SERMONS FROM EXODUS THROUGH DEUTERONOMY

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PROSPERITY UNDER PERSECUTION  
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**A SERMON  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Come on let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falls out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight  
against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for  
Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses.**

**But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.” Exodus 1:10-12.**

THE children of this world are wise in their generation. Their policy may be short-sighted and their stratagems crooked, nevertheless the world admires the wisdom of their counsels, and makes light of the craftiness of their projects. In their opposition to the Christian Church the men of the world might certainly have been as well able to outwit her by the variety of their maneuvers as to overwhelm her by the force of their numbers were it not that there is an unseen One in her midst who is more than a match for the guile of their hearts and the might of their hosts. Looking back at the early struggles of the Hebrew race to gain a footing among the nations, it is very clear that had the contest been merely between Pharaoh and Israel, the Egyptian king could exercise power and policy enough to defeat the sons of Jacob and reduce them to serfdom.

But when a new name is brought in, and the contest appears to be truly between Pharaoh and Jehovah, the God of Israel, it is quite another matter—and a far different issue may be counted upon. There is One behind the curtain that takes Israel’s part. He sees through all Pharaoh’s plots. Before his thoughts have ripened into plans they are forestalled. As fast as they are set up, they are upset. For every intrigue there is a reprisal. Thus He takes the wise in their own craftiness. The whole history of the long feud between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent illustrates the subtlety of the serpent’s seed, and the simplicity of the woman’s seed.

But still more does it bring to light the infinite wisdom of Him who rules the seed of the woman. And who will, in the end, bruise the serpent’s head and give unto His people and the cause they have espoused a complete triumph. Whatever has been done by the enemies in rage or in recklessness, God has always met it calmly and quietly. He has shown Himself ready for every emergency. And He has not only baffled and utterly defeated all the inventions of wicked men, but He has turned their strange devices to good account—for the development of His own sovereign purposes.  
He has made His enemies work for Him, aiding the enterprise they eschewed—He has turned their curse into a blessing—He has made evil productive of good—He has extracted sweetness out of their bitter spleen, and distilled healthful medicine out of their deadly animosity. He has His way in the whirlwind—the clouds are the dust of His feet. He does not only meet evil with good, but He takes the evil and subjects it to His own eternal purpose. And from it He brings forth a course of events that results in His own Glory, the benefit of His children, and the fulfillment of their destiny.

Of this general principle we shall now proceed to consider three special illustrations. First, the circumstances of the children of Israel. Secondly, the history of the Church of Christ. Thirdly, the experience of individual Christians.

I. IN THE CASE OF ISRAEL, it did seem to be a deep-laid plot, very political and crafty, indeed, that as the kings of Egypt, themselves of an alien race, had subdued the Egyptians, they should prevent the other alien race, the Israelites, from conquering them. Instead of murdering them wholesale, it did seem a wise, though a cruel thing, to make them slaves. To divide them up and down the country. To subject them to toil till their spirits were broken. To appoint them to the most menial work in the land that they might be crushed down and their spirits become so base that they would not dare to rebel.

Thus we may suppose it was hoped that their physical strength would be so relaxed, and their circumstances so reduced, that the clan would soon be insignificant if not utterly extinct. But God met and overruled this policy in various ways. “The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied.” The census proved the error of their calculation. The cause looked likely, but it was not productive of the consequence expected. Had it been another people, the tactics might have been successful. But they were God’s people, endeared to Him by their ancestry, ennobled in His sight by their Covenant destiny and encompassed with His favor as with a shield.

No conspiracy formed against them could thrive. And so it came to pass that like certain herbs which spring up when trod down, or like certain trees that grow taller if loaded with weights, Israel rose superior to all her disadvantages. “The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.” The glory of God shines forth conspicuously in the use to which He turned the persecutions they endured. The severe treatment they had to bear from the enemy became to them a salutary discipline. This comes of the Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.

From that time the children of Israel began to feel a disgust with Egypt. They had settled down very quietly in Goshen and thought that it was their rest. They had imbibed much of the manners and customs of the Egyptians. We have it on record that they worshipped the gods of Egypt. They seemed greatly to have appreciated what they afterwards called the luxuries of the land—the leeks, the garlic, the onions, the melons and the cucumbers. They appear to have been almost naturalized to that country.

They were little better than Egyptians. Perhaps persons traveling, except by certain tones of language and contour of countenance, would scarcely have known but what they were descendants of Ham. But now their masters treat them cruelly and they loathe the Egyptians. They are scattered up and down throughout the land, and Goshen is no longer dear to them. They are treated like strangers, and they feel they are strangers. Now that they hear from morning till night the taskmaster’s oaths and the crack of the cruel whips—and are subjected to incessant toil and bondage—they think far less of Egypt than they used to do.

This is what the Lord designed. He never intended that His people, Israel, should be absorbed into any other family. He never meant them to be other than sojourners on that soil. He had some better thing for them than that they should dwell in that land and be as the heathen were. God was thus answering one purpose. And He did more than this. Now they began to remember, as their bondage waxed more and more severe, the God of their fathers whom they had forgotten.

I have reminded you that they had fallen into the worship of the gods of Egypt. But now they turn with abhorrence from the gods of their oppressors and they think themselves of the Covenant which Jehovah had made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and they betook themselves to their knees. In secret they utter their groanings before the Most High, and when their taskmasters make them smart, they lift their eyes, suffused with bitter tears, and silently appeal to Heaven, to the God of their fathers, that He would have mercy upon them. They had forgotten to pray until then. The mass of them had been unused to call upon the name of the Lord.

But now the scourge drives them to seek help from above. Their terrors, their pains, their griefs, and their vexations compel them to lift up that cry to Heaven which came into the ears of Jehovah and moved His hands to help them. More than that, remember that it was necessary for this people to be altogether rescued from that land which for many a year had taxed their labor and bounded their enterprise—because it was not the land which had been promised them as an inheritance.

It was God’s intention and Covenant purpose to give them the Land of Canaan, a land that flowed with milk and honey. But it is not very easy to induce a nation, numbering some millions, to leave a country in which they have been born and nourished and found a home. Only some very fearful evil can induce them to expatriate themselves. Had Moses gone to the children of Israel before the time of their bondage, and said, “Up! Get you from here unto the land which the Lord swears that He will give you,” he would have seemed to them as one that mocked—they would have laughed him to scorn.

In order to cut loose the bonds that bound them to Egypt, the sharp knife of affliction must be used. And Pharaoh, though he knew it not, was God’s instrument in weaning them from the Egyptian world, and helping them as His Church to take up their separate place in the wilderness and receive the portion which God had appointed for them. Once more—and here you may see the wisdom of God—the very means which Pharaoh devised for the effectual crushing of the people—the destruction of the male children—became the direct, no, the Divine provision for educating a deliverer for them.  
Moses had never been, in all probability, trained in the courts of Pharaoh if he had not been put in the basket of bulrushes on the brink of the Nile. And his mother would certainly never have put him there if there had not been a pitiless edict that the male children should be put to death. Moved by maternal instinct to save her child, and moved by faith in God not to obey the king’s command, she places her child in the ark. Pharaoh’s daughter finds the child, has compassion on it because of its cries, extricates it from peril, loves it fondly, adopts it capriciously, and educates it in the very court of Pharaoh!

That child grows up to be the man who should vex the fields of Zoan— the man of God, who with a high hand and an outstretched arm would lead forth the slaves of Egypt to become a great nation which God should bless. So you see the Lord, in all points, meets Pharaoh and foils him. This Pharaoh was the great representative in those days of the power of evil, and he stands still to the Christian Church as the type of the seed of the serpent. But the Lord withstands him, despoils him of his purpose, and turns all he does to the very highest and best end. Such is the narrative full of instruction, and charged with portent that serves as a type of the Lord’s doing when He makes bare His arm for the salvation of His own heritage.

II. Let us now carry the same thought a stage farther and take a brief survey of THE HISTORY OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD. The like means will appear in manifold operation. Men meditate mischief but it miserably miscarries. God grants protection to the persecuted and provides an escape from the most perilous exposure. Full often the dark conspiracy is brought to the direst confusion. No sooner does Christ gather a Church in any place, be it a renowned empire or a paltry village, than opposition is stirred up.

“If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed,” is the first check for the serpent’s wiles, the first ray of hope for his helpless victims. And the prediction will continue to be fulfilled till at last, according to the Word of the Lord, the tares are bound in bundles to burn and the wheat is gathered into His garner.

Whenever there has been a great persecution raised against the Christian Church, God has overruled it, as He did in the case of Pharaoh’s oppression of the Israelites, by making the aggrieved community more largely to increase. The early persecutions in Judea promoted the spread of the Gospel. After the death of Stephen, the disciples were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles, the result is thus given—“Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word.”

So, too, when Herod stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church, and killed James, the brother of John, with the sword. What came of it? Why Luke tells us in almost the same words that Moses had used—“The Word of God grew and multiplied.” Those terrible and bloody persecutions under the Roman Emperor by no means stayed the progress of the Gospel—but strangely enough seemed to press forward for the crown of martyrdom. The Church probably never increased at a greater ratio than as when her foes were most fierce to assail and most resolute to destroy her.

It was so in after times. The Reformation in this country and throughout Europe never went on so prosperously as when it was most vigorously opposed. You shall find in any individual Church that wherever evil men have conspired together, and a storm of opposition has burst forth against the saints, the heart of the Lord has been moved with compassion and the hand of the Lord has been raised to succor. We have come to look upon opposition as an omen of good, and persecution for righteousness’ sake as a tearful seed-time, quickly to be followed by a harvest of joy!

We have looked on our adversaries, though they seemed like stormy petrels, as being the index of a favorable wind to the good boat of Christ’s Church. Persecution seems to be the wave that, when it leaps up around her, speeds her course. Let the mountains be removed and cast into the midst of the sea. But after long experience of Jehovah’s faithfulness towards His people, we are confident that His Church shall not be moved— in quietude shall she possess her soul. Persecution has evidently aided the increase of the Church by the scattering abroad of earnest teachers. We are very apt to get hived—too many of us together—and our very love of one another renders it difficult to part us and scatter us about.

Persecution, therefore, is permitted to scatter the hive of the Church into various swarms, and each of these swarms begins to make honey. We are all like the salt if we are true Christians, and the proper place for the salt is not massed in a box, but scattered by handfuls over the flesh which it is to preserve. We are of good service when we are kept together in great bands—happy we certainly are in the presence of each other. But we are to separate and scatter—and then we shall conquer as we are scattered abroad.

You remember the days of our Puritan forefathers, when the dominant Church of the day determined to crush out pure evangelism? To what extent did it succeed? Did it destroy their faith and their confidence? No, my Brethren—by driving them out of an apostate Church, and compelling them to take up their stand as separated Believers without the camp, bearing Christ’s reproach and Cross—an everlasting testimony for pure Truth was enshrined. Was the crisis prolonged? Were deeds of violence legalized?

By the increasing rigor of such persecution our forefathers were forced to leave their native shores, and they had to pass in the Mayflower, and afterwards in some succeeding vessels, across the blue Atlantic, sadly but surely to found another center for the proclamation of the Gospel. And upon the wide continent of a new world they became the progenitors of another nation holding fast the fundamentals of the faith, and rejoicing in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.

There might have been no Church in the United States if it had not been that our sires were driven to the wilds among the Red Indians, there to establish themselves, and set up a banner for the Truth as it is in Jesus. It will always be so. I could almost wish that in this island—though I dread calamity—I could almost wish, for the Master’s honor, that some irresistible impulse should force His disciples to go abroad to the regions

beyond our present sphere of life and labor.

I rejoice, though I love not to miss my friends, when I find them led or driven, as it may be, to emigration. Whether it be to Australia, Canada or anywhere else, I trust that if they are living seed they will be as a handful of corn sown in the new land, and the fruit whereof shall shake like Lebanon. Christian men are sometimes called to leave positions of great comfort and to occupy stations of great hardship. They may account it a reverse of fortune, while God designs it as an appointment to special service. If they bear Christ’s Gospel with them to a people sitting in darkness, that will be great gain, in the long run, to the Church.

Your being sent to a village, though you like it not, may be a lasting blessing to the hamlet. Your residing among strangers, when you would far rather find a more congenial home among your own kindred, may be for the good of that neighborhood. Who knows? Where should lamps be set up but in dark places? Where should we have a guard for Christ’s army but where the enemy is most likely to make the assault? Be patient, then, my Brethren, amidst the persecutions or trials you may be called upon to bear. And be thankful that they are so often overruled for the growth of the Church, the spread of the Gospel, and the honor of Christ.

Moreover, Beloved, persecution in the Church—even when it does not take the form of burning or imprisonment, but of slander, of cruel mockings, jesting, jeering, and venomous spite—in whatever form it is sent— persecution helps to keep up the separation between the Church and the world. I fear most the rich when they bring gifts. I loathe the world most when it fawns and flatters. When I heard of a lady who had put on Christ by Baptism and that the cold shoulder was given her in all the circles in which she moved—do you think I felt more disposed to console or to congratulate?

It was said that now she had but few invitations to such places and such society as she had previously frequented. But I rejoiced, and thanked God for it! I was glad of it, for I felt she was farther removed from temptation. When I heard of a young man that, after he joined the Church—those in his workshop met him at once with loud laughter and reproached him with bitter scorn—I was thankful, because now he could not take up the same position with themselves. He was a marked man— they who knew him discovered that there was such a thing as Christianity—and such a one as an earnest defender of it!

It is no evil to the Church, depend upon it, to have a great gulf fixed between her and the world. The worst thing that ever could happen for us is when affinities are made between the sons of God and the children of Belial. This brought on the Deluge. And if it could ever be carried out thoroughly again, it would bring on judgments terrible to think of. It is ill for the worldly since, “they that are far from God shall perish.” But it is a thousand times worse for the professing when they play foul with their profession—for so it is written, “You have destroyed all them that go a whoring from You.”

Summary vengeance is their lot. “Come out from among them, and be you separate, and touch not the unclean thing. And I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters.” This is a text that needs to be thundered in trumpet tone. What says the great King unto the spouse? “Forget, also, your own people, and your father’s house. So shall the King greatly desire your beauty: for He is your Lord. And worship you Him.” “Be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

Too much laxness, giving way to the world a friendship foil of fascination brings on leanness of spirit and causes us to be scarcely known as Christians. It weakens our testimony, and in every way promotes Satan’s ends. But when persecution breaks forth barriers are set up—distinctive colors are worn, so the two camps are kept in open hostility. And when brought to battle with each other, the Church is kept pure with bright armor! Victory waits her march, and her champions win their laurels.

Again, persecution in the Christian Church acts like a winnowing fan to the heaps gathered on the threshing floor. In these soft and silken days any man may be a Christian professor. Oftentimes it pays well to make a profession of godliness. Men think the better of you—it brings customers to the shop. No one knows how many conveniences may attach to the profession of religion—but if it is pretense without pretext, everlasting destruction awaits such violation of Truth—for God will surely avenge hypocrisy.

But in days of persecution to profess Christ is very inconvenient. Then to be baptized in water may involve a Baptism of blood. Then for the soul to burn with zeal for Christ would probably be followed with the body being burnt at the stake. Then a word for Jesus would bring a word of conviction from the judge’s mouth, and, close at the heels of that word, death. Then they who loved not Christ betake themselves to the other side. The cowards and the spies shrink away. Demas went, and Judas went, and all of that brood to their own company, and then only the true and the brave, the regenerate, the elect of God were left.

They stood fast and firm—all the stronger for losing such ill company. Then in those days the Church was like a heap of golden wheat, all winnowed and clean grain, fit for a burnt offering to the Most High, to be offered up as a meat offering upon His altar. Her martyrs were among her noble sons and daughters—the very Glory of the Church and of the Lord Jesus Christ! So you see persecution is overruled for this great good. It ought never to be, while there are sinners in this world—it ought never to be that the Christian escapes opposition.

I take it that if a man makes an advance in life and comes to a position of fame, he ought to win it—ought to fight for it. Men ought not to be crowned until first of all they have strived for the mastery. And it should be so in the Church of God that we must fight if we would reign. It should not be that we should think it an easy thing and a light matter to be a follower of Him whose life was sorrow and whose death was the death of the Cross. If we are to be conformed to Him, it cannot be by ease and sloth. Not the downy couch, but the crown of thorns! Not the triumph, but the shame must be the portion of the imitators of the Crucified!

Persecution has a further beneficial use in the Church of God, and it is this. It may be that the members of the Church want it. It is a sorrowful thing that slander should be so often used against God’s people. It is a

grievous thing that their little faults should be severely criticized and magnified. But, on the whole, it is good and profitable. It is a great blessing to be made to walk carefully. The Roman who professed that he would like to have a window in his bosom, that everybody might see his heart, would have wished, I should think, before long for a shutter to that window.

Yet it is no slight stimulus to a man’s own circumspection for him to know that he is observed by unfriendly eyes. Our life ought to be such as will bear criticism. As Christian men we serve a jealous God, and our works will have to stand the test of fire at the Last Great Day. The wood, the hay, the stubble that we have built will be consumed, and only the gold, the silver, and the precious stones will remain.

Are we, therefore, to be afraid of the ordinary ordeal of human censure and malignity? If we run with the footmen and they weary us, what shall we do when we contend with horses? And if in this land of comparative peace we are weary, what shall we do in the swelling of Jordan? This is the opposition appointed for us. It is through much tribulation we are to inherit the kingdom. And if we are sincere, and honest and true, we shall not flinch at this—we shall feel that God will overrule it for our sanctification by making us take heed unto our ways—because the wicked watch our paths.

And this persecution, dear Brethren, has a further usefulness. Often does it happen that the enmity of the world drives the Christian nearer to his God. How many prayers have been offered up as the result of persecution that would never have been offered otherwise? Heaven, alone, can tell! How many a groan, and sigh, and tear acceptable to God have been forced from true hearts by their sufferings? God alone knows! Ah, in the soft days, the summer days of peace and prosperity, we are apt to gad abroad after vain delights.

But when the winter comes, with its keen and cutting blast, we hasten to our own abode. We cleave to our own hearth. We love to dwell with our own kindred. Even so, right frequently, with hearts all chill and cheerless, we have sought the House of our Father and our God, drawn near to His altar, and found a refreshment we gladly could wish that we might never leave. Why, oh why, are we so fickle? If we could find succor and solace apart from the Rock, away from the Sun, absent from our Lord—our wayward hearts would do so. But when the waters of affliction have covered all the earth, then we fly back to our Noah, our Ark, and find rest for the soles of our feet.

The friendship of this world is enmity to God. It rivals God’s friendship. It deceives and deludes many hearts. But when the world frowns, it is a blessed frown that makes me seek my Savior’s smile. Anything that drives me to my knees is good. Anything that makes me trust in the promise and wait only upon God because my expectation is from Him, is healthful to my soul, infuses courage, inspires confidence and invests her with fresh strength. O Brethren, the very Glory of the Church is to live nearer to God. The more she thinks of her great and glorious Head, and the more she leans upon the invisible arm of the Eternal, the more invincible she is!

Persecution, in driving her to her stronghold, is overruled to her help! And yet, further, the dark days of fiendish persecution have witnessed bright deeds of Christian heroism never to be forgotten. How often have the richest and the ripest fruits of the Spirit been put forth by the Lord’s people when they have been most grieved and smitten! Then the saints have been like clusters thrown into the winepress. But who shall bring forth the red wine? Whose but the feet of God’s enemies shall tread the grapes?

And as with exultation they bruise and trample down, they shall crush nothing in the dust but husks—the living wine shall flow, and God shall receive the whole of it. They work—these foes work—and think that with axes they can break down our carved work and cast fire into the sanctuary of God. But all the while they burn not the true sanctuary—they burn but the base wooden erection with which man has defaced the living temple. Let them burn on—they do no hurt—only good ensues.

If you read “Foxe’s Book of Martyrs,” or any of the martyrologies of earlier ages, you will find there patience, self-denial, consecration, confidence in God and all the finer Divine Graces of temper in full bloom, perfuming the air with their fragrance. One is astonished at what our poor, weak humanity has been able to endure for the Truth of God, when strengthened by the Spirit of God. Verily humble, weak, and timid women have shown true mettle, waxing valiant, and cheering on men of muscle and sinew, whose hearts had grown faint. We could mention the names of many saints, if this were the time, who have endured torment as severe as inquisitors could devise, or relentless executioners could inflict, and yet they have not denied their Lord.

This was the patience of the saints, I think, when the martyrs perished in the Roman Amphitheatre, and the cruel crowd looked down to watch their agonies as their bones were crushed between the jaws of wild beasts. I think angels gathered in tiers, invisible multitudes of them gathered and looked on with eyes of admiration at the spectacle of mortal men ravished with the love of God—waving the banner of immortal Truth—while from frightful wounds and horrid gashes their life-blood streamed.

Oh, what God can do by us when He works in us! Perhaps Heaven itself, except when it gazed upon the Cross, never saw a nobler spectacle than when men and women who bore the Cross of Christ in their hearts, gave themselves up wholly as living sacrifices unto Him. The Church looks fairer and shines brighter when she is in the furnace. The smell of fire does not pass upon her. Her Lord is with her—and if the fire is heated seven times hotter—His Glory is seven times brighter.

Thus, again, the principle of the text is brought out—“the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied.” Their enemies try to deal wisely with them to put them down, but their wisdom is folly. God has blessed the Church by her persecution. And do you not think that persecution and opposition—such little oppositions as we meet with now— little indeed, compared with those of olden times—are permitted for our good as in Israel’s case, to make us feel that this is not our rest, and cause us to long for the better land?

Perhaps, dear Christian, if you lived in a Christian household, where all the accustomed order helped your piety, if you were put into the conservatory of a gracious Providence, you might be content to dwell below always. We soon take root in this soil, for we are earthy by nature and we cling to earth—like to its like. But when there comes the jeer, the unkind remark, the cruel innuendo, the bitter sarcasm—then we feel, “This is not my rest. I must seek better company than this, a better land and a better portion than I shall find this side of Jordan.”

And then we long for the home-bringing, when the King, the Husband, shall fetch home His spouse, and the marriage shall be consummated in the skies. Oh, how sometimes, when the world has been very very cold you have longed for the warm bosom of your Savior! You would have nestled in the world’s bosom if you could, but when she would not receive you but thrust you forth, then you came to your true self and exercised your right senses, and you said, “I will return unto my Husband. It was better with me then, than now.”

O that our hearts were always set on Heaven! There is our treasure— there let our hearts be also. There is our Lord and King—to Him should our hearts fly. There are the best ones of our families, our relations, who are everlastingly our associates—Brothers and Sisters whose brotherhood and sisterhood no death can bring to an end—

*“There my best friends my kindred dwell,*

*There God my Savior reigns.”*  
We ought to long for that land—and I say the whip of persecution is helpful, because it makes us learn that this is the house of bondage—and moves us to long after and seek for the land of liberty—the land of joy.

III. And now I close this address by just very briefly hinting that THIS GREAT GENERAL TRUTH APPLIES TO ALL BELIEVERS. But I will make a practical use of it. Dear Brothers and Sisters, are you passing through great trials? Very well, then, to meet them I pray that God’s Grace may give you greater faith. And if your trials increase more and more, so may your strength increase. You will be acting after God’s manner, guided by His wisdom if you seek to get more faith out of more trial—for that trial does strengthen faith. Through Divine Grace experience teaches us, and as we make full proof of the faithfulness of God, our courage, once apt to waver, is confirmed.

Do pray the Lord that when the trials multiply He may give you faith to meet them. That out of the eater you may get meat. And out of the strong find strength. So, too, if you know the Truth of God to be at any time assailed, and your own mind is beset with doubt about any doctrine, always ask God to open that particular Truth to your understanding and endear it to your heart—that by the assaults you are enabled to repel your faith may be the more confirmed. Oh, there is a right way of holding Truth, and there is a tenacious way of grasping it.

I have held doctrines, as it were, in my hands, like a boy’s ball that might be thrown away. But it is another thing when the King prints the mark of the doctrine right into your very soul so that you could no more part with it than you could part with life itself. Trials often burn doctrines into us, and heresies and infidelities make the good confession dear in our sight as a prize which we could never part with. Thus opposition to the Truth leads to the multiplication of evidences in its support. And the more we are assailed with the arguments of science, falsely so-called, the firmer we adhere to the oracles of God.

Or it may be, dear Christian worker, that of late you have met with a great many discouragements. You seem to have labored in vain and spent your strength for nothing. Ask then, in prayer, and act accordingly, that the more you are defeated the less you may be disposed to yield. Ask that you may be endowed with fresh energy for the service, and strive with increased assurance for the victory. When you feel, “I am foiled in that point,” say, “Nevertheless, I cannot be beaten—I belong to a seed that cannot be vanquished. If I did not belong to the house of Israel, I might have been destroyed and overcome. But none can stand against the Hebrew race, against true Israelites—they must win the day.”

Therefore, settle it in your mind that if you do not win souls one day, you will another. And if you cannot press into your enemies’ territory in one part, you will in another. And if he defeats you at any time, then multiply your efforts to do good. Always take revenge on Satan, if he defeats you, by trying to do ten times more good than you did before. It is in some such way that a dear Brother now preaching the Gospel, whom God has blessed with a very considerable measure of success, may trace the opening of his career to a circumstance that occurred to myself.

Sitting in my pulpit one evening, in a country village where I had to preach, my text slipped from my memory, and with the text seemed to go all that I had thought to speak upon. A rare thing to happen to me. But I sat utterly confounded. I could find nothing to say. With strong crying I lifted up my soul to God to pour out again within my soul the Living Water that it might gush forth from me for others.

And I accompanied my prayer with a vow that if Satan’s enmity thus had brought me low, I would take so many fresh men whom I might meet with during the week and train them for the ministry—so that with their hands and tongues I would avenge myself on the Philistines. The Brother I have alluded to came to me the next morning. I accepted him at once as one whom God had sent, and I helped him, and others after him, to prepare for the service, and to go forth in the Savior’s name to preach the Gospel of the Grace of God.

Often when we fear we are defeated, we ought to say, “I will do all the more. Instead of dropping from this work, now will I make a general levy and a sacred conscription upon all the powers of my soul. And I will gather up all the strength I ever had in reserve and make, from this moment, a tremendous life-long effort to overcome the powers of darkness, and win for Christ fresh trophies of victory.” After this fashion you will have an easier time of it, for if you do more good, the more you are tempted, Satan will not so often tempt you.

When he knows that all the more you are afflicted, so much the more you multiply, very likely he will find it wiser to let you alone, or try you in some other method than that of direct and overt opposition. So whenever you have a trial, take it as a favor! Whenever God holds in one hand the rod of affliction, He has a favor in the other hand. He never strikes a child of His but He has some tender blessing in store. If He visits you with unaccustomed affliction, you will have unusual delight. The Lord will open new windows for you and show His beauty as He shows it not to others. As your tribulations abound, so also shall your consolations abound in Christ Jesus.

In the deeper waters you shall find Him nearer, for He has said, “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.” He will be with you always, but He has promised to come to you specially and peculiarly, and, as it were, by appointment, when you are driven out into the wilderness, or harassed by the foe. He comforts those that are cast down. Rejoice, therefore, in your afflictions—if you have faith—believe that they shall be blessed for your good.

What is all this to the unconverted? Ah, Sirs! While the men of God flourish in adversity, the men of this world are ruined by their prosperity. Even the cup of pleasure and sensual enjoyment, of which you delight to drink, has its bitter dregs which you shall be compelled to swallow. Even now all your days are not passed in sunshine. You have your troubles. But you have no God to resort to. You will have many sorer plagues than you have ever yet been visited with. And if you continue in unbelief, you will still have no God to trust in.

Perhaps you go to some friends in any emergency now, but no friend can help you in the dying hour. No brother can go with you through the swellings of Jordan. O friendless One, O Christless Sinner! Do you not want God to be your Helper, and Christ to be your Friend? If you do, then behold the Savior on the Cross. Turn your eyes to Him—penitently trust Him—rely upon Him and He is yours!

And then from now on the Lord of Hosts shall be with you, and God of Jacob shall be your Refuge, and your afflictions shall also work your good. May God bless each one of you, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

[MR. SPURGEON hopes to be permitted to preach on July 2. He is most thankful to inform all friends that he is better in health, and trusts he may be able again to occupy the pulpit of the Tabernacle from Sunday to Sunday.]

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ISRAEL’S CRY AND GOD’S ANSWER NO. 2631

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JULY 16, 1899.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, APRIL 23, 1882.

**“And it came to pass in process of time that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them... Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me: and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh, that you may bring forth My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”  
Exodus 2:23-25; 3:9, 10.**

GOD had chosen the children of Israel, and He had determined to make of them a great nation and a peculiar people to whom He could communicate the Law and the Testimony, that they might keep the heavenly lamp burning until Christ should come. Jacob and his family had gone down into Egypt and, for a long time, they and their descendants were very happy there. The land of Goshen was very fruitful and the Israelites were greatly favored by the Egyptian king. The mass of them, therefore, had little thought of ever leaving that country—they resolved that they would settle there permanently. In fact, though God would not have it so, they became Egyptians as much as they could. They were a part of the Egyptian nation and they began to forget their separate origin. In all probability, if they had been left to themselves, they would have been melted and absorbed into the Egyptian race and lost their identity as God’s special people. They were content to be in Egypt and they were quite willing to be “Egyptianized.” To a large degree, they began to adopt the superstitions, idolatries and iniquities of Egypt. And these things clung to them, in later years, to such a terrible extent that we can easily imagine that their heart must have turned aside very much towards the sins of Egypt. Yet, all the while, God was resolved to bring them out of that evil connection. They must be a separated people—they could not be Egyptians, nor yet live permanently like Egyptians, for Jehovah had chosen them for Himself, and He meant to make an abiding difference between Israel and Egypt.

Now see the parallel. God still has a people whom He has chosen to be His own in a very peculiar sense, but they are, at present, mixed up with the world. They are in the world and they are, at least in appearance, of the world. They are as fond of sin and as much slaves to sin as others are. They even love the world and the things of it—and many of them are quite happy where they are. They have no wish whatever to became a part of the separated people, set apart unto the Lord. They would rather remain in the world. But God will bring His redeemed out from the rest of mankind. He that bought them with blood will deliver them by power. Christ did not offer His Atonement in vain, but, “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.” God will yet call every one of His sons and daughters out of Egypt, even as He called His Firstborn, and He will bring His chosen out of the midst of the people among whom they are sojourning until the time appointed for their emancipation.

The first thing to be done with the Israelites was to cause them to be anxious to come out of Egypt, for it is not God’s way to make men His servants, except so far as they willingly yield themselves to Him. He never violates the human will, though He constantly and effectually influences it. Jehovah wants not slaves to grace His throne and, therefore, God would not have the people dragged out of Egypt, or driven out in fetters, against their own glad consent. He must bring them out in such a way that they would be willing to come out, so that they would march forth with joy and delight, being thoroughly weary and sick of all Egypt and, therefore, rejoicing to get away from it. How was this to be done? It was accomplished by a new king coming up who knew not Joseph and his eminent services. This Pharaoh began to be jealous of the people, fearing that, some day, when Egypt was at war, Israel might turn and side with the Egyptians’ enemies. He looked upon the people, therefore, as being a great danger, and determined, if he could, to thin their ranks. Hence, he issued the barbarous edict to slay all the male children and, to effectually break their spirit, he put them to hard labor in making bricks and erecting vast structures, so that the treasure cities of Egypt and, perhaps, some of her huge pyramids were built by the unpaid labors of Israelite slaves. The whip fell often and heavily upon their backs, for they were put under brutal taskmasters who beat them most shamefully. They had no rest. They had to toil on and on and on, and scarcely had bread enough to eat to keep body and soul together. At last, the yoke of bondage became altogether intolerable and then, as we have it in the first part of our text, “The children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.”

I want to use this subject in showing to any here who are in soultrouble and do not understand why they have such sorrows and distress, that God is seeking to make them sick of the world, sick of sin and, therefore, He is putting them into a condition of spiritual bondage so that they may be willing to come out of Egypt! Yes, that they may, by-and-by, with the utmost joy and gladness, leave the land of their captivity!

I. The first thing I have to speak about is THE CRY OF MISERY. “The children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning.”

Notice, first, that they began to sigh, and to cry because their time of prosperity had passed. The land of Goshen might still be very fruitful, but their taskmasters devoured their substance. The country might be fair to look upon, but they had no time to enjoy the prospect. They were worked well-nigh to death and they could no longer get any rest in Egypt. All their prosperity and happiness had departed. Am I addressing any who were once very well content and satisfied to live as ordinary worldlings do? And has everything changed with you? Is there now no joy in what was once such a pleasure to you? Does it seem very dull and dreary if you go where you used to find so much merriment? Those haunts which were once the scene of your greatest delight—are they now avoided by you because you cannot endure them? Do you now feel that you would gladly give up all those things which once you doted on? I am thankful to hear that it is so, for when God is about to give a man a drink of the cup of salvation, He often first puts his taste right by washing out his mouth with a draught of bitters to take away the flavor of the accursed sweets of sin! I always regard it as a good and hopeful sign when a man becomes tired of the world, altogether weary of its sins, and says, “I find no pleasure in them.” This happens to some while they are still young and their passions are strong—while their substance is undiminished, while their health is vigorous—while their friends are numerous. In the very middle of the day, their sun of enjoyment seems to go down. There is the honey, but it is no longer sweet. There is the wine cup, but it has no further fascination for them. Their joy has departed just when one would have thought that it would have been most abiding with them. Do I speak to any in this condition? If so, I think that I bring a message from the Lord to them!

But, next, the Israelites had not only lost their former prosperity, but they began to feel that they were in bondage. An Israelite in Egypt was at first a gentleman—in fact, a nobleman—for was he not related to the great prime minister, Joseph, who was second only to Pharaoh himself? Every Jew walked through Goshen as an aristocrat, for he was intimately connected with almost the highest in the realm! But now all that was changed with them and they felt that they were slaves—they were in bitter bondage—they must act and move at the will of others. There were hard laws and regulations made for them and cruel taskmasters to put those laws in action. They must rise, not when they chose, but when they were told to, and they might get to their beds only when they were allowed to do so at the slave driver’s will. And they felt that they could not bear it any longer.

This was God’s way of bringing them out of bondage, by first making them feel that they were in slavery. Have I any here who realize that they are also in slavery? Am I addressing a man who feels that he is in bondage to evil habits which he cannot break, although he wishes that he could and counts himself degraded by the fact that to will is present with him, but how to perform that which he would, he finds not because he is a slave? His passions rule him. His companions control him. He dares not do what his conscience tells him is right, for there is a fear of somebody or other that makes him into a coward, and so into a slave. I am always glad when the fetters begin to gall. They who are content to be in bondage will never be freed! But when they feel that they cannot and that they will not any longer endure their captivity, then has the hour of freedom struck! It is an untold blessing when the Grace of God makes a man feel that what was once a pleasure has now become a servitude—and what he formerly found to be liberty has now become utter slavery to him.

The Israelites went further than that. They now felt that their burdens were too heavy to be borne. They had worked and toiled very hard and they had lived through the work, but now they were made to serve with rigor and their bondage was too heavy to be endured. They could not bear it. And it is the same spiritually! As long as a man can carry his sins, he will continue to carry them. And as long as a man can be content with the pleasures of this world, rest assured that he will delight in them. It is a blessed thing when sin becomes an awful load, so that it crushes a man until he seems to sink utterly hopeless beneath it! It is well with him, for now he will welcome the Deliverer. He will be glad of pardon from Him who, alone, can forgive sins. He will rejoice to accept the word of absolution from the lips of the Great High Priest and, therefore, although it is often a sore sorrow, it is also a very great mercy to be made to feel the intolerable load and burden of sin. If I am speaking to any who are in such a condition—and I hope that I am—I congratulate them on what is yet to come to them!

Oh, well do I remember when I was such a slave—when, as I rose in the morning, I resolved to live better than I had previously done, yet, long before noon, I had made a worse mess of the day than ever! Then I thought that, perhaps, by increasing my prayers, or reading more of the Scriptures, I might get ease from my burden. But I found the more I prayed and the more I read, the heavier my burden became! If I tried to forget my sorrow and so to shake off my gloom, I found that it would not forget me—and I had to cry unto the Lord, with David, “Day and night Your hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.” I remember all that painful time so vividly that I can speak to some of you like an experienced friend who is well acquainted with the dark and stony road on which you are walking. I know all about your painful pathway of grief and I long to help you to get over it quickly, and to come to a better and happier place! But this trial is God’s way of fetching you out of Egypt. He is making the house of bondage too hot for you. He does not mean to let you stay there, so He is permitting all this to come upon you that you may cry unto Him to deliver you! He will bring you forth and you shall march out with joy and gladness, thankful and happy to do what now seems like a hardship and like self-denial to you.

These Israelites also felt one more thing, namely, their powerlessness to escape out of Pharaoh’s hand, and they thought that there was nobody to help them. When the young man of 40, who had been educated in Pharaoh’s court, came forward and was reckoned to be the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. When he came forward like a true hero, he threw in his lot with the despised people and smote one of their adversaries. He thought, perhaps, that it would be the signal for a general revolt and that the banner of Israel would wave defiantly in the face of Pharaoh and that the people would boldly march to liberty. But they were too enslaved— they had been too long ground down and oppressed to act like that—they had lost all spirit and they did not hope to ever be free! They were a nation of hopeless slaves.

Am I speaking to any here who have lost all heart and hope—who have come to this place of worship with a sort of feeble wish for salvation, but with no expectation of receiving it? Are you so shut up in the prison of sin that you cannot come forth? Are your chains clanking in your ears? Do you feel yourself to be in the low dark dungeon out of which you will never come alive? It is to you I have to say that I bless God that you are where you are! Despair is a blessed preparation for faith in Jesus! The end of the creature is the beginning of the Creator. Your extremity is God’s opportunity. Now that you are helpless and hopeless, God will come to your rescue!

You notice that in my text there is a gradation, and such a gradation as some of us have felt in spiritual things. “The children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage.” “Ah, miserable wretch! Woe is me! Alas! Alas!” That is how they sighed when they were at their labor. That is how they sighed when they went home at night, or lay down among the pots by the kiln. And that is how they sighed when they woke up in the morning. When a boy was born, they sighed as they looked at him, for they knew that he must be killed. “The children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage.” And, then, as their misery grew, a sigh was not enough. “And they cried.” Ah, I cannot imitate the expressive language of their grief. There were often many tears and there was the voice of grief which made itself audible in piercing cries. “O God, how long shall this bondage last?” They sat them down and begged for death—and sought it as if they were seeking for hidden treasure, for the life of a slave in Egypt was intolerable to them. And, often, the sigh and the cry were merged into a groan, for we read, “God heard their groaning.”

Is that how it has been going on with you, my Brother? You used to sigh a good deal. Sometimes people noticed that you were very absentminded and that you seemed to have some sorrow upon your spirit which you could not express. Now you have gone further than that, for you have begun to cry and in prayer to God, you pour out your very soul! Perhaps—and that is the worst plight of all—you feel that you cannot pray. You do not seem to be able to offer what you regard as a real prayer. You can only weep—yes, and perhaps you cannot even weep— and so you sigh and groan because you cannot pray. You are troubled because you cannot be troubled enough. And that is the worst kind of trouble that there is in the world! There are none so brokenhearted as those that are brokenhearted because they are not brokenhearted! I have reminded you that the Israelites groaned and that “God heard their groaning.” Ah, from the very bottom of their heart came up their groaning! It was no mere heaving of a sigh. It was no mere utterance of a cry. But all day long it was groaning, groaning, groaning—each breath seemed to be yet another sorrowful groan!

I hope that many of you will find the Savior before you know much about this terrible groaning, but it was not so with me. I became so full of groans that I understood what Job meant when he said, “My soul chooses strangling and death rather than my life.” It would be better never to live than to live forever under conviction of sin, for the arrows of God drink up the very fountains of our life, pour fire into the blood and make us feel as if a thousand deaths were preferable to living under an awful sense of God’s wrath! Perhaps I am speaking to some who, even when they fall asleep, are startled by dreams concerning the Day of Judgment, the sound of the archangel’s trumpet and the setting up of the Great White Throne. And when they wake and go out to their business, they make strange blunders—and all day long they are like men walking as in a dream.

Still, dear Friends, if that is your experience, I am heartily glad of it, for it is to me a sign of better days coming! Looking down upon Egypt, the angels must have been glad when they heard the sighs and cries and groans of Israel. “Why,” you ask, “how is that?” Because the angels would say to themselves, “God’s greatest difficulty is overcome! He wanted to incline these people to come out of Egypt and now they long to come out—so they will be willing to accept the leader whom God will send to them and, with music and dancing, they will come forth when Moses brings them out of the iron furnace and the house of bondage.” Those of us who were, only a little while ago, in the house of bondage, rejoice that we have been set free from it! And we are praying that you who are still in it and are beginning to feel what a horrible place it is, may not stay there long. May tomorrow’s sun not see you there, but may you escape at once from that terrible captivity!

That, then, is the first head—a cry of misery.  
II. The second is a very blessed one, THE GOD OF PITY. Let me read part of the text again. “They cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.”  
Here, then, is the poor sinner’s hope—not at all in himself, but wholly in God! Note the gradations here with regard to God’s pity for these people. First, “their cry came up unto God.” When it rose up sharp, shrill and intense, it burst through the gates of Heaven and “came up unto God.” Not that He does not really hear everything, but, speaking after the manner of men, when it was a mere sigh, it did not reach Him. But when it got to be a cry and deepened into a groan, then it came up before Him and He seemed to stop and say, “What is that? It is the cry of the seed of Abraham in Egypt.” Oh, poor Soul, when your cry comes up from the depths of your very soul, then God will stop and say, “What is that? It is the cry of a man in misery. It is the voice of a soul that is in bondage under sin.” “Their cry came up unto God.”  
Notice, next, for it is a step further—“and God heard their groaning.” Do you know what that means? There are some people who seem to hear things, but the sounds pass through their ears and there the matter ends. But if you go to visit a sick woman and you sit down, and she tells you all about her ailments and about her poverty, she is cheered because you listen to her kindly and because you are willing to hear her even if you cannot help her—but it does help her even to tell her sad story. Well now, God heard Israel’s crying and groaning. He heard them not merely as men hear a sound and take no notice of it, but He seemed to stand still and listen to the sighs, and groans, and cries of His people. Sinner, tell God your misery even now and He will hear your story! He is willing to listen, even, to that sad and wretched tale of yours about your multiplied transgressions, your hardness of heart, your rejections of Christ. Tell Him all, for He will hear it. Tell him what it is you need—what large mercy—what great forgiveness! Just lay your whole case before Him. Do not hesitate for a single moment! He will hear it, He will be attentive to the voice of your cry. Oh, what comfort there is for you in this Truth of God if you can but grasp it! Dear Christians, pray that some poor sinners may grasp it even now! Pray that they may lay hold upon the sweet thought that God is hearing the sighs and cries of the penitent souls in our midst!  
God’s pity went further than that, for we read, next, that having heard their groaning, “God remembered His Covenant.” I wish I knew how to preach upon that 24th verse—“God remembered His Covenant.” He looked on the children of Israel and He did not remember their sins— their practically becoming Egyptians, their loving Egypt and Egypt’s idols—but He remembered His friend, Abraham. He remembered Isaac. He remembered Jacob whom He loved, and He remembered how He had promised to bless them and to make them a blessing. And not because of any merit in the Israelites, themselves, but for the sake of those whom He had loved and honored, and for the sake of the Covenant which He had made with them, He said, “I will break the power of Pharaoh, and I will bless My people; I will bring them out of bondage, and set them at liberty.” Sinner, if God were to look on you to all eternity, He could not see anything in you but what He is bound to punish! But when He looks on His dear Son whom He loves, and remembers how He lived and loved, and bled and died, and made atonement for the guilty. And when He remembers His Covenant with His Well-Beloved, He says, “I will bless these people whom I gave unto Him by an Everlasting Covenant. I promised that He would see of the travail of His soul and so He shall. I will break the power of sin and I will set these captives free to the praise of the glory of My Grace. And they shall be accepted in the Beloved.” It is a great blessing that although God cannot see any reason for mercy in us, He can see the best of all reasons for mercy in the Covenant of His Grace and in His dear Son with whom He made it! “God remembered His Covenant.” Do not forget it, dear Friends, but think much upon the Covenant ordered in all things and sure, and upon all the blessings that are to come to you through that Covenant.  
God did still more for His people. “And God looked upon the children of Israel.” He had given them His ear. He had given them His memory. Now He gives them His eyes. He stood still and He looked upon them in pity and in love. And it is further said, “And God had respect unto them.” The margin renders it, “God knew them,” which is the true meaning of the original. He looked upon a man and He said, “That is one of My children.” He looked upon another and He said, “Yes, Egyptian though he is in dress, he is one of my Israelites.” He looked upon others and He said, “I know them. I know their sorrows, I know their sins, I know their weaknesses. And I will surely deliver them.” Oh, that these lips could utter language in which I might fitly tell you how God looks upon you, my dear brokenhearted fellow sinner—how He looks upon you, my poor troubled Friend who cannot break loose from sin, but feels like a bull in a net and cannot get free from it! I tell you that He is looking upon you in love and pity and that He knows your condition and is ready to help you! I will close my discourse by telling you what He has done to help you and, oh, may He give you Grace to lay hold of it, that you may find liberty this very hour!  
III. The last point is THE INSTRUMENT OF DELIVERANCE.  
God’s power was quite sufficient to bring the people of Israel out of bondage, but He chose to deliver them by means of human instrumentality. God works for men by men, so He raised up Moses, and it was through Moses that the children of Israel were delivered. Now, for you, dear Captive, God has raised up a Prophet like unto Moses. One who is infinitely greater than Moses has come to deliver you!  
First, remember that Jesus, the Savior of men, is a Man like ourselves. This ought to encourage you to come to Him. Full of grief and broken down under a sense of sin, you dare not approach an absolute God—it would not be right that you should attempt to come to Him without a Mediator. But you may come to the one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, for He can fully sympathize with you! He is able to have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way, for He, Himself, in the days of His flesh, was compassed with infirmity. Well did Dr. Watts sing—  
*“Till God in human flesh I see,  
My thoughts no comfort find.  
The holy, just, and sacred Three  
Are terrors to my mind!  
But if Immanuel’s face appears,  
My hope, my joy begins!  
His name forbids my slavish fear,  
His Grace removes my sins!”*  
Jesus Christ is a Man—therefore come boldly to Him, even as Israel might come to Moses! And Jesus is clothed with Divine authority and power, as Moses was. But more than that, He is what Moses was not, and could not be—Jesus is actually Divine! Jesus is God! Oh, come, poor trembling Sinner, and trust your case in His hands, because nothing ever fails that He undertakes! He can break the power of the Pharaoh of your sins and set you free! Yes, even now He can bring you forth out of Egypt with the silver and gold of His abounding Grace. Only trust Him and follow Him, and be obedient to His commands, and all will be well with you.  
This Moses, being a man, yet clothed with Divine authority, gave himself entirely up to the people. He was such a lover of Israel that he lived entirely for the people and once, you will remember, he even said, as he pleaded for them, “Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold! Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray You, out of Your book which You have written.” Our Lord Jesus Christ, whom it is our joy to preach, was really made a curse for us. He actually stood in the sinner’s place and bore the penalty of the sinner’s guilt. Therefore, oh, trust Him! Perhaps I may be the means of leading some poor sinner to end his delaying and now to commit his spirit into the hand of the faithful Creator and Redeemer who died for him. And, dear Friend, if you will but trust Jesus with yourself, you shall be saved at once! I hope you are willing to come out of Egypt. If you are, you may do so. Christ has broken all the power of sin and He is willing, now, to set you free if you will but trust Him and give yourself up, once and for all, entirely to His power!  
Lastly, Moses did bring the people out, every one of them. He left not a little babe in Egypt. No, not so much as a sheep or a goat remained there. He said, “There shall not a hoof be left behind.” All that belonged to Israel went marching out when Moses led the way. And God’s elect and Christ’s redeemed shall all come out of the Egypt of sin. Pharaoh’s power—the devil’s power—cannot hold the very least of them in captivity! No, not even a bone of one of God’s children shall be left in the grasp of death and the devil! They shall die and their bones shall be put into the sepulcher, but not the least atom of one of God’s own chosen ones shall be left in the power of death! They shall come again from the hand of the enemy.  
Yet remember, O you Sinners, that I do not urge you to trust Christ as though He cringed at your feet and could not have honor and glory if you did not welcome Him as your Savior! If you will not come to Him. If you will turn your backs on Him, I shall only say of you, “You believe not because you are not of His sheep, as He said unto you.” It is not for Christ’s sake, but for your own sake that I plead with you! Oh, that you would come to Him and trust Him! Weary of self, and weary of sin, and hopeless of self-salvation, come and lay yourselves at Jesus’ feet, even at the feet of Him whom God has “exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” He has laid help upon One who is mighty! He has exalted One chosen out of the people! Therefore, come and trust Him even now, and you shall be saved! May God grant repentance and faith to this whole congregation for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **ACTS 7:14-43.**

Verses 14-17. Then sent Joseph, and called his father, Jacob, to him, and all his kindred, seventy-five souls. So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, and were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulcher that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem. But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt. Note those words, “the time of the promise,” and remember that every promise has its due time of fulfillment and that there is a time of promise to all the Lord’s chosen people, when He will surely bring them out of bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

18-20. Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph. The same dealt subtly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live. In which time Moses was born, and was exceedingly fair, and nourished up in his father’s house three months. In the darkest night of Israel’s bondage in Egypt, her star of hope arose—“Moses was born and was exceedingly fair,” or, as the margin has it, “was fair to God”—with a beauty something more than human.

21, 22, And when he was cast out, Pharaoh’s daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. He was well qualified for the work to which God had called him, but how much more fully qualified is that great Prophet, like unto Moses, whom God has raised up, in these latter days, for the salvation of men, even Jesus Christ, His Son! He knows more than all the learning and wisdom of the Egyptians! He knows more than the cleverness of the devil, so He can deliver us from all his crafty wiles.

23-25. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: for he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God, by his hand, would deliver them: but they understood not. Alas, it is just the same with Israel now! The Lord Jesus came to His own and, according to one of His parables, the Father said of Him, “They will reverence My Son.” But they did nothing of the kind! They said, “This is the Heir. Come, let us kill Him, and the inheritance shall be ours.” And, alas, how many, nowadays, are imitating their evil example! They say, “We will not have this Man to reign over us!” They refuse to yield themselves to the Sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ.

26-30. And the next day he showed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, you are brethren; why do you wrong one to another? But he that did his neighbor wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Will you kill me, as you did the Egyptian yesterday! Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian where he begat two sons. And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, an Angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush. So that he was 80 years of age when he began his great lifework! Perhaps, as a rule, the larger part of our time is occupied in getting ready to work. Yet, if we are able to perform a work as good as that which Moses did, it will well repay us for a long season of preparation.

31-34. When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, saying, I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and dared not look. Then said the Lord to him, Take off your shoes from your feet: for the place where you stand is holy ground. I have seen, I have seen the affliction of My people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. All this must have been very pleasant to the ears of Moses. It was solemn, yet it was exceedingly sweet. But notice what comes next.

34. And now, come, I will send you into Egypt. Oh, dear! What a falling-off there seems to be in these words! God first says, “I have heard their groaning and am come down to deliver them.” And then He adds, “I will send you into Egypt.” Yes, truly, from the grandeur of the Divine working down to the insignificance of our instrumentality is a tremendous stoop! Yet the God who says, “I will save sinners by My Grace; none but Myself can save them,” also says to me, “Go and preach the Gospel to them.” The same Lord who says, “I will change the heart of stone into a heart of flesh and work a miracle of mercy in renewing those who are dead in trespasses and sins,” also says to you, “Speak to the persons sitting with you in the pew and seek to point them to the Savior.” It is an amazing stoop, but it is the condescension of Almighty Grace and it brings great honor to the poor, trembling, unworthy person to whom the message is addressed! Moses thought himself very unfit for the task of delivering Israel and he would, if he had dared to do so, have refrained from that task. But God said to him, “Now come, I will send you into Egypt.” Ah, Brothers, how different a man did Moses then become! When he went out by himself, without any commission, he was impatient to get to his work and he slew an Egyptian—and so had to flee the country. But when he was sent in God’s name, when the Lord said to him, “Now come, I will send you,” then the work was accomplished! O my Brothers and Sisters, in your service for the Savior, always seek for power from on high! Ask to be sent of God and pray your Master to go with you—then will you succeed in the task which He entrusts to you.

35. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made you a ruler and a judge? The same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel which appeared to him in the bush. Is not that a shadow of that grander Truth of God, “The Stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the Head of the corner”?

36, 37. He brought them out after that he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years. This is that Moses which said unto the children of Israel, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me;

Him shall you hear. Now you see that Moses was thus a type of Christ. God grant that we may not reject Christ, as the Israelites rejected Moses, but may we be willing that He should be to us our Judge and our Deliverer!

38, 39. This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the living oracles to give unto us: to whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt. Though Moses had brought them out of Egypt, they were not obedient to him and they wanted to go back to the land of bondage. And, ah, Brothers and Sisters, this is the great crime of the present day—the crime of mankind in general—that, after all Jesus has done, there is still within so many, the evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God!

40, 41. Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we not what is become of him. And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. This again is another of the ways by which men attempt to make an idol god out of something which they can see and to rejoice in what they, themselves, do, instead of trusting in what the Lord Jesus has done.

42, 43. Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the Prophets, O you house of Israel, have you offered to Me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yes, you took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your God, Remphan, figures which you made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon. There was still idolatry in their hearts and Moses was rejected by them. God grant that we may not be idolaters and so reject the Prophet like unto Moses, whom the Lord has sent unto us! Amen!

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THE TWO PIVOTS  
NO. 2633

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JULY 30 1899.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 18, 1882.

**“I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”  
Exodus 3:6.**

**“Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He has prepared a city for them.”  
Hebrews 11:16.**

YOU remember, dear Friends, that Paul is writing to the Hebrews concerning Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and he says, “God is not ashamed to be called their God.” Then, when you turn back to our text in Exodus, you find that God was called their God at the burning bush and, oftentimes, on other occasions, He is called the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. We must not forget that at the time when God appeared to Moses, in the desert, in the bush that burned, but was not consumed, the condition of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was very terrible. They were slaves to the Egyptians. They were an oppressed and downtrodden race. Their male children were taken from them and cast into the river. They were entirely in Pharaoh’s hands. They were a degraded people, as all slaves gradually become, and they were unable, of themselves, to rise out of that degradation. Yet, at that very time, God was not ashamed to be called their God! There, with Israel in bondage, Jehovah, whose name is the great I AM—a name which makes all Heaven bright with ineffable Glory—did not disdain to say to Moses, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” I do not wonder that the Apostle should note it as a remarkable thing, that He was not ashamed to be called their God!

I have been looking into this text very earnestly and trying to find out exactly what was the meaning of the Holy Spirit in it, and I think I have discovered a clue in two words which it contains. First, “Therefore.” “Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God”—and next, “for.” “For He has prepared for them a city.” As a door hangs upon two hinges, so my golden text turns upon these two pivots—“therefore” and, “for.”

I. I shall ask you to keep your Bibles open at the 11th of Hebrews, that you may see, first, “THEREFORE.” Therefore God is not ashamed to be called the God of His people. Look at the 13th verse—“These 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” and so on. “Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.”

To begin with, then, the Lord was not ashamed to be called His people’s God because they had faith in Him. You read here of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob—and then Paul says, “These all died in faith.” If a man believes in God, trusts Him—believes that His promise is true and that He will keep it—believes that God’s command is right and, therefore, ought to be obeyed—God is never ashamed to be called that man’s God. He is not the God of unbelievers, for they act contrary to His will. They set up their own will in opposition to His—many of them even doubt His existence, they deny His power, they distrust His love—and, therefore, He is not called their God. But when a man comes to trust God and to accept His Word, from that moment God sees in that man the works of His Grace which are very precious in His eyes, and He is not ashamed to be called that man’s God.

Notice that it is said, “These all died in faith,” so that they did not believe in God for a little while and then become unbelievers, but, throughout the whole of their lives, from the moment when they were called by God’s Grace, they continued to believe Him—they trusted Him till they came to their graves—so that this epitaph is written over the mausoleum where they all lie asleep, “These all died in faith.” Ah, my beloved Brothers and Sisters, it is very easy to say, “I believe,” and to get very enthusiastic over the notion that we have believed. But so to believe as to persevere to the end—this is the faith which will save the soul! “He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” The faith that many waters cannot drown and the fiercest fires cannot burn—the faith that plods on throughout a long and weary life—the faith that labors on, doing whatever service God appoints it. The faith that waits patiently, expecting the time when every promise of God shall be fulfilled to the letter when its hour has come—that is the faith which, if it is in a man, makes him such a man that God is not ashamed to be called his God! I put it to every one of you, have you a faith that will hold on and hold out—not a faith that starts with a fine spurt, but a faith that runs from the starting place to the goal? Some of you, I know, have believed in God these twenty, thirty, forty, or even fifty years. Just before I came to this service, I stood by the bedside of a dear Brother who is the nearest to Job of any man I ever saw, for he is covered from head to foot with blisters—I might almost say, “wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores”—and yet he is as happy as anyone among us, joyful and cheerful as he talks about the time when he shall be “with Christ, which is far better.”

Oh, that is the faith we want! “These all died in faith,” “therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.” He is not the God of apostates, for He has said, “If any man draws back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him.” If he has put his hand to the plow and looks back, he is not worthy of the Kingdom of God. It is the man who steadily and perseveringly, resting in his God and believing Him against all that may be said by God’s foes, holds on until he sees the King in His beauty in the land which is very far off. Of such a man it may be truly said that God is not ashamed to be called his God!

Now let us come back to the Scripture. We cannot do better than keep close to it, for our text is only to be understood by the context. Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture. The locks of Scripture are only to be opened with the keys of Scripture! There is no lock in the whole Bible which God meant us to open without a key to fit it somewhere in the Bible—and we are to search for it until we find it. Now read on in the 13th verse, “These all died in faith, not having received the promises.” That is to say, the things that God promised to them, He did not give them in their mortal life, and they did not always expect that He would do so. They were a waiting people. God loves those who are like Himself. I am not now speaking of His love of benevolence, for with that love He loved us even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, but I am speaking of the love of complacency which makes Him not ashamed to be called our God. In that sense, God loves those who are like Himself—and God is a waiting God—He is never in a hurry. How wondrous is the leisure of the Eternal!

When He is coming to help His people, He is quick, indeed! “He rode upon a cherub, and did fly, yes, He did fly upon the wings of the wind.” But, oftentimes, He waits and tarries till some men count it slackness. But He does not reckon time as we do. With God, a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. So, being a waiting God, He loves a waiting people. He loves a man who can take the promise and say, “I believe it. It may never be fulfilled to me in this life, but I do not need that it should be. I am perfectly willing that it should be fulfilled when God intends that it should be.” Abraham saw Christ’s day afar off, but he never saw Christ—yet he rejoiced in the promise of which he did not receive the fulfillment! Isaac did not see Christ except in a vision of the things that were long afterwards to come to pass. Jacob did not hear that joyful sound, which—

*“Kings and Prophets waited for,*

*And sought, but never found.”*  
But they were perfectly willing to wait and God was not ashamed to be called the God of such a waiting people!

You remember Mr. Bunyan’s description of the two children, Passion and Patience? Passion would have his best things now, and he had them. But he soon spoiled them, misused them and abused them. But Patience would have his best things last and, as Bunyan very prettily says, “There is nothing to come after the last.” Therefore, when Patience got his best things, they lasted on forever and forever. God, loves not the passion, but He loves the patience. “The husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth and has long patience for it.” And I would gladly imitate him. “My Soul, wait only upon God, for my expectation is from Him.” The worldly man lives in the present, but that is a poor way of living, worthy only of the beasts that perish.

Look on the sheep and bullocks in the pasture—what kind of life is theirs? They also live in the present. If they have grass enough for today, they are perfectly satisfied. The butcher’s knife has no terrors for them and neither do they, in the cold of winter, look forward to the bright days of summer. They cannot look before them and God loves not men who are like the beasts of the field! He is ashamed to be called their God. But He loves the man who gets to live in eternity, for God Himself lives there! To God there is no past, present, or future—He sees all at a single glance. And when a man comes to feel that he is not living simply in today which will so soon end, but that he is living in the eternity which will never end. When he is rejoicing in the Covenant, “ordered in all things, and sure,” made from before the foundation of the world—when a man feels that he is living in the future as well as the present, that his vast estates are on the other side of Jordan, that his chief joy is up there where Christ sits at the right hand of God, and that his own heart has gone up there where his treasure is, for “where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”—when the affection is set, not upon things below, but upon things above—that is the man whom God loves because he has learned how to live in God’s atmosphere, in God’s own eternity! He has risen above the beggarly elements of time and space. He is not circumscribed by Almanacs, days, months and years—his thoughts range right away from that glorious declaration, “I have loved you with an everlasting love,” to those endless, dateless periods when the everlasting love of God will still be the constant delight of His people!

I see, then, why it is written that “God, is not ashamed to be called their God,” because they are content to live without having received the promises, but to keep on patiently waiting with a holy, joyful confidence, till the hour of God’s gracious purpose shall arrive and the promise shall be fulfilled.

Now read on in the 13th verse, and see whether this description fits yourself, dear Friend. “But having seen them afar off.” So they were a farseeing people. God, you know, sees everything. And He loves people who can see afar off. The gods of the heathen have eyes, but they see not. And the Psalmist says, “They that make them are like unto them.” So they that worship a blind god are a blind people! But they that worship a seeing God are, themselves, made to see, for they are numbered with the pure in heart who shall see God! It is a grand thing when a man can see infinitely further than these poor eyes can carry, far beyond the range of the strongest telescope, when he can see beyond death—and see beyond the Judgment Seat and see right into Heaven and there behold the Lamb leading His glorified flock to the living fountains of waters, and the saints, with tearless eyes, forever bowing before the Throne of God and the Lamb! God is not ashamed to be called the God of the people who can do this! God is ashamed to be called the God of you blind people, whose eyes have never been opened. But when He opens your eyes, then He becomes your God and He is not ashamed to be so called, for He it is that gives us this blessed power to see! Until spiritual sight is thus bestowed upon us, we are blind. But when God has given us sight, then He is not ashamed to acknowledge us as His children, nor is He ashamed to acknowledge that He, Himself, is our God!

I appeal to you whom I am now addressing and ask whether you can see God’s promises afar off? There are some who say, “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.” Yes, it may be so with the poor birds that sing here, but, for my part, I am willing to wait till I can have the one in the bush if it is in the bush that burned with fire because God was there! You may have the bird in the hand, if you will. You will soon pluck off its feathers, it will speedily die in your hand and there will come an end to it. But there are other birds which, as yet, we cannot reach, but which are really ours, and if we cannot at present grasp them, we are willing to wait God’s time—because we can see that they will be in our hands in the future, we can already see them “afar off.” Unhappy is the man who sees nothing but what he calls, “the main chance,” or who sees nothing but that which is within a few feet of him. Wretched, indeed, is he who lives only to get money, or to gain honor—whose whole life is spent in the pursuit of personal comfort, but who never had his eyes opened enough to see the eternal things, and who never was able to set a value upon anything but what could be paid for with pounds, shillings and pence. Beloved, have you seen the promises afar off? Has the Lord opened your eyes to see eternal things? Then it is written concerning you, also, “Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.”

Now pass on to the next sentence, for every word is fruitful with meaning—“and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.” They were people who rejoiced in things unseen. You will find that, in the Revised Version, the words, “persuaded of them,” are left out, and very properly so, for there is no doubt whatever that they were not in the original, but were added by somebody who wished to explain the meaning to us. The Greek is properly rendered, “but having seen them afar off, greeted them,” but I like, even better, the translation, “embraced them.” It means that as for the things which are promised to us, if we are Believers, like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, we have, from afar, seen those promised things and we have welcomed them. Or, to use our Authorized Version, we have “embraced them.” We have pressed them to our bosom, we have hugged them to our heart, we have loved them in our very soul, we have rejoiced in them! They have filled our spiritual nature full of music and all the bells of our being are ringing merry peals because of the blessed promises of our God. Now, when a man is of that mind, God is not ashamed to be called his God!

Let me ask you then, dear Friend—What is it that you are embracing? Is it some earthly thing? Does your heart love and cling to that which you can see, and touch and handle? Is that your chief delight? Then God is ashamed to be called your God because you are an idolater! You are worshipping some created thing. But if you can say of Christ, “He is all my salvation and all my desire,” then God is not ashamed to be called your God. Remember what David said—“Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart,” for God is able to give to a man his desires when all his heart is delighting in his God—and God is not ashamed to be called his God. The Lord’s love is not set upon merely material objects. The infinite heart of God loves truth, righteousness, purity and everything that is holy and glorious. And if your heart does the same, God is not ashamed to be called your God. But if you do not love these things, you have neither part nor lot in God—you are a stranger to Him and, though I speak this solemn Truth of God in gentle language, I pray that it may drop like lye upon your spirit and burn its way into your very soul! What an awful thing it must be to be without God— to have no part nor lot in Him—never to be able to say, “My God, my Father,” but only to speak of Him as a God—an unknown God, another man’s God, but no God to you! May it not be so with you, my Friends! If you can say that you have seen the promises from afar and have, by faith, embraced them, then God is not ashamed to be called your God.

Pass on to the next sentence—“and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” They acknowledged that they were not at home here. Abraham never built a house! Isaac never lived anywhere but in a tent and, though Jacob tried to dwell in a settled habitation, he got into trouble through it and he was bound, still, to be a tent-dweller. The reason why they lived in tents was because they wanted to show to all around them that they did not belong to that country. There were great cities with walls which, as men said, reached to Heaven, but they did not go to dwell in those cities. You remember that Lot did, yet he was glad enough to get out again—“saved, yet so as by fire.” But Abraham, Isaac and Jacob kept away from other men, for they were commanded to dwell alone and not to be numbered among the nations. Nor were they—they kept themselves apart from other people as strangers and sojourners here below, so, for that very reason, God is not ashamed to be called their God!

Remember how David said to the Lord, “I am a stranger with You, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.” That is a very amazing expression— “a stranger with You”—blessed be God, not “a stranger to You,” but, “a stranger with You.” That is to say, God is a stranger here—it is His own world and He made it, but when Christ, who is the Son of God, and the Creator of the world, came into it, “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” And they soon made Him feel that the only treatment which He would receive at their hands was this—“This is the Heir. Come, let us kill Him, that the inheritance may be ours.” There was no man who ever lived who was a truer Man than was Christ the Lord. But there was never a Man who was more unlike the rest of men. He was a homely Man, a home-loving Man to the last degree, yet He was never at home. This world was not His rest. He had nowhere to lay His head and what was true, naturally, was also true spiritually. This world offered Christ no rest whatever.

Now, dear Friends, how is it with us? Do we belong to this world, or to the unseen? How do you feel about this matter? Do you feel at home here? I think that we are often compelled to cry with the Psalmist, “Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!” We wish to do good to others as far as we can. We are men of peace, but when we speak, they are for war and we realize the truth of our Lord’s words, “A man’s foes shall be they of his own household.” The more a man comes right straight out for God, the more opposition he is sure to meet with! Be half-asleep and nobody will say much against you. But wake up and be active for God and for His Christ and you will soon discover that the seed of the serpent still has the serpent’s venom in it—and it hates the Seed of the woman as much as it ever did! It must be so and, therefore, always feel that you are only a stranger here and that your business is to go through this world as a traveler passes through a foreign country. He does not speak the language of the people. He does not follow their customs. He is not one of the citizens of the land. He is just a temporary dweller here below and he is on his journey home. If that is the kind of man you are, God is not ashamed to be called your God.

But He is not the God of the earthworms that only want to burrow down into the soil. He is not the God of those who build their nests and say, “Here would we live forever.” He is not the God of the man who can say, “Give me a knife and fork, and plenty to eat and drink. Give me suitable clothes to wear in the day and a nice soft bed to sleep on at night. Give me wealth, give me fame—that is all I need—and I will let Heaven go to anyone who wants it!” Jehovah is not the God of Esau, who sells his birthright for a mess of pottage, but He is the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob who have a heritage that they cannot see, and who count the land in which they dwell to be a place of strangers and of sojourners—and they think of themselves as only strangers and sojourners in it.

Now read on a little further. “For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.” The word translated, “country,” might, I think be better rendered, “fatherland.” “They who say that they are strangers here declare plainly that they seek a fatherland.” The word is sometimes translated, “their own country.” “A Prophet is not without honor, save in his own country.” It is the same word here in the Greek. It signifies that they sought their own country—their fatherland. Therefore God, who is the Father of all His people, and whose Heaven is their fatherland, is not ashamed to be called their God. Now, dear Friends, are you seeking a fatherland? I put the question to every hearer here—Are you looking for a fatherland? Sir Walter Scott wrote—

*“Breathes there the man, with soul so dead, Who never to himself has said,  
‘This is my own, my native land’?  
Whose heart has ne’er within him burned, As home his footsteps he has turned  
From wandering on a foreign strand?”*

So said the patriot poet and we have said it, too, for we are patriots! But yet I venture to say that this is not my home, this is not my fatherland— *“I’m but a stranger here!  
Heaven is my home.”*  
My fatherland lies out of sight, beyond the everlasting hills, where God dwells and where Christ sits at the right hand of the Father. Now, the men who, by Grace, have been brought to say this, “We are out of our own country, we are seeking a fatherland,” these are the people of whom it is written, “Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.” Paul goes on to say, “And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from where they came, they might have had opportunity to have returned.” Brothers and Sisters, this is another characteristic of Believers—we have left the world as our home, and joy, and comfort, to seek a better country, but we may go back if we like. There is no compulsion to keep a man a Christian but the compulsion of love. He who is enlisted in the army of Christ may desert if he pleases, but the blessed Grace of God will hold us so that we shall do no such thing! We have plenty of opportunities to return. Oh, how many invite us to turn back! I know how they beckon some of you who have lately come out on the Lord’s side. Sometimes it is a female voice that would charm you and there is a great fascination about it, and you have to mind what you are doing lest you become unequally yoked together. Sometimes it is the voice of the world promising you wealth—offering you a better situation, perhaps, if you will go back. But, like Moses, you esteem “the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.” You have plenty of opportunities to return. There are back entrances to Satan’s Kingdom—he does not require you to come in at the front door—he lets you sneak in, again, by the back gate. If you want to go into slavery, again, there are many opportunities of returning! But if you are made by Christ to be, in this respect, like God, immutable, so that you say, “I cannot turn. I cannot change. I must be what Christ has made me. I must stand fast for truth and for holiness, and stand fast as long as I live, so help me, my God”—if you are able to talk like that, then God is not ashamed to be called your God! Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, you can get back to the old country whenever you like. But they never will go back—the deep dividing river rolls between them and that land, even as, today, there rolls between some of us and the world the stream in which we have been buried with Christ and, by God’s Grace, we shall never cross it again! And, because of that holy determination, God is not ashamed to be called our God. I finish up my remarks upon the word, “therefore,” which is very full of matter, by noticing how the Apostle says, “But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly.” That is to say, instead of going back, we are pressing forward towards heavenly things. “God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” “The Father seeks such to worship Him.” That is, those who are spiritual, who are seeking after heavenly things with all their heart. These are they whom God loves, for God is spiritual. God is heavenly and when He has made us spiritual and made us pant after heavenly things, then He is not ashamed to be called our God.  
I have put these points before you as briefly as I could, wishing every moment to be examining myself, and asking you to examine yourselves. Have you a life within you which makes you pant and pine after heavenly things? Whatever you have in this world, do you hold it with a loose hand? Do you feel that it is not your real riches—it is not your true treasure? You know that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all rich men. God blessed them and gave them a great increase to all that they had, but, still, they did not live simply to gather riches! They did not make that their chief delight. If you had asked them, they would have told you that they were inheritors of a mysterious Covenant by which God had bound Himself to be their God, and the God of their seed. And in that Covenant was included the promise that Christ Himself should come out of their loins—and for Him they waited—He was the hope of their spirit. Now, dear Friends, if that is the case with you, also, you can understand the meaning of my text, “Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.”  
II. I must give but a few minutes to the second part of the text, yet it needs a good deal of thought, for it says, “for He has prepared a city for them.” The second pivot word is, “for.”  
Now go back again to the text in Exodus, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Yet Paul says, “These all died,” and we know that our Lord said to the Sadducees, “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” Is He not ashamed to be called the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, seeing that they all died? No, because they are not dead, though they died, “for He has prepared for them a city.” These men, though they lived and died, and passed out of the world without having received the heritage, are not dead! There is the glory of the matter. When they lay a-dying, the devil might have come and said to them, “Now, what have you got by your Covenant with God? You left father, mother and everything that you had, and went and lived the separated life—and now you are dying out here—what have you got? Nothing but some little holes in the Cave of Machpelah into which they will push your bodies! That is all that you have!”  
Oh, but the devil does not know! Or if he does, he is a liar, for they gained everything by that life of faith, for they still live and God has prepared a city for them. And now they have entered that city! Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are at the very head of the celestial company, for our Lord said, “Many shall come from the east, and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven.” And, byand-by, Machpelah shall yield up her dead and Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Jacob shall live, again, in the fullest sense, for their bodies as well as their souls shall live again! And Joseph’s bones, which he would not allow to lie in Egypt—for he would not let the Egyptians have a scrap of him—shall live, and thus, in their flesh, shall they see God and shall rejoice before Him. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called the God of these people who all died in faith because they are still living—and they shall continue to live forever and ever!  
Somebody may, perhaps, say that these people did not receive the promises. Well, they did not literally receive the fulfillment of them. They did not see Christ. They did not witness the descent of the Holy Spirit. They did not hear the Gospel preached. They did not see those wonders that they looked for—so is not God ashamed to be called the God of people who, after all, did not receive the promises? No, because “He has prepared for them a city.” They have received the promises now and they shall receive them yet more and more! God will yet cause the Believer’s life to be all blessing. Do not be afraid of the consequences of trusting in Christ—you may have the rough side of the road, here, but what we sang, just now, is quite true—  
*“Afflictions may press me, they cannot destroy, One glimpse of His love turns them all into joy! And the bitterest tears, if He smiles but on them, Like dew in the sunshine, grow diamond and gem! Let doubt, then, and danger my progress oppose— They only make Heaven more sweet at the close. Come joy or come sorrow, whate’er may befall, An hour with my God will make up for them all!”*If God gave to His children gall and wormwood to drink here—yes, if they never had anything but aches and pains from the moment of their conversion till they died—yet they would have the best of the bargain, after all, for there is an eternity of bliss in the Heaven which is prepared for them!  
But, further, these people were a sort of gypsies, always moving about and living in tents, different from everybody else. Yes, they were strangers among the people where they dwelt. And men often say of us, now, that we cannot be content to go on as other people do. Those Patriarchs were strangers, odd folk, peculiar people. Is not God ashamed to be called their God? No, because they have now gone where they are all right, for their manners and customs are exactly suitable to the place. A very dear old woman, whom I visited when she was dying, said to me, “One thing comforts me, Sir, I do not think that God will ever send me among the wicked, for I never could get on in their company. The best times I have ever had were when I could sit with a few of the Lord’s people and hear them talk about Him. And though I could not always be sure that I was, myself, a Christian, yet I was very much like them and I was very happy when I was with them. I think I shall go to my own company, Sir.” Yes, dear Soul, and so she did! And if we are strangers here, we are going to that company where we shall not be strangers! They will understand our language when once we get across the river into the King’s own country. “Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God” because they speak the language which He speaks, the language of His own courts—and He is not ashamed to say, “These are My people, and I acknowledge them before you all.”  
Notice, yet again, that these people were seekers and desirers all their lives. “They seek a country.” “They desire a better country.” Is this a right state of heart for a Christian—to always be seeking and always desiring? Well, Brothers and Sisters, that is the state in which I often am and I wish, still, to stay in that condition—always seeking, always desiring. Whenever God gives me any spiritual blessing, I always seek more. And if He gives me more, I seek for still more! And if He gives me my heart’s desire, I pray Him to enlarge my heart that I may desire some greater gift. For, in spiritual things, we may be as covetous as we like! We may say, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended. But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” And God is not ashamed to be called the God of those who are thus seeking and desiring because He has laid up for them all that they seek! And He has prepared for them all that they desire! I would be ashamed to set a poor person desiring if I could not gratify the desire. I would be ashamed to set a man seeking if I knew that he could not get what he sought after. But because God has prepared a city for these seekers and desirers, He is not ashamed to be called their God!  
As I stood, this evening, by the bedside of the dear Brother whom I mentioned to you a little while ago, I could not help saying, “Here is a poor soul covered with boils and blisters, but God is not ashamed to be called his God.” And there may be a child of God who is very poor, indeed, with hardly sufficient garments to cover him, but God is not ashamed to be called his God, either. Perhaps his own brother is ashamed to be called his brother. I have even known cases where men have been so wicked as to be ashamed of their own parents because they were not so well off as themselves. But God is never ashamed of His poor people. Yes, and if God’s people are persecuted, and ill-used. If they are covered with mud from head to foot, or if they are cast into prison, God is not ashamed to be called their God. In those days when God permitted His people to be fastened up to the cross, or when others were taken to the stake and burnt, and everybody hissed at them, and cast out their name as evil, and said that they were the offscouring of all things—God was not ashamed to be called their God!  
I am almost ashamed to say what I am going to say. I really feel my very heart blush that I should have to say it. I have known some professors who have been ashamed to call God their God! Is it not strange that the glorious God of Heaven and earth should call a worm His own, and take mean wretches such as we are, and say, “I am not ashamed to be called their God,” and yet that some of these creatures should be so miserably cowardly that they are ashamed to be called the people of God? Oh, write His name on your foreheads! Never be ashamed of it! Ashamed of God? Ashamed of Jesus? Ashamed of the Truth? Ashamed of righteousness? I do not wonder that there is such a text as this—“The fearful”—that is the cowardly—“and unbelieving shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” If you really do love the Lord, come out and show yourself on His side! And if He is not ashamed of you and if your prayer is, “Lord, remember me when you come into Your Kingdom,” acknowledge Him as your Lord and Savior now! You who are not members of any Christian Church—you who have believed in Christ, or think you have—and yet have never confessed Him. You who are hiding like rats behind the wall—come out and confess Christ! What are you doing? How can you be soldiers of the Cross and followers of the Lamb if you fear to acknowledge His cause and blush to speak His name? Come out of your hiding places! May God the Holy Spirit draw or drive you out at once! If anything could do it, surely, it should be such a blessed fact as this—that you are numbered among those of whom it is said that “God is not ashamed to be called their God.” God bless you, dear Friends, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

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THE GREAT EMANCIPATOR  
NO. 1440

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

***“And you shall say unto Pharaoh, thus says the Lord, Israel is My son, even My firstborn: and I say unto you, Let My son go, that he may serve Me.” Exodus 4:22, 23.***

***“Then the Lord said unto Moses, Now shall you see what I will do to Pharaoh.” Exodus 6:1.***

GOD had a people in Egypt. They were His own, the people of His choice. Although they had been grievously oppressed and had sunk into ignominious slavery, His interest in their welfare had in no degree lessened. The Lord’s purpose in sending Moses down into Egypt was that He might fetch out that people from among the nations to make them a separate people to Himself that He might give them an inheritance, even the land which flowed with milk and honey and that they might dwell there as witnesses of His Covenant and keep His Testimonies. Now precisely what God was doing towards His people, Israel, in the land of Ham, He is doing towards His own chosen ones throughout the whole world.

From one point of view the object of the Gospel is to gather out from among the nations a people whom He did foreknow, whom He did predestinate, whom He has redeemed unto Himself to be His peculiar heritage. These are to be fetched out from among others. They are to be made a separate people to be brought into a distinct position and to have a distinct experience. “The people shall dwell alone; they shall not be reckoned among the nations” and they are ultimately to be brought to a prepared place for which they are to be especially prepared that they may abide there and that the Lord may verify the thing that He has predicted of them, “They shall be Mine in that day when I make up My jewels.”

The work of rescuing perishing sinners out of the present evil world is as worthy of God as the work of delivering Israel out of Egypt. The same right hand of Jehovah, glorious in power, which released the sons of Jacob from the thralldom of Pharaoh, is now stretched out to ransom us from the dominion of Satan! The song of praise to Jesus Christ our Redeemer shall be more exultant than that which Miriam and the daughters of Israel lifted up by the Red Sea when they said, “Come let us sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.” Indeed, we shall sing at the last, the song of Moses, the servant of God and the song of the Lamb, clearly indicating that the redemption out of Egypt was always meant to be a leading type of the redemption of God’s people from out of the midst of the world, for Christ has a people whom He has redeemed from among men, and there is a Church of which it is written, “Christ loved His

Church and gave Himself for it.”

Now, in the process of bringing out these people of God from among the mass of mankind, God sometimes uses instrumentality just as He did in the former case. He may employ an instrument that is apparently as little adapted for the work as Moses felt himself to be. Yet the work is done and to God belongs the honor of accomplishing it. As for those of us whom He uses, we are more than content to yield the honor to Him. We rejoice in His excellency while we feel that we cannot take to ourselves any credit whatever—for we are less than nothing in His sight—and even in our own sight we are weak and worthless, so that unto God, alone, shall the glory redound when redemption’s work is finished and complete!

I invite you to think, first of all, upon the voice of God. According to our text, it is, “Thus says the Lord, Israel is My son, even My firstborn: and I say unto you, Let My son go, that he may serve Me.” When we have dilated a little upon that, we shall need to have a few words upon the voice of man. This was to be the voice of man, “You shall say unto Pharaoh, Thus says the Lord.” What God had spoken was to be repeated by His servant, Moses. Then we shall close by noticing, in the third place, the power which was to go with this voice of man. “I will be with your mouth and you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh.”

I. Let us endeavor, then, at the outset, to fix our thoughts upon THE VOICE OF GOD which was a real power to bring up His people out of Egypt. That voice was threefold—asserting His proprietorship in them, demanding their freedom and ordaining their destiny. With imperial authority He claims the people as His own. “Thus says the Lord, Israel is My son, even My firstborn.” The Lord knows them that are His and the Lord declared them to be His own with a jealousy of His inalienable right to their allegiance and an assertion of His unfailing interest in their welfare. The children of Israel were, at that time, in a very sordid condition. They were up to their necks in clay, making bricks. They were a band of slaves, degraded, brought down to the lowest condition. They were so spiritless that they submitted to any exaction of the tyrant and when the day of deliverance dawned on them, they could not think emancipation possible, or welcome the joyful change in their prospects.

They had, as a nation, lost the very thought of liberty! It was trodden out. The people seemed as if they must lose their nationality or only retain it as a nation of slaves. Yet all begrimed and beslaved as they came to be, they were still beloved. The Lord loved them! He said, “Israel is My son, even My firstborn.” Surely Pharaoh might have said in his heart, “This is a fine son! What must the God be who says of these brick makers, this abject race, ‘This is My son’?” Yes, and these ill-conditioned, unkempt serfs—these debased men and women, He says of them—“Even My firstborn, My son and heir.” A man is naturally proud of his son and heir, yet here is the mighty God speaking after the language of mortal men, acknowledging these cheerless, crestfallen, despised and dispirited people and saying, “Israel is My son, even My firstborn.”

He was acknowledging them, too, in the teeth of proud Pharaoh, whose firstborn was saluted as a prince of the blood royal when he rode through the land, before whom every knee bowed and to whom, as the son of the great king, homage was constantly rendered. “Israel is My son,” says God, “even My firstborn.” He is not ashamed of His people! He acknowledged His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sin, just as He loved His people Israel when they were still in bondage and in degradation. “He loved my soul out of the Pit,” said one of old. He loved us when we were lying in our blood like an infant cast out unswaddled and unwashed. When no eye pitied us in the day of our nativity and we were cast out in the open field, He passed by and it was a time of love. And He said unto us, “Live.” Oh, wondrous Grace of God, that He acknowledges His son when that son is still an Egyptian slave!

Moreover, God acknowledged His people when they did not acknowledge Him, for His name, “Jehovah,” was scarcely known to them. Although Moses presented himself to them with evident credentials, they were ready enough to reject him. We are informed in other parts of the Scripture that they had gone aside to false gods. During their sojourn in Egypt the Israelites fell into the prevailing superstition of the country and they forsook the Lord. Some little light still lingered among them. Some traditions were treasured and transmitted from sire to son in solemn trust. Doubtless there was a remnant of pious souls, faithful to the God of Abraham. The bones of Joseph, preserved in Goshen as a memorial of the oath that he took of their tribes, subsequently were carried through all their devious wanderings in the wilderness and ultimately buried in Sechem, as you read in the last chapter of the book of Joshua and they, I say, vouch for a fidelity we cannot wantonly forget.

But the bulk of the people had fallen into the snares which surrounded them and conformed to the fashions of those among whom their fortunes were cast—whose many gods and lords were superstitiously served in secret. They were not a people who could have scraped together so much as a molehill of merit if they had tried! They were a vain and vicious people, prone to supplant, yet utterly supplanted. They were especially sinful because their marked proclivities which might have developed on the side of virtue were perverted into stains and stigmas on their reputation. Yet Jehovah says, “Israel is My son, even My firstborn.” And does the Lord acknowledge His people when they know Him not? Ah, blessed be His name, He does, or else they would never come to know Him! We love Him, now, because He first loved us and if there had not been that antecedent knowledge of us—and love towards us—we had not now been what we now are.

Oh, the freeness and spontaneity of the Grace of God that He should know His people and call them His own even when, as yet, they know Him not! He acknowledged this people by affirming His Covenant. “Israel is My

son.” He was referring to the Covenant which He had made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob of old. And the Lord knows His people and shows favor to them, not because of anything personal to recommend them, for there is no superiority in their nature, no brightness in their intellect, no beauty in their disposition that can be pleasing in His sight! The only title to Grace in His eyes is that ancient Covenant ordered in all things and sure which He has made, not with Abraham, but with our Lord Jesus, who stands as our Covenant Head!

We do not sufficiently reflect upon the Covenant as the great deep that lies under the fountain of many waters out of which all the wells of salvation continue to be filled with the living waters of Grace—

*“Never had you felt the guilt of sin,  
Or sweets of pardoning love,  
Unless your worthless name had been  
Enrolled to life above.”*

If you had not an interest in that Covenant which He made in the eternal council chamber long before the earth was most assuredly in hapless, hopeless obscurity, you would have lived and died! This was the reason why He called Israel His son! An ancient Covenant had made Israel to be so regarded. How sweet it is that He does not merely speak about the people as being His people, but He says, “Israel is My son.” There is a love between father and son which cannot be found elsewhere. Blood is thicker than water. Relationship has ties that cannot be relaxed.

“Yes, but,” says one, “Does God ever call His people, in any place, His sons before they are regenerate?” Well, there is a text that says, “Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, whereby you cry, Abba, Father.” It is because, in the purpose of God, His people are really His sons before they know anything at all about it, that in due time He sends the Spirit of His Son to give them the nature of children that they may enjoy the adoption of children and say, “Abba, Father.” O Beloved, it is delightful to think that the Lord should look upon us before we are born—before we are born again—with a love that cannot be measured and cannot be broken! The gist of this affirming was thus— “Israel is My son. You, Pharaoh, may call him your slave, but he is My child. He was Mine before he was yours. Israel is My son. You say, ‘No, he is my serf.’ I say, though he has fallen under your yoke, I will maintain My right to him as My firstborn. He is a prince and to that estate he shall be raised.”

The Lord has a claim upon His people—a claim which all the claims of Law and all the clamors of sin and death and Hell shall never be able to deny. And though they basely submit to the claims of the Wicked One and make a covenant with Death and a league with Hell, yet shall Jehovah’s claim upon them stand, for thus says the Lord, “Your league with Death is broken and your covenant with Hell is disannulled.” The Lord Jesus will not suffer those whom He has made to be His own people and ransomed by the bloody purchase upon the Cross to remain the slaves of sin and Satan! They are His. His Father gave them to Him. They are His! He bought them. They are His! Their names are written on His hands and engraved on His side. They are His! He will not suffer so much as one of them to remain in bondage to the adversary.

By thus acknowledging His people, He puts in a positive claim which puts all other claims on one side. With the bare assertion of absolute right He demands their unconditional freedom. “Thus says the Lord, Israel is My son, even My firstborn: and I say unto you, let My son go.” What a grand verse that is! What an imperial edict it contains! As in the narrative of the Cosmos, God said, “Light be, and light was,” so in the history of the exodus, short words are launched with Sovereign force—“Let My son go.” Well might the proud heart of Pharaoh have quailed before the Almighty, whose lips asserted a right which His arm was instantly able to enforce. How aptly those tones apply to our deliverance from under the Law! The Law includes all mankind under its curse—the god of this world claims the whole human race as his subjects. In due time our Redeemer appears.

The Lord Jesus comes, identifies Himself with the enslaved family, bears the curse, fulfils the Law and then on the ground of simple justice demands for them full and perfect liberty, having fulfilled for them the precept and for them endured the penalty! “Let My son go.” On what pretext could the Law, unless it were lawless and unjust, put in a claim which has been discharged, or urge a right which has already been fulfilled? No, from under the Law the people of God go free and their joy is that they are not under the Law but under Grace! And how gloriously do those tones sound when they come with force and power to rescue us from the tyranny of sin and Satan! The Prince of the power of the air holds men in subjection. He prejudices them and so stops their ears against the Gospel. He seals their eyes against the Eternal Light, but thus says the Lord, “Let My son go,” and immediately the prejudice vanishes, the ears are opened, Eternal Truth shines into the heart, scales drop from the eyes and the soul beholds the Heaven-born Light and begins to rejoice!

Satan will tie a soul down, sometimes, in very heavy bondage. I have known him fasten a soul down with steel chains of despair such as could not be snapped. The man has said, “There is no hope,” and he has given up all thought of pardon and eternal life. But, “Thus says the Lord, let My son go.” The iron bands have snapped in a moment and the man has risen to hope and liberty, for the Lord’s voice breaks the chains! Fast bound by fearful habits which seemed impossible to give up—having plunged into one sin after another—the man has been shut in by one iron gate and then by another and another and was enclosed in the innermost ward of the prison. But at midnight he has been struck on the side when he was asleep in his senseless carelessness.

Around him has shone a great light—the Covenant Angel has come to him and led him through gate after gate! The iron gates have opened of their own accord and the man has found himself free and scarcely knew

whether it was true or not! He knew not that it was true, but thought he saw a vision. The thing has been scarcely done before he has found himself to be alive and delivered from the bonds of sin, filled with astonishment at himself and saying, “How can this be?” His tongue has been filled with singing and his mouth with laughter and he has said, “The Lord has done great things for me, of which I am glad.”

Well, Beloved, the tones of that august voice which said, “Let My son go” will continue to echo as long as you and I are here below! We shall continue to be let go! This glorious liberty shall be made more manifest to us daily. Are we not as creatures made subject to vanity and compassed with infirmity? By-and-by we shall be liberated from the bondage of the flesh! Our bodies shall go down into the grave and lie there for a while in the prison of the tomb, but that voice which quickened us into spiritual life will resuscitate our bodies and cause them to enter into the resurrection-life of Christ! Through the dark, dismal vaults will sound the loud, cheerful voice “Let My son go,” and there shall not a bone of a Believer be left.

As it was said of old, “not a hoof shall be left behind,” so nothing that belongs to redeemed man shall be left in the grave. “Of all that You have given Me I have lost nothing,” says Christ, and truly, of person and of things—of all the people and of all that shall belong to the people to make up their manhood—there shall nothing be lost—the Lord shall have His own and His Grace shall triumph! This voice of God is an acknowledgment of His people and a claim for their deliverance—but no less is it an ordaining of their destiny. “Let My son go, that he may serve Me.” Oh yes, Beloved, we are no sooner set free from serving Pharaoh than we begin to serve Jehovah! “Let My son go, that he may serve Me.”

And in what capacity did Israel serve God? It was in the loftiest capacity possible! Israel became Jehovah’s priest. It was in Israel that the sacrifice was offered. In Israel the incense was burnt. From Israel went up the sacred Psalm. Israel stood before the Lord in that high position of sacred privilege. So, likewise, is it that as soon as a man is brought out of the bondage of sin, he presents unto the Lord the sacrifice of Christ by faith and afterwards goes on to present himself a living sacrifice. Thus his thanksgivings and his broken and contrite heart are perpetual oblations and offerings of a sweet smelling savor, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Israel became the servant of God by way of preserving the Testimony. His were the Oracles. Israel kept the knowledge of the one God. Israel kept the Revelation of the Most High. While all the world outside was dark, Israel preserved the Light.

To this end, in like manner, Brothers and Sisters, you and I are called of God. If He has brought us up out of the Egypt of sin, we are to present daily sacrifice. We are to bear daily testimony to the Truth of God. And oh, if we do not—should we begin to stagger through unbelief, or speak with bated breath of the Truth that has been surely made known to us. Should the fear of man, or the fashion of the age so beguile our hearts, becloud our eyes, belie our good profession and utterly befool our common sense that we shall blush to bear our testimony—what shame must cover us! What confusion must take hold upon us! But, blessed be His name, He will keep His own true to His Word. If it were possible, the freethinkers and the false teachers in these days would deceive the very elect—but that is out of the question—it is beyond the range of possibility!

All God’s children shall be taught of the Lord and they shall hold His Truth and bear witness to it, even to the world’s end! Israel was to be God’s servant to serve Him by walking by faith. What a wonderful 40 years’ walk that was in the wilderness! They did not live up to it but still, the spirit of that march of mystery was very wonderful. Without sowing or reaping they were fed! They were supplied with water without fountain, reservoir, or watercourse. They were guided without a compass and without one sign of track way over shifting sand! Yet they were always wellfed, well-housed and, what was still more marvelous, their camps were well shaded by day and well lit by night! They had a choice experience of having nothing and yet possessing everything! With no fertile fields or fruitful trees, yet Israel was made to live upon the fat of the kidneys of wheat and to ride upon the high places of the earth. She had all things and she abounded. The Lord was her Shepherd and she did not want!

We are often called upon to serve God and that very conspicuously, though we may be little conscious of it when we are required to walk by faith. This is the work of God, the grandest work a man can do—to believe on Him whom He has sent. The godlike work, the work of works is this— to walk by faith, living upon the unseen God! Israel was to be God’s servant by continually dwelling in happy fellowship with God and waiting upon Him with holy worship. Nowhere else, in all the world, was a Passover or a feast of tabernacles kept to do Him homage—and nowhere else was the Sabbath hallowed and observed. With them, alone, Jehovah dwelt and among them Jehovah shone forth. And so, Beloved, if you and I have been called out of bondage, it is that we may serve the Lord!

Are we all alive to our obligation? Are we faithful to our higher calling? Are we doing our sworn, sacred duty? If anyone here is rescued this night from the grip of the Destroyer, delivered from the bondage of this evil world, saved from the damning power of sin—know that when you leave one corps, you must enlist into another corps! You come in fresh from the enemy’s camp, not to be treated as a prisoner, but as a recruit! You must enlist to assail the powers and passions you once defended. God would have you become His servant that you may serve Him with joy and gladness all your days. Thus, then, I have opened up the voice of God as far as my time or strength or knowledge has permitted.

II. Now, secondly, here was THE VOICE OF MAN. What a comedown it seems to be. “You shall say unto Pharaoh, Thus says the Lord, Let My son go.” Why did not the Lord say it Himself? Why did He need to pick up a

Moses and send him to say it? Well, dear Friends, had the Lord said it Himself to Pharaoh, it would have been very startling and Pharaoh must have yielded ultimately to the Divine fiat—but don’t you see the deeper marvel in the milder proceeding—when Jehovah, as it were, hides His power and cloaks it in weakness?

Instead of appealing to Pharaoh with that Voice which breaks the cedars of Lebanon and makes the hinds to calve, He speaks to him by one who was slow of speech and of a stammering tongue! Now, if God’s voice can vanquish Pharaoh when it masks itself behind the feebleness of a stuttering, stammering Moses, it will be more glorious than it would have been if it had used no instrumentality whatever! Why does not the Lord speak to every sinner directly and bring him out and save him? Well—He might do so. He might do it if He would—but when He condescends, instead, to take us poor mortals who have tasted of His love and says to us, “Now you go and be My voice: you go and speak for Me,” oh, then His Grace and power are not less conspicuous, but they are far more admirable! In using such ill-adapted tools for the accomplishment of His great designs, He shows His own transcendent power!

That famous well-cover at Antwerp, just opposite the cathedral—one of the finest pieces of worked iron that was ever known—is said to have been made by Quintyn Matsys with nothing but a hammer and a file, his fellow workmen having taken away his tools. If it is so, the more praise is due to his consummate skill. All the works of God redound to His Glory—but when the tools He uses appear to be totally inadequate to the results He achieves—our reverence is excited, while our reason is abashed and we marvel at a power we cannot understand! This comes home to some of us very closely. Let us put it to ourselves. Does the Lord take you, my Brother, or has He taken me—and does He speak words of eternal power through our poor little tongues—through these unruly members that are prone to do so much mischief?

If He really wins souls through them, or pulls down the pride of Pharaoh through them, then shall it ring through eternity that the Lord has done marvelous things! He has taken the worm and made him to be a sharp thrashing instrument, having teeth—and made him to thrash the mountains! He has chosen the weak things of the world to confuse the things which are mighty! Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings has He ordained strength because of His enemies, that He might still the enemy and the avenger. Unto His name be Glory forever and ever!

The feebleness of the human voice has never appeared more palpable than when it has attempted to repeat the sentences which have been uttered by the mouth of the Lord. Moses seems to think that there must be some mistake! Can it be that God means to bring Israel out of Egypt by him? Whenever God designs to make His servants eminently useful, He lets them know their frailty. The more treasure there is in the vessel, the less will its comeliness be vaunted. It is mere common ware, an earthen vessel that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us! But when Moses found that he really was employed of God, how fearless he was of ridicule! He went in unto Pharaoh and delivered his Master’s message.

The interview with Moses and Aaron must have seemed supremely ridiculous to Pharaoh. It put him into a great rage. These two Israelites, wretched slaves, coming to tell the great king of Egypt that he must let Israel go! How absurd! Even to the Israelites it must have appeared preposterous, for two persons such as these to go in before the king. Why, with a word he could have said, “Take off the dogs’ heads,” and so have ended all the business directly! Yet they went and bearded him in his royal palace and delivered what he might think a vain menace, but what they knew to be a veritable message from God! Insignificant as we, of ourselves, may be, the very fact that God instructs us to speak might suffice to quell our fears. We must go and speak the Lord’s message and must not be afraid of being thought infatuated.

When I have sometimes bid a sinner live and believe in Christ, I have heard a mutter, “What is the good of telling a dead man to live?” Some wise Brother has said, “You might as well shake a pocket handkerchief over a grave.” Yes, Brother, it is true—quite true. So might Moses as well have shaken a pocket handkerchief outside Pharaoh’s palace but, when God bid him to go and tell Pharaoh to let His people go, he went and did it. And when the Lord bids any of us go to a sinner and say, “Believe,” we cannot make the sinner believe—neither can he make himself believe—but the preacher sent of God is an echo of God’s voice! God speaks through him! With authority he is commissioned to say to the sinner, “Turn you, turn you; why will you die? Repent and be baptized, every one of you.”

We are bid to speak peremptorily, as ambassadors of the King—not because of any prerogative we assume—but as we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience, there is power in our message. The voice that speaks by stammering Moses is Divine, notwithstanding the ridicule that may be heaped upon it. Moses, having such a command to go and speak, must be undeterred by refusal. “I know not the Lord,” said Pharaoh, “neither will I let His people go.” Now, dear Brother, you cannot win souls unless you are prepared to meet with strong rebuffs. Yes, but some are heartbroken if any resistance is offered them! You may expect it. Old human nature does not know the Lord.

You remember how Melancthon thought he was going to convert any number of people when he began to preach, but when he found out his mistake, he said, “Old Adam is too strong for young Melancthon.” So he is. You will come across a bit of grit every now and then which will break your knife. Be not dismayed, the Lord will sharpen you and make you stronger and stronger yet, for even that Pharaoh who said, “I will not let the people go,” will be down on his knees presently begging the people to depart! We must be prepared for opposition and neither flinch nor quail,

but brace ourselves up for the struggle.

So, too, the man whom God sends ought to be assured of success. I am persuaded that Moses, after he got over his first little difficulties with the people and recovered from his own diffidence, parleyed not with doubt, but was strong in faith. There he stood with the wondrous rod, turning waters into blood and slaying all their fish; covering the heavens with blackness; turning the dust into living creatures; bringing hail and grievous murrain and doing it all as calmly and quietly as he should do who feels that he is the voice of God! How steadily he kept at his work! With what diligence he persevered in it, till at last the 10th plague found Moses unmoved, ready to conduct the people away to the Red Sea and to bring them out into the wilderness!

O servants of God, be calm and confident! Go on preaching the Gospel! Go on teaching in the Sunday school! Go on giving away tracts! Go on with steady perseverance! Be sure of this—you shall not labor in vain or spend your strength for nothing! Do you still stutter? Are you still slow of speech? Nevertheless, go on! Have you been rebuked and rebuffed? Have you had little else but defeat? This is the way to success! You shall pave the road with the rough flints of your failure! Toil on and believe on! Be steadfast in your confidence, for with an high hand and an outstretched arm the Lord will fetch out His elect and He will fetch some of them out by you! Only trust in the Lord and hold on the even tenor of your way!

III. Our last word is upon THE POWER OF GOD. Without the power of God the voice of man would have been an utter failure. What effect was produced by the voice of Moses? Went there not forth with it a power which plagued Pharaoh? It filled the sinful land of Egypt with plagues! So men that preach God’s Gospel with God’s power fill the world with plagues. “I know that,” a man says. “I wish I had never listened to that fellow. I could not sleep last night.” No, the frogs were his bedchamber! The true preacher finds his hearer sometimes saying, “I will never go again. Wherever I am, I seem to be haunted and tormented with the Truth of God that man has spoken so badly and so boldly. The commands he enforces run counter to the prejudices I cherish! They alarm my conscience and worry me incessantly.”

Yes, he has made a simple sermon bring forth all manner of flies— thoughts that will sting a man wherever he goes and he cannot escape from them! He still kicks and strives against the Gospel—rebels against it, won’t have it—gets angry; goes to the theater one night; joins in a little social revelry another night, but to no purpose. He does not enjoy anything! He scarcely knows why. Soon a thick darkness comes over the whole scene of life, as the darkness came over all the land of Egypt. All that was beautiful and brilliant is now obscured. All that was pleasant and joyous is now eclipsed. The man finds that he does not even enjoy the ordinary comforts of life! He does not know why. He does not intend to yield to the Gospel, yet his very bread seems sour and the water he draws from the well is brackish and bitter.

His troubles multiply and follow one another in quick succession. Now a hail storm that leaves desolation behind! Then a grievous disease among the cattle. The hand of the Lord is not confined to the farm. It will visit your home. His terrible judgment reaches your family, your fondest love, your firstborn son. As of old there was a cry going up in the land of Egypt so that it was intolerable to stay there, so God lays bare His arm in the exceedingly great plagues which His terrible Law brings upon a man! When He means to fetch him out and bring him to Himself, God’s servants become the harbingers of plagues! Jesus Himself said, “I came not to send peace on the earth, but a sword.”

That sword is unsheathed and families are divided against each other with the grand intent that Israel should be brought out and peace established by the Redemption which Jehovah has provided. What will occur, by-and-by? Why, the oppressor will be glad to part with his bondmen. It sometimes happens that the ungodly become very glad to get rid of God’s chosen people whom they are prone to persecute. “Their melancholy ill agrees with our liveliness,” so they say. They did all they could to invite them to their parties and get them into their frivolities again—they laid traps for them to keep them away from hearing the Gospel—but now the Lord has begun to deal with them!

Their old companions say, “Now we must leave him.” “I have tried all I could to get our old comrade back to our old parties,” says one, “but, really, he said such things that he quite poisoned all our pleasures. We could not enjoy ourselves! I say, let us get rid of him. Do not let him be in our company any more.” Yes, it is a grand thing when the preaching of the Gospel makes the ungodly want to keep the converts away from their cliques—when they say, “Oh, go off to the Tabernacle! We do not want you here. You have pestered us enough with your religion, your prayers, your crying, your tears, your talk about being lost and your needing to find a Savior! You are bad company and you had better be gone.”

A lady who joined this Church some years ago, moving in the higher circles of society, said to me, “I was quite willing to continue my acquaintance with my friends, but I found they gave me the cold shoulder and did not want me.” Just so. It is a great mercy when the Egyptians say, “Get you gone,” and when they are ready to give you jewels of silver and jewels of gold to get rid of you! The Lord wants His people to come right out and to be separate! He knows how to, by the simple utterance of the Gospel, put such a division between His people and those who are not His people, that even the ungodly shall begin to say, “Get you gone! We want to have nothing further to do with you!” Glory be to God when such a thing as that happens!

And the Lord knows how to make all opposition cease, for it is written that when Israel came out of Egypt, not so much as a dog moved his tongue against the children of Israel. Before, they were such slaves that

if a cur barked at them they dared not turn against it, for fear it should be the dog of an Egyptian who would be surely down upon them for meddling with his dog. How dare a slave do that? Everybody was against them. But when the Lord brought them out, there was not a dog that dared bark that night! The Egyptians were all anxious that they should be gone and willing that they should go. And Pharaoh, too, must have astonished his subjects with his sudden zeal to see this strange people gone. Do you know what that means?

Oh, what fights and battles; what wars and strife there were in my soul when I was trying to find Christ! My old sins came up against me! My memory unearthed buried trespasses—faults and failings gathered in force like a flood and threatened to overwhelm me. Everything in my constant studies and in my daily experiences seemed to drive me back from Christ. But on that memorable Sabbath morning when I heard the word, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth,” I did look and lo, against me not a dog did move his tongue! My sins did not complain! They were drowned in the Red Sea of Jesus’ blood! My old corruptions—I did not know at the time that I had any—they were so very quiet! Temptations ceased to trouble me!

For that little while, at any rate, the warrior seemed to sheathe his sword and the brick maker laid down his clay to go out of Egypt with jewels of silver and jewels of gold! I could sing unto the Lord, for He had triumphed gloriously! I have met some of these old Egyptians since then—a good number of them—and I have had some hard dealings with them. But, at that time, all was still and quiet, happy and blessed—

*“Happy day, happy day,  
When Jesus washed my sins away!”*  
With the Paschal Lamb in our mouths nobody dares to challenge us. The

blood on the door is an unanswerable answer to every accuser, caviler, or adversary! Glory be to God, then, who thus can fetch out His people and deliver them from their sins, their lusts, their habits, their passions— deliver them from death—deliver them from going down into the Pit and so deliver them that none shall lay anything to their charge, since God has justified them and Christ has absolved them!

May the Lord grant us Grace to be used as His instruments as Moses was. And may we, each one of us, cry unto the Lord if we are in bondage, just as Israel did in Egypt! May the Lord in mercy send forth concerning every poor sinner here just such a message as He sent concerning His people in the house of bondage—“Thus says the Lord, Let My son go, that he may serve Me.” If He will thus work among us as in the olden times, to Him shall be the glory now at this present, yes, and forevermore. Amen!

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TO THE SADDEST OF THE SAD  
NO. 2026

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, JUNE 3, 1888, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And Moses spoke so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit and for cruel bondage.” Exodus 6:9.**

LITTLE words often contain great meanings. It is often the case with that monosyllable “so.” In the present instance we must lay stress upon it and read the text thus—“Moses spoke so unto the children of Israel.” That is, he said what God told him to say. He did not invent his message. He did not think out the Gospel that he had to carry to the people. He was simply a repeater of the Divine message. As he received it, so he spoke it. “Moses spoke so unto the children of Israel.” If he had not done so, the responsibility must have rested upon himself, whether the nation was moved by his words or not. But when he was simply God’s ambassador, saying only what God would have him say, his responsibility was limited.

If he delivered the Lord’s own Word and it failed to win the heart of Israel, he could not be blamed. Although it was a great sadness of heart to him that the people did not and even could not receive the Divine message, yet as far as he was concerned, his conscience was clear. It is ever so with the preacher of the Gospel—if he declares the Word of the Lord as he has received it, whether men will hear or whether they will not, he is clear before God, whatever his hearers may do or may not do.

I often wonder what those preachers do who feel called to make up their message as they go on. For if they fail, their failure must be attributed in great measure to their want of ability to make up a moving tale. They have to spread their sails to the breeze of the age and to pick up a Gospel that comes floating down to them on the stream of time, altering every week in the year. And they must have an endless task to catch this new idea, or, as they put it, to keep abreast of the age. Unless, indeed, like chameleons, they have a natural aptitude to change color, they must have a worrying time of it and a horrible amount of shifting to get through.

When they have done their best to preach this gospel of their own, then they are accountable for having made that gospel. For every bit of its teaching they are accountable because they were the manufacturers of it and it came forth from their foundry, bearing their stamp. If they take this yoke upon them and so refuse to learn of Christ, they will find no rest for their souls. To me the preaching of the Lord’s own Gospel is a joy and a privilege. Concern for your souls loads me with the burden of the Lord—it is His burden and not one which I have selected for myself. I often feel on a Sabbath night when I go home weary—“I know that I have preached

what I believe to be God’s Gospel.”

I have not said anything—I have not intended to say anything that was my own. I have not left out, at least I have not intended to leave out, anything that was in the text, nor anything which I believe to be the teaching of the Gospel of Christ. And then if you do not receive it, that is a sorrowful business, but it is no concern of mine so that I shall have to answer for it at the Last Great Day. When a man-servant goes to the door with a message from his master, if you do not like what he tells you, do not be angry with him. What has he to do with it? Has he said what his master told him to say? If he has, then be angry with his master if you must be, or accept what his master says if you think fit. But let the poor man that brought the message be held clear if he has faithfully reported his master’s words.

I claim that if I have preached my Master’s Gospel, whether men are saved or lost, whether they accept it or reject it, I must leave that with themselves and not have their sin laid at my door. How heartily do I cry to God that the Word may not be a savor of death unto death but a savor of life unto life. But oh, my Hearers, if you perish after hearing the Gospel of God, do not think that you can cast the blame on me.

Now, the message Moses brought was rejected and he knew why it was rejected. He could see the reason. The people were in such bondage, they were so miserably ground down, they were so unhappy and hopeless, that what he spoke seemed to them to be as idle words. There are hundreds of reasons why men reject the Gospel. We will not go into them tonight. He that wants to beat a dog can always find a stick and he that wishes to reject Christ can always find a reason for it. And, however unreasonable a reason may be, it will serve a sinner’s turn, when that turn happens to be the making of some excuse for himself why he should not yield to the Savior. Oh that men were less cunning in making apologies for refusing the Lord Jesus!

Among all the reasons, however, that I ever heard, that with which I have the most sympathy for, is this one—that some cannot receive Christ because they are so full of anguish and are so crushed in spirit that they cannot find strength of mind enough to entertain a hope that by any possibility salvation can come to them. It is to their sad case that I desire to speak. I think that I can speak to the case, if God help me, for I have felt the same myself. I do remember when I could not believe even Jesus Himself by reason of sore anguish and straitness of spirit. And, therefore, as one who has worn the chains, I speak to those who are still in chains.

I know the clanking of those fetters. I know what it is to feel the damp of the stone walls and to fear that there is no coming out of prison. I know and have felt the despair that even when the emancipator turned the great key in the lock and set the door wide open—yet still my heart had made for itself a direr cage. And I could not believe in the possibility of liberty— therefore I sat bound in a dungeon of my own creation. Ah, there is no Bastille so awful as that which is built by despair and kept under the custody of a crushed spirit. Many are the desponding ones whose eyes fail so that they cannot look up or look out. To such I speak. May God speak through me by the Holy Spirit, the Comforter!

I. And first, will you notice that what Moses brought to these people was glad tidings. IT WAS A FREE AND FULL GOSPEL MESSAGE. To them it was the Gospel of salvation from a cruel bondage, the Gospel of hope, the Gospel of glorious promise. It is a very admirable type and metaphorical description of what the Gospel is to us. Moses’ word to them was singularly clear, cheering and comforting. But they could not receive it. “They hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit and cruel bondage.”

First, Moses spoke to them about their God. He said, “You have a God, and His name is Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob.” They looked up from their bricks and they seemed to say, “God? What have we to do with Him? Oh, that the straw were given us to make our bricks! We are up to our necks in this filthy Nile mud making bricks. And you come and talk to us about God. Go and preach to Pharaoh and the taskmasters that rule us. But as for us poor creatures, slaves that we are, we do not understand you. What do you mean by Jehovah, our God? Bring us more garlic and onions, or lessen our daily tasks, or take away the sticks from our drivers and then we will listen to you.”

And so they shook their heads and said that such mysteries and theologies were not for them. And yet, dear Sirs, if any of you are in such a case, it is for you—Jehovah, Israel’s God, was indeed their only hope and He is your only hope, also. Alas, that they should be so unwise as to refuse to let the light shine upon them, for light it was! What a poor reason for refusing light because the night is so dark! Man’s best hope lies in his God. O you whose lives are bitter with toil and want, there is something for you after all, much better than the hard saying, “What shall we eat and what shall we drink?”

There is an inheritance above the grinding toil of everyday life. There is a portion much better than this killing care which frets so many of you and makes life a calamity to you. Do not, therefore, because of the heaviness of your lot, refuse to hear about God, your Maker, your Benefactor. In that direction lies your only real hope. Have this God for a Father and a Friend, and life will wear another aspect and you will be another man.

Then Moses went on to tell them about a Covenant. He said, “You have a God and that God has said, ‘I have also established My Covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers.’ ” Covenant? Why, many of them would hardly know what it meant. “Covenant?” they said, “God make a Covenant with us poor brick makers, that have to slave from morning to night without wages and now are forced to make bricks without straw?” God and a Covenant—these are strange words in ears that hear the curses of taskmasters and the crack of their whips. It sounded like mockery to them to talk of such high matters.  
I doubt not they muttered to themselves, “This Moses is a mad phipher who has grand mouthfuls of words. But what are words to us? A bit of fish out of the Nile, or a cucumber from the irrigated fields would be a deal better than talking to us about a Covenant.” And yet, hearken. If any of you are in a sad condition, your best hopes may lie this way. What if God has entered into Covenant with you that He will bless you for Jesus Christ’s sake? There may be a mint of wealth for the sons of poverty in this Everlasting Covenant. And the best kind of wealth, too. There may be for you a promised emancipation which will break the fetters which now hold you—and set you free.

I tell you that in the Covenant of Grace lies the charter of the poor and needy. At any rate, if you come under that Covenant it cannot be worse with you than it is now. You seem now to be under a covenant of bondage and of sorrow and any change will be for the better. If there be another covenant—a Covenant of Grace and love and peace and everlasting faithfulness—it were worth while to hear about it and to seek it out until you discover whether you have part and lot in it. I entreat you, look into this matter. Hearken diligently to the voice of the Gospel. Hear and your soul shall live.

So, when Moses had spoken of the Covenant, he went on to speak yet more about God’s pity to them. He reported that Jehovah had said, “I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage and I have remembered My Covenant.” I fancy that those words opened their eyes a little. They looked up and said to one another, “Is there, indeed, a God who has heard our groanings? Oh but,” they muttered, “look at the many years we have been groaning. Why, it is forty years since this man Moses first came out and saw our burdens. Where has he been these forty years? What is the use of pity that is so tardy in its movements?”

And yet, dear Sirs, if you are inclined to talk so, it may be that if God is slow He is nevertheless sure. And if He is slow to you it is out of patience and longsuffering to others. He knows best when and how to save His people. Remember that when the tale of bricks was doubled, then Moses came. And when you are getting to your very worst and your night is darkening into a sort of hellish midnight it may be that your darkness is coming to an end. Therefore, be not so bowed down as to let the brick— earth—get into your ears and eyes and make you deaf and blind. But listen to see if there is anything to be heard that is better than your daily moans and groans. Listen to the messenger of God who comes to tell of what God is about to do. He is a God full of compassion and He has respect unto broken hearts and tearful eyes.

And then Moses went on further with his blessed Gospel message to tell them about the Lord’s resolve to rescue them by a great redemption. The Lord had said, “I am Jehovah and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians and I will rid you out of their bondage.” Do you notice that all along the Lord uses strong words and speaks like a great king? “I am Jehovah. I will. I will. I will.” When you go home just notice what a number of “I wills” there are in this declaration of the great God. When God says, “I will,” He means it. Depend upon it. He does not ask our leave, or wait for our help. “I will” is omnipotence putting itself into speech.

Jehovah will accomplish what He promises. He told them, therefore, that He meant to come to their rescue. “I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians and I will rid you out of their bondage. I will redeem you with a stretched out arm and with great judgments.” God means to save you. Poor, troubled, confessedly guilty Sinner, believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God and trust yourself with Him and the Lord will save you. He will deliver you from all the guilt of your past life, from the evil habits of your present life and from the temptations of your future life. He will break the yoke of Satan from off your neck and make you to be no more the slave of sin but you shall become the child of the living God.

Moses told them about the Lord’s ways of Divine Grace and the inheritance which He had prepared for them. My message is after the same sort. Thus says Jehovah tonight, in the preaching of the Gospel to everyone that will believe in Jesus, “I will save and I will deliver you. And I will be to you a God—and you shall know that I am your God, which brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. And I will give it you for an heritage—I am the Lord.”

These are great words but they come from the mouth of the great God who cannot lie. Therefore believe them and take heart of hope. God will take you, poor guilty ones, to be His children. He will promote you to be His willing servants. He will use you for His Glory though now you dishonor His name. He will sanctify you and cleanse you and He will bring you to Heaven, even you who have lain among the pots and have been deified in the brick kilns of sin. He will never rest till He makes you sit upon His Throne with Him, where He is glorified, world without end. This I speak to you who are in bondage. Even as Jesus said of old, so say I in my measure as His messenger—“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me. Because he has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.”

Believe in Christ Jesus and He who has come to save the lost will give you as clear and clean a deliverance from the power of sin as Jehovah gave Israel deliverance from the power of the Egyptian tyrant. He will bring you out of bondage and guide you through the wilderness till you come into the eternal rest, even to a better land than Canaan, though it flowed with milk and honey.

II. We come now to note that IT WAS RECEIVED WITH UNBELIEF CAUSED BY ANGUISH OF HEART. The message was from the Lord and it was full of hope for them but they were too much broken down to receive it. We can quite understand what that meant. Let us look into the scene. They could not now receive this Gospel because they had at first caught it and had been disappointed. They were under a misapprehension, for they expected to be free at once, as soon as Moses went to Pharaoh. And as they did not get immediate relief, they fell back into sullen despair. When

Moses came to them and said that God had appeared to him at the bush and had sent him to deliver them, they bowed their heads and worshipped.

Great things they looked for on the morrow, for they were at the end of their patience. But after that, when Moses went in unto Pharaoh and the tyrant doubled their labor by denying them straw, then they could not believe in God or in His messenger. In the process of salvation it often happens—I have seen it many times—after persons have come to hear the Gospel, after they have, in some measure, become attentive to its invitations, they have for a season been much more miserable than they were before. Have you never noticed, in taking a medicine, how often you are made to feel more sick before you are made well? It is often so in the workings of the great remedy of Divine Grace—it shows us our disease that we may the more heartily accept the heavenly medicine.

Yes, and in special cases there may be evils within the spiritual system which must be thrown out in the flesh to be made visible and so to become the subjects of repentance and abhorrence. The man who judges with shortness and straitness of judgment demands a remedy that will cure his soul of all evils on the spot. And if it does not evidently and immediately do this, he cries, “Away with it.” I find that the Hebrew word translated “anguish” here signifies shortness. Your marginal Bibles have “straitness.” So they could not believe because of the shortness of their judgment—they measured God by inches. They limited the great and infinite God to minutes and days.

And so, as they found themselves, at first, getting into a worse case than before, they said to Moses, deliberately,” Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians.” They did as good as say—“You have done us no good. Indeed, you have increased our miseries. And we cannot believe in you or accept your message as really from God, seeing it has caused us a terrible increase of our sufferings.” Grace may truly and effectually come to a heart, and for a while cause no joy, no peace. I have known many a man coming to this Tabernacle who has been prospering in business, and so on, and yet he has been going down to Hell as fast as ever he could travel.

By God’s Grace he has come and heard the Gospel and he has made a great many improvements in his conduct. And he has even become a regular and attentive hearer. And at that very time he has fallen into an affliction, the like of which he had never experienced before. And he has consequently complained, “Why, I am worse instead of better. I find my heart grows more rebellious against God than ever it was before.” I do not wonder that it should be so, for I have seen so many examples of it. The discipline of the household of God begins very early. But a present increase of sorrow has nothing to do with what the main result will be, except that it works towards it in a mysterious manner.

Perhaps what you at first thought was genuine faith was not faith—and God is going to knock down the false before he builds up the true. If you had an old house and any friend of yours were to say, “John, I will build you a new house. When shall I begin?” “Oh,” you might say, “begin next week to build the new house.” At the end of the week he has pulled half your old house down. “Oh,” you say, “this is what you call building me a new house, is it? You are causing me great loss—I wish I had never consented to your proposal.” He replies, “You are most unreasonable—how am I to build you a new house on this spot without taking the old one down?”

And so it often happens that the Grace of God does seem in its first work to make a man even worse than he was before, because it shows to him sins which he did not know to be there, evils which had been concealed, dangers never dreamed of. Thus the work of Divine Grace even makes his bondage seem to be heavier than ever it was. And yet this is all done in wisdom, in love and in fulfillment of the promise which God has given. I am never very much astonished when I find people ready almost to turn away from the hearing of the Gospel, because, after having at first heard it with pleasure, they find that, for the time being, it involves them in even greater sorrow than before.

How earnestly would I persuade them to overcome their very natural tendency to a hasty judgment! Press on, dear Friend. Be of good courage. Pharaoh will not long be able to make you keep up that enormous number of bricks. Within a very few days he will be glad to get rid of you. Wait hopefully. For the God who begins in darkness will end in light and before long you will come to understand those ways of mercy which are now past finding out. Not many weeks after the sobbing and sighing at the brickyards, Moses and the children of Israel sang this song unto the Lord— “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously—the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.” The work of deliverance began very grimly but it ended very gloriously.

The inability of Israel to believe the message of Moses arose also from the fact that they were earthbound by heavy oppression—the mere struggle to exist exhausted all their energy and destroyed all their hope. The extreme hardness of their lot made them despondent and sullen. They had to work from morning to night. The Egyptian of the present age knows what it is to work very, very hard and to let their earnings go into the coffers of their precious princes. It seems always to have been so with wretched Egypt—it is ever the house of bondage. But these Israelites, being not even Egyptians, but strangers in Egypt, were worked without any pity or mercy. It was a daily question with them whether life was worth living under such cruel conditions.

I do not wonder that a great many are unable to receive the Gospel in this city of ours because their struggle for existence is awful. I am afraid that it gets more and more intense, though even now it passes all bounds. If any of you can do anything to help the toil-worn workers, I pray you, do it. The poor workwoman who sits so many hours with the candle and needle and does not earn enough, when she has worked all those hours, and can just pay the rent and keep body and soul together—do you wonder that she thinks that this Gospel of ours cannot be for her and does not

care to listen to it? I know that it would be her comfort but her soul refuses to be comforted, she is so crushed.

The dock laborer who comes home five days out of the six having earned nothing and hears his little children crying for bread—is it any wonder that he cannot hear about heavenly things? Why, it is with our white population very much as it was with the Negro population of Jamaica. When there was work to be had and they could get enough to eat and more, our Churches were crowded with them. They were the best of hearers and the speediest of converts. They were soon gathered into immense Churches. But when everything went badly with them and they had to work very hard barely to live, there were groups of backsliders and multitudes who did not feel that they could go to the House of God at all.

They said that they had no garments to wear and no money to spare. And do you wonder at it? Their poverty was so grinding and their toil so severe that the services they had once delighted in they had no heart for. It is all very easy to say that it ought not to be so. But it is so. And it is so with multitudes in London. And yet, dear Friend—if such a one has come in here tonight—I pray you do not throw away the next world because you have so little of this. This is sheer folly. If I have little here, I would make sure of the more hereafter. If you have such a struggle for existence here, you should seek that higher, nobler, better life, which would give you, even in penury and want, a joy and a comfort to which you are a stranger now.

May the Holy Spirit come upon you and raise you out of this present evil world into newness of life in Christ Jesus! I do not find that God’s people get into a condition of utter desolation—they are, at their very worst, kept from total desertion. For the Lord has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” They have to work hard and they may come very near to want but my observation satisfies me that they are happy still. They are joyful still. They are uplifted by the inner life above the downdragging depression of external trials. I would to God that I could say a word that might comfort any child of poverty who should happen to be here tonight. And I pray the Lord Himself to be their comforter and helper.

But, worst of all, there are some who seem as if they could not lay hold on Christ because their sense of sin has become so intolerable and the wretchedness which follows upon conviction has become so fearful. They have grown almost to be contentedly despairing. I hardly know any condition of mind that is worse than chronic despair when at last that which seemed alarming enough to drive to madness settles down into a lifeless, sullen moroseness. These Israelites had at last sunk so low that they said, “Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians.”

But your lot is terrible. “We know it is,” they said, “but we shall never get out of it.” But your bondage is horrible. “Yes but you may make it worse by interfering. You will only aggravate our taskmasters and bring upon us that last straw which breaks the back. Let us alone. We are doomed to suffer—we are predestined to be bondsmen. Let us go on as quietly as we may in our slavery. It may be that like poor fishes in the cave, we may lose our eyes yet and then we shall not know that it is dark, for we shall have lost the capacity for light.”

Oh, it is a dreadful thing when a heart gets to that—when a man desires that Christ would depart from him and let him alone to perish. Do not some men virtually say, “I know I am lost. Let me enjoy myself as well as I can. I cannot—I cannot enjoy sin. But don’t vex my conscience. Do not worry me with your talk, for I shall suffer enough hereafter. Do not tantalize me about saving faith, for I shall never believe. Do not begin talking to me about repentance. I shall never have a soft and tender heart. I know I never shall.”

A man who has begun to be numbed with cold, cries to his comrades, “Leave me to sleep myself to death.” And thus do despairing ones ask to be left in their misery. Dear Soul, we cannot, we dare not, thus desert you. I will tell you what you shall do, dear Soul—give me a hearing. In the name of God, believe that there is yet hope —that even now Christ Jesus invites men and especially such as you, to put their trust in Him. O you who are burdened with sin, He calls you to let him be your Savior! If there is a man in the world He died for, you are the man.

If I see a physician hurrying down the street in his brougham and anybody says to me, “Where is that doctor going?” If I knew every house in the street, I should pick out the case of a man that I knew to be in the worst condition and most near to death’s door. “Sir,” I should say, “the doctor is going there. That dying person needs him most and I believe that he is hurrying to his bedside.” If there is one man here that is worse than any other, more sad, more sick, more sorry, more despairing than another, my Lord Jesus Christ, who is here, has come to meet with such a one.

O troubled Heart, Jesus has come to seek and to save you! I am sure it is so. Hope! Just hope! Hope! You are not beyond hope of salvation— *“See, O Soul, you are yet alive,  
Not in torment. Not in Hell.  
Still does His good Spirit strive,  
With the chief of sinners dwell.”*

Lift up your eyes, for you are not yet where the rich man was after his death and burial. Do not yet despair. Maybe there awaits you yet a happy life of joy in God. The sun may yet bring you brighter days, days of peace and rest and usefulness.

Did you ever hear the story of John Newton on the coast of Africa? He had got himself into such a state by his sins, his drunkenness, his vice, that at last he was left on the coast of Africa and virtually became a slave. Did John Newton dream, when he wandered up and down with a hungry belly, full of fever and at death’s door that the day would come when he would be the companion and dear Friend of Cowper? And did he dream that the Church of St. Mary Woolnoth, over there in the city, would be crowded every time he stood up to preach of Free Grace and dying love? He did not think it but it was so predestined.

Something equally gracious may be ordained for you. Blasphemer, you may even preach the Gospel! O you Magdalene, full of filthiness, you will yet wash his feet with your tears and wipe them with the hairs of your head. You sin-stained villain, you may yet stand among that white-robed host of whom the angel asked, “Who are these and from where came they?” You, even you, will sing more sweet and loud than any of them unto Him that loved you and washed you from your sins in His precious blood. God make it so and unto His name shall be praise forever and ever!

III. I have many more things to say but I might weary you with them rather than bless you. The message was at first not received by Israel by reason of their anguish of soul but IT WAS TRUE FOR ALL THAT AND THE LORD MADE IT SO. What did the Lord do when He found that these people did not hearken to Moses for anguish of spirit and for cruel bondage? What did the Lord do? He was not going to give them up because of their wretched condition. He had said, “I will bring them out,” and he meant to do it.

The first thing the Lord did to prove His persevering Grace was to commission Moses again. (Exo. 6:1; 7:2). So the Lord God, in everlasting mercy, says to His minister, “You have to preach the Gospel again to them. Again proclaim My Grace.” It seems a terrible thing to have to pour our souls into deaf ears. Yet I shall not give up, for I have done it with some here for nearly thirty-three years and I may as well go on. Why should I lose so much labor? I will try again, like Peter, who, after toiling all night and taking nothing, yet let down the net at the Lord’s bidding. One of these days those dead ears will be made to live. God in mercy says, “Go on with it. As long as there is breath in your body, tell them to believe in My Son and they shall live. Tell them till you die that, ‘He that with his mouth confesses and with his heart believes that God has raised Christ from the dead shall be saved.’ ”

But the Lord did more than that for Israel. As these people had not listened to Moses, He called Moses and Aaron to Him and He renewed their charge. He laid it upon them—gave them again their marching orders— “He gave them a charge unto the children of Israel and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.” A monstrous thing it did look like. They would not even hear Moses. But the Lord will have His servants stand to their work. Moses and Aaron have to do it, however impossible it may appear. There is to be no backing out of it. They must know of a surety that Israel is to be delivered by their means.

It is a grand thing when the Lord lays the conversion of men on the hearts of His ministers and makes them feel that they must win souls. Moses was bound to bring out Israel. “But there is Pharaoh.” Pharaoh is included in the Divine charge. They have to beat Pharaoh into submission. “But these children of Israel will not obey.” The Lord put them in the charge—did you not observe the words, “He gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh”? Moses and Aaron, you have to bring Israel out. Pharaoh is to let them go and Israel is to go willingly. God has issued His royal decree and be you sure it will stand.

I believe that God is saying to His Church, “You have to do it. You have to gather out My elect out of every nation under Heaven.” To the Church in London He says, “Bring this people out of the bondage of sin.” That terrible London with all its poverty, its drunkenness, its infidelity and licentiousness—you are to save it in the name of the Lord Jesus. Its darkness is dense. You are to shine till it is enlightened. You have to save London. So do not back out of it.

“Oh,” says one man, who lives down some street near this place, “Sir, I can hardly live in the street. It teems with ill-living women.” You have to save them. Passing a little shop as I did the other day, I saw written up in the window, “If any poor girl that wishes to lead a better life will only step inside she will find a friend.” That is one of our dear members. I felt so pleased as I saw it. I should like to see such a notice in a great many windows. I would like to see you live among the wicked and put up in your windows, “If anybody wants a friend, there is one inside. Come in.”

You are called to save them! They must not be lost. Somebody says, “What are you talking about, Mr. Spurgeon? We cannot save them.” I am talking as God said, when He told Moses and Aaron that He gave them a charge to bring His people out of Egypt. They could not do it—but yet they did it. Anyone can do what he can do but it is only God’s servant that can do what he cannot do. We, my Brethren, are called to perform the impossible. We are to be familiar with miracles.

Look at Ezekiel. There is a valley full of dry bones. Ezekiel is to go and say to them, “Thus says the Lord, you dry bones, live.” What a preposterous thing! An able Divine of good repute once said that to preach the Gospel to dead sinners was as preposterous as to wave a pocket-handkerchief over a grave. Ah, just so! Therefore, I would not have him do it. If the Lord has not sent him to do it he would do no good if he were to attempt to preach to the sinner dead in sin. But it is a different thing when it is my case, for I feel that I am sent to do it and therefore I am not vexed at being thought to be acting absurdly.

If God had sent me to wave a pocket-handkerchief over the dead in Nunhead Cemetery that they might live, I would go and wave that pockethandkerchief, and they would live. To the eye of reason there is no use in preaching to men dead in sin. I freely admit that. But if it is a commission from God, then it is not ours to raise questions but to do as we are bid. God has commissioned His servants to preach the Gospel to every creature. Whatever those creatures may be, we are to say to them, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. But he that believes not shall be damned.” This is our message and our mission and we are just to tell the Truth of God and leave God to apply it to the heart.

Oh that He may give us Divine Grace to tell the Gospel and to keep on doing it till He has brought His own elect out of the bondage of sin and Satan and saved them with an everlasting salvation!  
Once more—as I told you in the reading, I greatly admire this chapter.

I cannot help admiring the next thing that God did when He told His servant what to do. The Lord began to count the heads of those whom He would redeem out of bondage. You see the rest of the chapter is occupied with the children of Reuben and the children of Simeon and the children of Levi. God seemed to say, “Pharaoh, let My people go!” “I will not,” said the despot. Straightway the Lord goes right down into the brick-town where the poor slaves are at work and he makes out a list of all of them, to show that He means to set them free.

So many there of Simeon. So many here of Reuben. So many here of Levi. The Lord is counting them. Moreover He numbers their cattle, for He declares, “There shall not a hoof be left behind.” Men say, “It is of no use counting your chickens before they are hatched.” But when it comes to God’s counting those whom He means to deliver, it is another matter. For He knows what will be done, because He determines to do it and He is almighty. He knows what is to come of the Gospel and He knows whom He means to bless. And so let Satan rage and let adversaries do what they will, “The foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, the Lord knows them that are His.”

And to prove this, He goes on writing down their names and taking an account of them. “They shall be Mine, says the Lord, in that day when I make up My jewels.” Now, my Hearers, if you do not come to Christ, it will be your own loss and not His. If you refuse Him, it will be because you are not Christ’s sheep. As He said to you, He has a people and He will save them, whether you, my Hearer, believe in Jesus or willfully refuse to do so.

Out of the mass of mankind a company shall come to Him and shall glorify His name, as it is written, “This people have I formed for Myself. They shall show forth My praise.” Oh, that you had such a mind in you that you would accept His Gospel! Will you do so even now? Trust Christ and you are saved. Look unto Him and be saved. The Lord bless you, for His name’s sake. Amen.

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THE POWER OF AARON’S ROD  
NO. 521

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 26, 1863, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“But Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods.”  
Exodus 7:12.**

WE shall not attempt to discuss the question as to whether these magicians actually did turn their rods into serpents or not. It is probable that they, by dexterous sleight of hand, substituted living serpents for dry rods and so deceived the eyes of Pharaoh. On the other hand, it is possible that God was pleased to permit the devil to aid their enchantments, and so the old serpent produced a brood. But into that question, I say, I shall not enter. It is of no importance which opinion we may hold. Curious questions must this morning give way to important Truths of God.

I call your attention to the fact that Aaron’s rod proved its Heaven-given superiority and silenced all the boastings of Jannes and Jambres by readily swallowing up all their rods. This incident is an instructive emblem of the sure victory of the Divine handiwork over all the opposition of men. Whenever a Divine thing is cast into the heart, or thrown upon the earth, it swallows up everything else. And though the devil may fashion a counterfeit and produce swarms of opponents, as sure as ever God is in the work, it will swallow up all its foes. “Aaron’s rod swallowed up all their rods.”  
Without any preface, let me ask you, first of all, to observe this fact. When we have duly considered it, let us, in the second place, draw an in

ference from it. And then, in closing, let me endeavor to show some reasons why it is right that it should be so.

I. Let us turn aside to see this great sight—the Divine triumphant over the diabolical—the spiritual subduing the natural—AARON’S ROD SWALLOWING ALL ITS RIVALS.

1. Let us take the case of the awakened sinner. That man was, a few days ago, as worldly, as carnal, as impassive as he well could be. If anyone should propose to make that man heavenly-minded, to lead him to set his affection upon things above, and not on things on the earth, the common observer would say, “Impossible! The man has no thought above what he shall eat, and what he shall drink, and how he shall be clothed— his heart is buried in a grave of cares. He rises early. He sits up late. He eats the bread of carefulness. He is glued and cemented to the world—as in old Roman walls, the cement has become so strong that the stone is no longer a separate piece, but has become a part of the wall itself—so this man is cemented to the world. He cannot be separated from it. You must break him in pieces with the hammer of death. You cannot separate him in any other way from the cares of life.

Ah, but Aaron’s rod shall swallow up this rod. The man listens to the Word. The Truth of God comes with power into his soul. The Holy Spirit has entered him. And the next day, though he goes to his business, he finds no true contentment in it, for he pants after the living God. Though

still he will buy and sell and gain, yet there is a craving within—an awful hunger—a thirst unquenchable—which above the din and clamor of the world’s traffic, will be heard crying, “Seek you first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” Now his spirit pleads its needs, and outstrips the body in the contest for his warmest love. He spurns the trifles of a day— he seeks the jewels of eternity. The groveling swine which wallowed in worldliness is transformed into an eagle. The man who lived for this shadowing earth has now an eye for the upper spheres and a wing to mount into celestial heights. Divine Grace has won the day and the worldling seeks the world to come.

It may be that the man is immersed in pleasure. He is at this theater and at that. In all gay society he bears the palm. You shall find him at every horserace and fighting ring—ah, and worse still, you may track him to dens of licentiousness and learn that he is diving deeper than others in the turbid streams of vice. What power can make this gay sinner become a saint? As well ask over a moldering grave, “Can these dry bones live?”— how shall he find joy in the praise of God, or interest in waiting upon the worship of the Most High?

“Absurd!” cries Unbelief, while Worldliness shouts, “Ridiculous!” The man is too far gone for regeneration! He is married to pleasure and he wears the ring upon his finger! Yes, but Aaron’s rod can swallow up this rod. For we have seen such a man loathe the very joys he loved till there was no charm in the music of sin—no mirth in the society of folly. He fled away to hide himself. He sought seclusion that he might weep alone. Where are now the sweetness of your bowls and the melody of your viols? Where now the charms of the earth’s harlotry? Where now the giddy delights of chambering and wantonness? They are gone, for Aaron’s rod has swallowed up these rods of the magicians, and the mad sinner is sitting yonder—a penitent at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind.

His companions follow him. With many weighty reasons, as they seem to think, they invite his return. They plead with him not to make a fool of himself by joining those melancholy fanatics. They point out the faults of many professors. They remark that hypocrisies are common. They describe the inconsistencies of good men. And they say, “What? Will you throw away the joviality of youth, the bloom and flush of life, to be united with a miserable band of enthusiasts and deceivers like these?” Then they insinuate cunning doubts. They thrust into the man’s way certain strange things, of which he had never heard before, which startle him like thunder, and almost drive him from his purpose. If God’s Grace is in him, the world’s best magicians may throw down all their rods—and every rod may be as cunning and as poisonous as a serpent—but Aaron’s rod will swallow up their rods.

The sweet attractions of the Cross will woo and win the man’s heart. The blessed arguments, fetched from the bleeding wounds of Jesus, will answer all the blandishments of Madam Wanton and the reason of her sister, Madam Bubble. Everything shall be set aside when true religion comes in. The man shall have a longing so intense that he cannot stop it, nor can he stop himself from obedience to it—a longing after pardon by blood and salvation by Divine Grace.

Oh, have you not seen the trembling penitent, when under conviction of sin, apparently oblivious to everything else? How changed the man! The furrows of that brow prophesy a harvest of hope. Tears, those jewels of repentance, bedeck his eyes. He is dressed in the sackcloth and ashes which are the court robes of those blessed mourners who shall be comforted. For a season even righteous joys yield him no solace. The comforts of his household, and the enjoyments of the fireside fail to reach his case. There is no balm in Gilead for him—Heaven alone can supply him a fit physician. His cry has become, “These can never satisfy! Give me Christ, or else I die.”

You have marked the stag when it is let down for a royal hunt. Away it flies. The dogs are behind it. It flies over flowery meads but it does not pause to smell the fragrance of the dale. It dashes along the wood but it waits not for shelter beneath yon shady oak! It scatters the sparkling waters of the brook, but it scarce has time to bathe its limbs. Onward, up the hill, the scenery is grand. But those wild eyes, starting from its head, is solaced by no sight of beauty. The birds are singing sweetly in yonder thicket, but those startled ears are not comforted. The bay of the dog is all the noble victim hears. The wrath of the hunter is all it dreads.

On—on—on it flies, panting for life. Such is the soul hunted by the dogs of conscience. Such is the awakened spirit, when the wrath of God is let loose upon it. No comforts can charm it. No joys can delight it. It flies on—on—on—resting never until it finds a shelter and deliverance in the clefts of the Rock of Ages. It is in vain that Satan tries to attract it from the one master thought. The Divine life must and will have its course. As some lofty mountain casts its shadow all along the valley, so a sense of condemnation throws its dark influence over the whole life. Then follows a longing for mercy, which, like a swollen torrent, bears all before it.

To use another illustration—the man has found the pearl of great price and for joy thereof he parts with all to buy it. No matter how dear the old ancestral homestead, it must be sold. The favorite horse. The faithful dog—all must go. He will sell his dearest joys, and his most prized luxuries of sin, that he may buy this priceless, peerless pearl. Aaron’s rod swallows up all other rods, and serpents, too.

2. Beloved, the same fact, with equal distinctness, is to be observed in the individual when he becomes a Believer in Jesus Christ—his faith destroys all other confidences. Once that man could trust in his selfrighteousness. He was rich and increased in goods and had need of nothing. He was honest. Who could say that he ever fraudulently failed in business, or robbed a creditor? For integrity he boasted that none could say he lacked the highest. He was, moreover, kind and charitable— amiable in his deportment and tender in heart towards the poor. He trusted that if any man went to Heaven by his merits, he should.

But where is that rod now? Lo, Aaron’s rod has swallowed it up. For now that man can say with the Apostle Paul, “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yes doubtless and 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.”  
The man once could rely upon ceremonies. Was he not sprinkled in infancy in the customary manner? Was he not confirmed afterwards by Episcopal hands? Did he not receive the blessed sacrament of the Lord’s Supper? What more was wanted? He was regular at his Church, or punctual at his Chapel. He paid the contribution expected of him, and perhaps a little more. He had family prayers and went through a private form at his bedside. What more did he want? But Aaron’s rod swallows this up, too. For all our righteousnesses are but as filthy rags.

This is the cry of the man now—“God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” My Hearers, you are no Christians unless your faith in Christ has devoured every other confidence—unless

you can say— *“On Christ, the solid Rock I stand!  
All other ground is sinking sand.”*  
It is not to trust Christ, and to trust self. To rely on Jesus somewhat, and  
then upon our prayers, and our works to some degree. Jesus ONLY must  
be your watchword. Christ will never have a partner. He trod the winepress alone, and He will save you alone. He stretched His hands on the  
Cross and none but He could bear the burden of sin—nor will He divide  
the work of salvation, lest at the last He should have to divide the crown.  
The rod of the one only High Priest must swallow up all other rods. My dear Friends, what multitudes of foes has our faith had to meet  
with! But how it has swallowed them all up! There were our old sins. The  
devil threw them down before us and they turned to serpents. What hosts  
of them! What multitudes! How they hiss in the air! How they intertwine  
their many coils. How horrible are their deadly fangs, the gaping jaws,  
their forked tongues! Ah, but the Cross of Jesus, like the rod of Amram’s  
son, destroys them all. Faith in Christ makes short work of all our sins,  
for it is written, “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleans us from all sin.” Then the devil stirs up another generation of vipers and shows us our  
inbred corruptions, our neglect of duty, our slackness in prayer, our unbelief, our backslidings, our wanderings of heart. And sometimes you and  
I get so tormented by these reptiles that we grow alarmed and are half inclined to flee. Do not run, Brother, but throw down Aaron’s rod and it will  
swallow up all these serpents, even though they were poisonous as the  
cobra, fierce as the rattlesnake, or huge as the python. You shall overcome through the blood of the Lamb. “Jesus is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.”  
The battle is the Lord’s, and He will deliver them into your hands. The  
old enemy will throw down another host of serpents in the form of worldly  
trials, diabolical suggestions, temptations to blasphemy, ill thoughts of  
God, hard thoughts of His Providence, rash thoughts of His promises, and  
such like till you will be almost distracted. You will wonder how you can  
meet such a host as this. Remember to stand fast and throw down  
Aaron’s rod—your simple trust and faith in Jesus Christ—and it must,  
and shall, swallow up all these rods. There is not one doubt which the  
craft of Hell can insinuate—there is not one difficulty which the infernal  
wisdom of Diabolus can suggest—but simple faith in Christ can disarm,  
tread under foot, and utterly destroy.  
On a certain railroad there is a viaduct. The arches are of considerable  
height. Wooden centers, of course, were used for the building of these arches and they remain there till this day because there is some suspicion that if the wooden centers were knocked out, the brick arches might not be strong enough and might come tumbling down. Now, there are some professors whose faith is of that kind—it is supported by wooden centers of human persuasion, reasoning, or excitement—which they cannot afford to lose. But the Christian man can say that if by Providence all the earthly props of his confidence should fail. If feelings, graces, and excitements were all gone—still the Cross, alone, is an all-sufficient dependence—and faith could bear the most terrible strain which earth or Hell could put upon it.  
I would to God we were more and more possessed of that faith which leans on God, and God, alone. For remember, the faith which is supported by anything except the Word and promise of God is no faith at all. It is a bastard faith which has the Cross for a buttress, but finds its foundation elsewhere. The Cross must be the foundation, cornerstone, and buttress, too. None but Jesus! None but Jesus! We need to have a faith which can endure every form of trial and as long as life lasts.  
One day last week, when I was preaching, it began to rain. A gentleman asked why the largest Chapel in the neighborhood could not be used for the occasion? The reply was, “Why, the galleries are not safe.” I thought, “what was the good of galleries into which they were afraid to let the people?” Pull them down and get fresh ones! So there are some people who have a faith like that good-for-nothing gallery. It is not safe. It will not sustain a crowd of afflictions and temptations, difficulties, and troubles. It would all come down with a crash in the day of trial, and great would be the fall of it.  
Brethren, if you have such a faith as I have described, pray God to take it away. It is worthless and dangerous. For remember, in the hour of death, if it cannot stand the tramp of the eternal feet, it will give way—and your everlasting ruin will be the result. Have a faith which is built upon God, which will bear whatever comes. But mind you, mix not with it wood, hay, stubble of your own gathering. Let Aaron’s rod swallow up all other rods. Let your faith in Christ overturn every refuge of lies.  
3. The same fact is very manifest after faith in all who truly love the Savior. It will be found, I am sure, that every true lover of Jesus has an all-consuming love—coals of juniper—which have a most vehement flame. They who love Christ aright, love no one in comparison with Him. The husband is dear. The father is cherished. The children are precious. But after all, Jesus Christ is better than all kin. We can look upon all and say, “Yes, it were a bitter pang to lose you, but we would sooner lose you all ten times over than once lose our Savior.”  
For, oh, if we lose Him, we have lost all, even if all else remained. But if all is gone and we still keep our Savior, we have all in Him. The Christian, as he loves nothing in comparison, so he loves nothing in contradiction to Christ. Whatever comes between him and his Savior, the true lover of Jesus abhors and rejects in a moment. He holds no deliberation or debate about the matter. He counts that vile, which, precious in itself, becomes  
evil through interposing between him and his Lord—  
*“The dearest idol I have known,  
Whatever that idol be”—*

though it is a golden idol—though it be myself—whatever that idol is—  
*“Help me to tear it from its throne,  
And worship only You.”*

The Christian’s love to Christ is of such a kind that he would forego honor and think it honor to be dishonored for Christ. Persecution’s flame cannot, by any means, consume bands of union which unite his soul and his Lord. Through fire and through water this love can march. For, “many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.” That is not true love to Jesus which governs only one part of the man out of twenty. It must be all the passions bound into one. This is the reason why our Apostle does not say, “Set your affections on things above.” But, “Set your affection on things above.” Tie up the affections in one bundle. There is not to be a host of them. They are to be made into one. Bind them into a bundle of camphire and then offer them to your Beloved Jesus.

Oh, if I pretend to love Christ and have other lovers, too—He cares not for such a heart as mine—it must be an undivided heart. “Their heart is divided. Now shall they be found faulty,” said Hosea. “Unite my heart to fear your name,” cried the Psalmist, and let each of us pray so, too. “My Beloved is mine and I am His.” Let that be without any sort of reserve. Let the giving up of ourselves to Christ, and the taking of Christ to ourselves be done heartily and earnestly, with all the powers of the soul.

This love to Christ reminds me of the fire which fell of old upon Elijah’s sacrifice—there stood the altar made of twelve rough stones. On it lay the bullock and the wood—and over all the Prophet had poured water, until it saturated the bullock, and stood in the trenches. But when the fire came down from Heaven, it devoured not only the wood, and the sacrifice, but the very stones of the altar—and licked up the water from the trenches. So when this heavenly fire of love comes down upon our hearts in very deed and truth, it not only burns the sacrifice and the wood—our own true intentions and our renewed heart—but the stones, the very flesh that seemed as dull and cold as a stone!

Yes, and those old corruptions which seemed to quench the fire of Divine Grace like water—this love licks the whole up, and the whole man goes up to Heaven—a living sacrifice unto God. “My heart and my flesh,” said the Psalmist, “cry out for the living God.” I used to wonder however he made his flesh to do it, for the flesh lusts against the Spirit. But there are times when Aaron’s rod does swallow up all other rods, and even the heart and the flesh cry out for the living God. Our love to Jesus should be like the love of David to Jonathan and of Jonathan to David. As Jonathan was ready to take off both his sword, and his bow, and his girdle, and give them to David, so should we make no reserve—our selfishness being swallowed up—giving to Jesus all that we are and all that we have evermore.

I have heard of one good man who carried out to the letter this love to Christ. He was rich. He prospered much in business. A very sincere friend who might take great liberties called upon him and said, “My dear Brother, you are so prosperous that I am afraid lest your heart should depart from God.” The other replied, “No, my Brother, I thank you for the warning, but I am not in that danger, for I enjoy God in everything.” Years went on—riches took to themselves wings and fled away. The rich man was brought to the depths of poverty. He even knew what it was to want bread. The same friend came to see him and he said, “My dear Brother, you remember what I said to you in your prosperity? Now, I am afraid, lest in your adversity, you should grow unbelieving and so dishonor your Lord.” But the other said, “Dear Brother, I thank you for your warning as I said before, but I am not in danger, for before I enjoyed God in everything, and now I enjoy everything in God.”

Oh, this is a sweet way of living, when our love to Christ is such that we find Christ in everything. We see the marks of His pierced hands on our daily bread. We see the blood mark upon the garments which we wear. It is good, too, when suffering and wanting times shall come, to find we are rich because we have Christ and can sing—

*“You, at all times, will I bless;  
Having You, I all possess;  
How can I bereaved be,  
Since I cannot part with You?”*

4. Brethren, you will notice this in the man who makes his delight in the Lord Jesus. He who makes his delight in Christ after a true sort will discover that this delight swallows up all other delights. There is none equal to this. The Christian man enjoys himself as others do. He is not denied the sweets of this life any more than another man. But to him all these things are brown bread. He has eaten manna from Heaven! His mouth has tasted angels’ food! And he feels that the choicest mirth and delight his soul can know in all the bounties of God’s rich Providences are mere ashes compared with what he finds in Christ. His delight in Christ is of such a kind that nothing can stop it.

In disease he still rejoices in his God, who makes his bed in his sickness. When he comes to die, that last of foes cannot interrupt the music of his soul. “My soul shall make her boast in the Lord,” he has said. And he carries out his vow. He has little to delight in besides. But he has more delights than those who have all the world. Though he were rich as Solomon, and had singing men, and singing women, and gardens, and houses and chariots and all manner of delights, he would not be so contented as he is with Christ, and with his Christ, alone.

I speak experimentally—I who am but a babe in Christ, even I know that there is such joy to be found in Jesus. Such rapture, such ecstasy— what shall I say?—such Heaven to be found in His dear name and in communion with Him, that if I could have but five minutes of my Lord’s company, I would sooner have it than a whole year of the society of princes rolling in wealth and exalted in fame. One glance of His eyes outshines the sun. The beauties of His face are fairer than all flowers. There is no such fragrance as in the breath of His mouth. “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Your love is better than wine.”

5. Yet more is it so in a man who is devoted to God’s service. The service of God swallows up everything else when the man is truly God’s servant. When a man gets fully possessed with an enthusiastic love for Jesus and there is no other love worth a moment’s care, difficulties to him become only things to be surmounted. Dangers become honors, sacrifices pleasures, sufferings delights, weariness rest. Life he looks upon but as a loan and gives it back to Jesus Christ with interest. Look in the olden times how the martyrs despised death. Aaron’s rod swallowed up the terrors of fire, and stake, and rack, and dungeon.

Poverty, nakedness, peril, sword—the love of Christ made short work of these. In later days, in the Reformer’s times, to meet the score of the multitude and the wrath of princes, was a thing of every day. They laughed at

all sufferings for the love of Jesus. Today some of our missionary Brothers and Sisters prove the same fact. Williams staining Eromanga with his blood. Knibb spending a weary life in the midst of his swarthy Brothers and Sisters. Moffat at this hour cut off from contact with those whom he holds dear, pressing on in the work of saving the Bechuana and the Bushman. These men and men like them of whom the world is not worthy prove that the love of Jesus will swallow up everything else.

I hope there are some in this Church in whom the service of Christ has become the main object of their lives. If you stand up and preach in the streets, and you are mocked at, Aaron’s rod will swallow up all the ribaldry of scoffers. You can bear all that, and rejoice in it! If you go home and find persecutors there, you can patiently endure their cruel mockery. Aaron’s rod will swallow up that rod very speedily. Perhaps you have to lose customers by closing your shop on Sunday. Perhaps friends forsake you because of your godly walk. Perhaps adversaries gather round you and say spiteful things of you because Jesus is yours. Aaron’s rod will swallow up those rods.

I would to God there were more Christians, however, in whom all their business cares and their worldly pursuits were subjugated and subservient to their devotion to their Master. For he is not a Christian of any standing who lives for anything but to extend the name of Christ and to spread His kingdom among the sons of men.

Brethren, we are waiting for the time in which my text shall have a more splendid significance than I can give it just now. In every neighborhood wherever Christ’s Truth is preached, like Aaron’s rod it swallows up all the serpents of sin. Go to the dark alleys in London, take Jesus Christ there and Aaron’s rod shall swallow up the rods of ignorance, vice, and ungodliness. Go to popish countries—spread the Bible—let the name of Jesus Christ be proclaimed and there is no lie of the Pope which the Cross cannot overcome. Go to the heathen land, where Juggernaut sits in bloody contentment on his throne. Or go to the islands of the South Seas, or to Africa’s wondrous plains! Wherever you go, cast down Aaron’s rod, and whatever the form of superstition or error, it shall swallow all up.

Wait yet a little while, when from eastern coast to western, one song shall be heard, the Hallelujah to the Lord—when Jesus’ name shall be exalted, and every knee shall bow—and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord. Then admiring angels looking from the battlements of Heaven, or flying down and mingling with the sons of earth, shall rejoice to see that Jannes and Jambres, who withstood Moses, were not more totally defeated than the foes of Christ shall be when Aaron’s rod shall swallow up their rods and the chorus shall be heard, “Hallelujah, Hallelujah, the Lord God 0mnipotent reigns!”

II. WE NOW DRAW AN INFERENCE. If it is so, that wherever true religion—the finger of God—comes into a man it becomes a consuming passion till the zeal of God’s house eats the man up—then there are many persons who profess religion who cannot have found the right thing. I will picture you one or two of them. There are some who sit and listen to the Gospel and who somewhat delight in its doctrines. They feel an attachment to the Truth and find some degree of comfort in it. But the one thing they think of is how they shall scrape together money—how they shall, by some means or other, fill their bank account.

As for God’s House, though it has many claims, it is looked upon as a nuisance when it once entrenches upon their pocket. They give—well, what per cent do they give of their incomes? So small is the fraction that we will not waste our time in calculating it. I dare say they give as much as their religion is worth. We have heard of one who said that his religion did not cost him above a quarter of a dollar a year. And somebody said he thought it was very dear at that price. I dare say most people are pretty good judges of what their religion is worth and their payment for its support may be taken as a fair estimate.

Those who are mean, miserly and miserable in the cause of Christ— whose only expenditure is upon self—and whose main object is gain, what can we say of them? Why, that they look upon religion as some great farmers do upon their little off-hand farms. They think it is well to have a little religion. They can turn to it for amusement sometimes, just to ease them a little of their cares. Besides, it may be very well, after having had all in this world, to try to get something in the next. They are not honest people. Serving the devil all their lives, the devil has a sort of deferred interest in them and will no doubt see to his claims. But, instead of doing justice, they want to cheat him at the last. No doubt, in the end, they will have their due. There are many of these in our Churches with whom we can find no fault in other respects. They are moral and decent in all ways. They can pray very nicely in Prayer Meetings, yet they never dream of consecrating their secular employments unto God. Aaron’s rod, in their case, has never swallowed up their rods.

I heard of a minister, who, having need to have a Chapel built, told the collector to call upon a certain person. The collector said, “Oh, he will not give anything. He never gives anything.” “Well,” said the minister, “if he gives as he prays, I should think he would give all he has!” So the collector called. “Well,” the gentleman replied, “really, he had so many calls.” You know all the fibs which are customary on such occasions. He would give nothing. So the collector said, “Sir, our minister said if you were to give as you pray, he thought you would give a large amount.” Well, that touched his conscience. “Our minister said, he thought when you prayed, you would give yourself away.”

There are many who say that who are a long way from meaning to carry it practically out. But give me the man who, with all worldly discretion, feels that it is as much his business to get money for God, as it is mine to preach for God. He sells his calicoes, his slabs of meat, his earthenware, or his groceries, for Christ, as truly as I come upon this platform to speak for Christ. He sanctifies his ordinary calling to the cause of Christ and makes himself the Lord’s servant in everything, saying, “Here, Lord, I give myself to You. It is all that I can do.”

I am afraid the inference I am to draw from what I have already said, is that those who love the world have a religion they had better get rid of. There are other persons who profess to be Christians, but who spend all the week round without ever brushing against their religion. They expect it to call upon them as the postman does, at regular hours. It may wake them up on Sunday morning, but it must mind it does not intrude upon the Monday. What are the books they read? Those yellow volumes of one

shilling or two shilling trash which abound at the railway bookstalls?

What is their talk about? Well, anything you like, except what it should be. What do they do during the week? Oh, they do twenty things. But what do they attempt for Christ? Do for Christ, Sir? With what surprise they look at you, when you ask them that question! What did they do all the week? Well, let us see—beginning with Monday and going on to Saturday—hear it all—and what is its sum total? As far as the Church or the world is concerned, these people might just as well have been in bed and asleep all the time—they do nothing whatever. They have a name to fire and practically they are dead.

If a young man joins a rifle corps, there he is. He stands in the rank. He learns his practice and drills. He tries to get a prize by hitting the target. But when a man joins the Christian Church, where is he? I do not know where he is. You may find his name seven hundred and something in the attendance book. He is there, but what is he? You find him at Chapel on Sunday, but where is he, and what is he doing for the cause of Christ during the week? The smallest scrap of paper would be too large to record his deeds of faith. He thinks he adorns his profession. But what kind of adornment is it, or who ever sees that adornment? I cannot tell. I believe that the man who does not make his religion his first and last thought, who does not subject all his actions, his eating and drinking, too, to the cause of Christ, has not the work of God in his soul. “Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

The man who has not consecrated the lap stone—who has not dedicated the counter to God—who has not made the desk and the pen holiness unto the Lord has yet to learn what the Christian religion is. It is not a uniform to be worn one day and cast away the next. It ought to be a part of the woof and warp of your being. It ought to run in your blood, penetrate the marrow of your bones, work in the arms, gaze from the eyes and speak from the tongue. O to be baptized, saturated, immersed in the Spirit of God and so, wherever we go to say to men who put our Lord at the bottom of the scale, “For us to live is Christ”! Only such, I say, will ever be able to add, “For me to die is gain.”

I hope this may come home to some of you. And if it does, may it produce from this day forth a more thorough love to Jesus—a more practical way of showing a more entire devotedness to that great cause which is either an awful imposition, or else deserves to have our whole heart, our whole spirit, soul and body devoted to it.

III. Now, I will close, by trying to GIVE SOME REASONS WHY I PUT THE SERVICE OF GOD SO PROMINENT, AND THINK THAT AARON’S ROD OUGHT TO SWALLOW UP ALL OTHER RODS.

What does the great Gospel revelation disclose to us? Does it not show us an awful danger and only one way of escape from it? Yonder is the place where the wrath of God burns without abatement, where souls suffer pangs indescribable. “Tophet is ordained of old. Yes, for the king it is prepared. He has made it deep and large: the pile there is fire and much wood. The breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, does kindle it.” Horrors, past imagination are revealed to us by the words of Jesus when He speaks of the worm that dies not, and of the fire that never shall be quenched.

If we could once, but for an instant, have an idea of the wrath to come. If but for a moment the scathing lightning of God could flash before our vision—if we could taste, but for an instant, the bitterness of that cup of trembling, the dregs of which the wicked earth must drink—I am sure we should feel that the religion which teaches us how to escape from it must be worthy of a man’s most solemn consideration! And we should give to it all the strength of our mind. To escape from Hell—O Sirs—if you do but manage this, though you die in an attic, you will have done well! Oh, if you have but escaped from the wrath to come, you will have been wise. Though you have lived as paupers here, wiser far than he who has piled—like the tower of Babel—wealth on wealth, only to find his way to despair at last.

Does not our religion also reveal to us the joyous reward of another world? It opens to us yonder pearly gates and bids us gaze on angels and glorified spirits. It tells us of celestial glories, of immortality, the crown of life which fades not away. It brings to our ear the melody of heavenly harps and bids our eyes look upon the splendors of the Son of God upon the Throne. Heaven—if there is a Heaven, and we, by calling ourselves Christians, accept it as Truth. Should it not, then, be our first and last thought, the Alpha and Omega of man’s existence, to seek and find it—so that we may not be shut out like the foolish virgins, but may enter with the wise into the marriage supper? By Hell and by Heaven, therefore, I do entreat you, let Aaron’s rod swallow up all other rods. And let love and faith in Jesus be the master passion of your soul.

Moreover, do we not learn in our holy faith of a love unexampled? Where was love such as that which brought the Prince of Glory down to the gates of death and made Him pass the portals amid shame and scoffing? Oh, matchless love which draws the Prince of Life down to the shades of death! That takes the crown from His lofty brow, removes His purple robe from His shoulders, loosens His glittering garment and strips His fingers of their golden rings. That wraps Him in clay, clothes Him in rags, houses Him nowhere, gives Him no place to lay His head! That makes Him eat the bread of penury and drink the water of affliction.

Shall such a love as this have half our hearts? Shall it have a cold love in return? Shall Jesus sit at the bottom of the table? Shall we stow Him away in some back chamber of the heart? Shall we treat Him to cold meats, to dogs’ meat? God forbid! Let us make Him King of kings within our hearts, as He is today King of kings in the highest heavens. If Christ is anything, He must be everything. If He deserve not to be everything, He deserves to be less than nothing.

But, my Brothers and Sisters, does not the Grace of God create in us a new and noble nature? And if new and noble, should it not predominate? He is accursed who lets his body rule his mind, who lets his eating and drinking chain the immortal spirit. And he is equally accursed who shall let his mind rule his new-born spirit. No, let that nature which feeds on Christ, which breathes Christ, and which ascends to Christ—as flame ascends up to the central source of fire—the sun—let that nature always have its full liberty. Let it be ruling in us! Though the Law in our members strives against it, yet let it rule and reign—like the rod of Aaron—let it swallow up all other rods.

And since, dear Brothers and Sisters, since God has been pleased to ennoble us by giving us the high dignity of being His children, shall we make our being a son of man a greater thing than being a son of God? Shall men, as they look at me, say of me first, “He is a tradesman”? O let me live so that the first thing they may say shall be—“He is a Christian”!

I heard of one, speaking of a certain earnest man’s religion, as riding his horse. I knew that the person who so spoke of him knew nothing about it. For this is a steed which you may ride all day and all night long. It is a very Pegasus which will bear you up to Heaven and carry you aloft up to the starry spheres. Never dismount, Christian—having been once set upon Christ’s own beast—continue to ride till He brings you safely home. Whatever others may be with their religion, let yours be of a sort which you cannot lay aside. You must hold it, you must speak about it.

The Brahmins and the Hindus practice caste. A Hindu one day asked our missionaries whether they had caste in England. The missionary replied, No, all men might eat and drink together. The Brahmin said this was very disorderly and even immoral. But the missionary said, “Well, but upon your great feast day—for instance, the great feast of Juggernaut— the Sudra eats with the Brahmin.” “Oh,” says he, “that is because we are in the presence of our god.” “So,” said the missionary, “that is the reason why we have no caste in England, because we are always in the presence of our God.”

I would that we thought of this. And being always in the presence of our God, let us live every day as the idolater does some days. As the Romanist does now and then. Talk of holy days! Why, every day ought to be to you a holy day. Speak of keeping the Sunday holy! Every day should be kept holy. Only the Sunday is a day of rest unto us more than the others. Write upon the bells of the horses, “HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD,” and let the pots in your own house be like the bowls before the altar.

I shall not say any more upon this subject. Only pray that the Lord may give to this Church a larger number of consecrated men and women—and ask of you, for I make a point of it—to remember that this must always be a labor of love if it is to be acceptable. No man ever does anything for the Lord acceptably which he would rather not do—no man ever gives to the Lord acceptably that which he would rather withhold. The service of Christ is perfect freedom—to serve Him day and night is to enjoy perpetual liberty.

Only try it, dear Brothers and Sisters! You that are low in Divine Grace and weak in your faith, doubting and unbelieving, do more for Christ! Make your consecration more perfect. and your light shall come forth as brightness and the glory of your soul as a lamp that burns. May the Lord now add His blessing. Amen.

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A DIVINE CHALLENGE!  
NO. 322

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, APRIL 22, 1860, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

**“Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me.” Exodus 8:1.**

ON two or three former occasions I have endeavored to insist upon the fact that God always puts a distinction between Israel and Egypt. He constantly speaks of the Israelites as “My people”—of the Egyptians, he speaks to Pharaoh as being “your people.” There is a continual and eternal distinction observed in the Word of God between the chosen seed of promise and the world—the children of the Wicked One. The great object of God’s interference with Egypt was not the blessing of Egypt at large, but the gathering out of His Israel from the midst of the Egyptians.

Beloved, I have the conviction that this is just what God is doing with the world now. Perhaps, for many a year to come, God will gather out His elect from the nations of the earth as He gathered His Israel from the midst of the Egyptians. You and I may not live to see that universal reign, of which we so joyously sang this morning. But the wheat will be gathered sheaf by sheaf, if not ear by ear. The tares will be left to ripen here, perhaps, until the great and terrible day the Lord comes.

At any rate, looking at the signs of the times we do not see any considerable progress made in the evangelization of the world. Egypt is Egypt still—the world is the world still—and as worldly as it ever was and God’s purpose seems to be, through the ministry which He now exercises, to bring His chosen ones out. In fact, the Word which Jehovah is now speaking to the entire world with the solemn authority of an imperial mandate is this—“Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me.”

It will be necessary in addressing you this evening to recall to your minds the position which the Israelites held in Egypt. It is a type of the position of all the Lord’s people before the Most High God, who with a high hand and an outstretched arm brings them out of their bondage. The people of the Lord are slaves. Though their names are in His book, yet they are slaves, engaged like Israel of old in labors that savor more of earthly than of heavenly things—brick-makers, building houses not for themselves, for they find no city to dwell in. But toiling and laboring here as unwilling servants, thinking, perhaps, they shall receive goodly wages, but they receive no wages, except the whip upon their shoulders.

Every man in his unrenewed state is a slave. Even God’s people are slaves as well as others, till they hear the trumpet of jubilee and at the Word and by the power of God are brought forth out of the place of their slavery. We are slaves—slaves to a power which we never can overcome by our own unassisted strength. If all the inhabitants of Goshen—the Israelites, I mean—had concerted measures to rebel against Pharaoh and had said, “We will be free”—in but a few hours, the tremendous power of that great monarch of Egypt would have crushed out the last spark of hope. With his terrible army, his horses and his chariots, the rabblement of Israel would soon have been given to the dogs. They had no hope in the world of ever delivering themselves by their own power.

Nor more have we, Beloved. By nature we are slaves to him who is infinitely our superior, namely, to Satan and all his hosts of sin. We may seek sometimes to snap the fetter when a hectic flush of health comes over the cheek. But oh, we may make the fetters grind into our flesh, we cannot snap them. We may even sometimes think that we are free and talk of liberty—but our walk is a walk within a prison and our apparent liberty is but a deeper delusion of slavery. Men may bid us be free, but they cannot make us so. They may use the best means they can by education, by training, by persuasion, but these fetters are not to be filed by any instruments so weak.

God’s ministers may continually exhort us to snap our fetters. But alas, it is not in our power to do what, nevertheless, is their duty to command us to do. We are such slaves, that unless a mightier than ourselves and a mightier than Satan shall come out to our assistance, we must continue in the land of bondage—in the house of our sin and of our trouble. Nor, again, can we ever hope to redeem ourselves with money. If the children of Israel had given up all they had, they were so poor they could not have ransomed their own bodies.

The poor brick-makers could not buy themselves from their masters. The least thought of such a thing would have brought down the whip with ten-fold fury upon their poor bleeding shoulders. And so you and I may think we can buy our freedom by our good works, but the result of all our offers of purchase-money will be to make us feel the whip the more. You may go and toil and think you have gathered together something that can be acceptable in the sight of your taskmaster—but when you have done all—he will tell you that you are an unprofitable servant, command you to yet sterner labors, make you feel yet viler durance in your prison, for you cannot by such means escape.

Really, apart from God, the view of humanity which is given in the Scriptures is the most deplorable picture that even despondency itself could paint. Ah, men talk about some remnants of good that are left in humanity, some sparkling of Divine fire and the like, but the Bible does not say so. It expresses, in its solemn words, the meaning of that hymn, which begins—

*“How helpless guilty nature lies,  
Unconscious of her load;  
The heart unblest can never rise,  
To happiness and God.”*

The slavery of Israel in Egypt was hopeless slavery. They could not get free unless God interfered and worked miracles in their behalf. And the slavery of the sinner to his sin is equally hopeless—he could never be free— unless a mind that is infinitely greater than he can ever command shall come to his assistance and help. What a blessed circumstance it is, then, for those poor chosen children of God who are still in bondage, that the Lord has power to say and then power to carry out what He has said— “Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me.”

Having thus introduced my subject, by showing you the helpless condition of God’s people by nature and the utter impossibility of their ever getting free by themselves, let me observe that today God is saying—saying in His own decree—saying by Providence—and saying through the lips of His faithful ministers, that emancipating sentence which of old made Pharaoh relax his grasp and caused the land of Egypt to loose its captive ones— “Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me.”

I shall dwell upon this emancipating sentence tonight, as God shall give me strength, in this way. I shall first notice the fullness of the sentence, then the rightness of the sentence. Next, the repetition of it. And finally, the Omnipotence which is concealed in it.

I. First, then, THE FULLNESS OF THE SENTENCE. “Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me.” I don’t doubt but what there are some of God’s people here tonight who have not any idea they are His people. Perhaps they are slaves to drunkenness, bond slaves to every evil passion, yet, being bought by the blood of Christ, their names are in His book. And they must and they shall be saved. They think, perhaps, that they never, never can be. It may even happen that they have not any desire to be. But Israel shall come out of Egypt even though Israel may love the flesh-pots, the garlic and the cucumber.

Israel shall be delivered by might and by power, even though Israel himself may blindly imagine that he is at peace and at ease in the enemy’s land—that is to say, God will have His own people. Though they are content in their sin, though they have no will towards Him, yet He will come and make them discontented with their sins. He will turn their wills— change the bias of their hearts and they who once despised God, shall, with free consent, against their natural inclination, be led captives at the wheels of His Sovereign Grace.

God not only saves those who are willing to be saved, but those who are unwilling to be saved he can make willing in the day of His power. There have been many instances of that in this House of Prayer. Men have come in here merely from curiosity—to laugh, to make jests and fun—but God has had His time and when that time has come—“Thus says the Lord, let My people go free”—they have gone free. They have been saved. Their fetters which they were unconsciously wearing before, have begun to grate upon their soul, to eat their flesh and then they have sought mercy. And their fetters have fallen off, they have gone free.

Well, then, though I have run away from what I was going to say, I come again to this point—the fullness of the Divine sentence, “Let My people go free.” If you notice, it does not say “Let them have partial liberty. Let them have two or three days’ rest from their toil.” No. But, “Let them go free,” free altogether. God’s demand is not that His people should have

some little liberty, some little rest in their sin—no, but that they should go right out of Egypt and that they should go through the wilderness to Canaan. The demand was not made to Pharaoh, “Make their tasks less heavy. Make the whip less cruel, put kinder taskmasters over them.” No, but, “Let them go free.”

Christ did not come into the world merely to make our sin more tolerable, but to deliver us from it. He did not come to make Hell less hot, or sin less damnable, or our lusts less mighty. But he came to put all these things far away from His people and work out a full and complete deliverance. Perhaps Pharaoh might have said at length, “Well, they shall have kind masters. Their tasks shall be shortened. They shall have the straw given them, with which to make their bricks.” Yes, but Devil, this will not do! You may consent to it, but God never will. Christ does not come to make people less sinful, but to make them leave off sin altogether—not to make them less miserable, but to put their miseries away and give them joy and peace in believing in Him. The deliverance must be complete, or else there shall be no deliverance at all.

Again—you will mark, it says, “Let My people go.” It says nothing about their coming back again. Once gone, they are gone forever. Pharaoh thought he would let them go two or three days journey, yet they never went back to Egypt again. They went through the wilderness forty years to the Promised Land and no Egyptian could ever drive them back. Egypt went forth with all its chivalry to overtake them, but they perished in the sea—and Israel went through as on dry land and was blessed of God. That sentence which said of me, “Let My child go free,” gave me eternal liberty. Not liberty for yesterday and today and tomorrow, but liberty forever and forever.

You know when the Negro slaves run away from the Southern States and get to the North they are free, but still the man-hunter will soon be on their track and they may be taken back again to their masters. Yes, but you and I are like the slave when he gets to Canada. When he sets his foot on British soil and breathes the English air, that moment he is free. Once ferried over the stream that parts the land of slaves from the land of freedom, he stands on soil that cannot be stained by the slave’s foot. He breathes an air that never was received into lungs that were in bondage yet. He is free.

And so is it with us. We go not into slave states where the devil has got a fugitive law to hunt us up again, but into states where we are wholly free. There is not a fetter left. We have not a chain upon our wrist with half of it filed away, but we are free—the free men of God—and Satan has no claim, no right, no, no power, ever to enslave us again. “Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me.” It is a large demand because it is a demand that requires entire liberty and that liberty perpetual, too.

But, methinks, I hear one say, “Well, I have not yet entered into the fullness of that sentence.” No, Brother, nor have I yet—into the fullness of it—though I have into some of the sweetness of it. You must know that this emancipation is often gradual in our own experience, though it is effectual and instantaneous in God’s mind.

Time was—and let me speak to you to whom I can speak, whose experience will agree with what I utter—time was when you were born slaves to hardness of heart. You despised God—religion was a toil to you—in fact you never exercised your mind or will with it. Well, there came a time when the Lord said, “Let My people go free,” and you began to think. Your heart began to melt. You groaned under the burden of sin, you began to cry to God. You were delivered, then, from the hardness of your heart and were free. But still sin tormented you. Your guilt went with you every day like your own shadow. And like a grim chamberlain, with fingers bloody red, it drew your curtains tight and put its finger upon your eyelid, as if to crush darkness into your very heart. But the day came when, standing at the foot of the Cross you saw your sins atoned for, “numbered on the scapegoat’s head of old.” You felt the burden roll from your back, you were free—free from your past sins and you could rejoice in that most glorious liberty.

But, then, after a season, you went out into the world and you felt that, “when you would do good, evil was present with you.” How to will you found, but how to do you found not. Well, you have had partial deliverance from that, as one evil passion has been overcome and a virtue has been learned. You have achieved a triumph over one bad habit and a victory over another evil temper. The sentence has been going on, “Thus says the Lord, let My people go.”

And remember the day is coming when you shall lay dying. Yes, but you shall then begin to live. There shall be heard a voice speaking by your death pillow saying, “Loose him and let him go.” You will understand what that means and in a moment, loosed from every fetter, like Lazarus when the napkin was taken from his head and the grave clothes from his feet, you start up perfectly free. There shall not be a shadow of bondage about you. You shall fly to Heaven and walk its free and happy streets and never more shall you say, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

I say, therefore, we don’t know in all its fullness the meaning of this passage experimentally. Still it is all ours and we ought to receive it all by faith, as being our precious blessing. God has said to sin, to Satan, to death, to Hell, to doubts, to fears, to evil habits and even to the grave itself—“Let My people go, that they may serve Me.”

II. So much, then, for the fullness of the demand, I shall now notice, in the second place, the RIGHTNESS OF IT. The Lord had a perfect right to say to Pharaoh, “Let My people go free.” Tyrannical despot! What right had he to enslave a free nation? They came down there by the invitation of his predecessor. Did not Pharaoh invite Jacob and his family to come down to the land of Goshen? It was never in the stipulation that they should be made slaves. It was a violation of a national compact for Pharaoh to exact toil from free-born Israelites. Had they been brave and strong enough,

they ought to have resisted the encroachments of his tyranny.

They were not Pharaoh’s people. Pharaoh never chose them. He had never brought them where they were. He had not fought with them and overcome them. They were not captives in war, nor did they dwell in a territory which was the spoil of fair conflict. They were guests—honored guests—invited to come and to dwell in a land which they themselves enriched and blessed by their representative Joseph. It was not right, then, that they should be in bondage—there was no right on Pharaoh’s part. The right lay exclusively with God.

You notice the lightness of the demand concentrated in that little word “My”—“Let My people go free. Let your own people kiss your feet if they will—make them dig canals and build pyramids if you like, for I interfere not with them. But My people—let them go free. You have no right to their unpaid toil. They have no right to endure this cruel servitude. “Let My people go free.”

Do you see the parallel in our case? The Word of God is His own heavenly mandate. The Voice of justice and pity and mercy, cries to death and troll and sin, “Let My people go free—Satan, keep your own if you will, but let My people go free, for they are Mine. This people have I created for Myself—they shall show forth My praise. Let My people go free, for I have bought them with My precious blood. You have not bought them, nor have you made them—you have no right to them. Let My people go free.” All this is our comfort for poor sinners and we hope that some of them, though they don’t know it, are God’s people.

You must not imagine when you hear a man swear, or when he is going on in sin—you must not write his name down in the black book and say, “I am quite sure that man will go to the devil.” No. It may be that God ordains to save that man and one of these days you will meet him lifting up his voice in prayer, outstripping you, perhaps, in the heavenly race and serving his Master better than you have done. Jesus Christ takes many to His bosom whose company we would have shunned when they were in their evil state.

Sovereign mercy can dash into the prize ring and make captives. Free Grace can go into the gutter and bring up a jewel. Divine love can rake a dunghill and find a diamond. There is no spot where God’s Grace cannot and will not go. This, we pray, is our great hope when we have a congregation before us—not a hope that they will be willing, that they will be attentive in themselves, that they will give heed to what we say, but our hope is this—“Doubtless God has much people in this city,” and God having brought some of these within the sound of His Word, we have a hope that many are His chosen ones and God will have them.

I trust we never entertain a doubt but that God will have His own and that Christ will say as we preached to you this morning, “Not a hoof shall be left behind.” “They shall be Mine,” says the Lord—“they are Mine now and they shall be Mine in the day when I make up My jewels.” Lost though God’s elect are, they never belonged to Satan. They were lost, but that does not say they belong to the finder. A thing may be lost, but it is mine still when I have lost it, that is to say, I have a right to it and any man finding it and appropriating it, has no right to do so.

If I leave a piece of land having a right to it and another shall take possession for a time, yet if I hold the title deeds, I will have him ousted and take my property. The Lord has got the title deeds of some of you, though the devil has got possession of you. Satan rules you with a rod of iron and makes you his captives and willing servants. But my Master is a match for your master. There has been a great duel fought between life and death for you and life has won the victory and Free Grace claims the prize. And that prize Free Grace will give and your poor guilty soul shall yet be set as a signet on Jehovah’s hand and shall yet glitter as a jewel in Jehovah’s crown.

Oh, how I delight to talk about this Omnipotence of grace—of that grace that does not tarry for the sons of men, that does not stop but rides on in triumph and leads captivity itself captive. Oh, what a joy it is to think that we have not to wait on man—that it does not rest with man whether he should belong to Christ or not. If Christ has bought that man—if the Father has ordained him to be Christ’s—then Christ’s that man shall be. Rampart yourselves about with prejudices, but Christ shall scale your ramparts. Pile up your walls, bring up the big stones of your iniquity—but Christ shall take your citadel and make you a captive. Plunge into the mire if you will, but that strong arm can bring you out and wash you clean.

I see you curl your lips and say, “I shall never be a Methodist. I shall never make a profession of religion.” I don’t know, Sir. Many have said the same as you are saying and yet they have been brought down and if Christ will, He can bring you down, too, Sir. There is not strength enough in sin to overcome His Grace. When He puts forth His arm, down you fall. Let Him but once strike and you may stand and rebel, but the victory is His. You may will to be damned, but if He wills to save you, His will is more than a match for your will. And you will come crouching down to His feet, saying, “Lord, I will that You save me.”

Then, methinks He will say this, “How is it you were not willing then! How is this that you are willing now?” “O Lord, You have made me willing and unto You be all the glory forever and forever.” So then, we need not say more. I think about the rightness of this sentence of God. They are His people, they are His blood-bought people. He created them for Himself and it is neither more nor less than right that God should say, “Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me.”

III. Let me now call your attention to THE REPETITION OF THIS SENTENCE. I have just read carefully through these first chapters of Exodus and I am not quiet sure how many times this phrase occurs, but some five or six times I know it is repeated. The first time, Moses said, “Thus says Jehovah, the Lord God of Israel, let My people go, that they may feast before Me in the wilderness.” The second time, he says, “Let My people go, that they may serve Me.” Some five or six times Moses went unto Pharaoh.

The first time he said it, Pharaoh laughed in his face. “You are idle,” he said, “you are idle. You don’t like your brick-making. You want to go and serve your God to get an idle holiday. Go to your tasks, the taskmasters had need make the toil a little more rigorous. What business have you with religion? Go on with your bricks.”

Now, that is how the worldling taunts you, when for the first time that sentence comes into his head. “Your religion,” he says, “your religion? Go to your shop, take down your shutters on a Sunday and see whether you can’t earn an honest living. Go on with your bricks. What business have you to talk about feasting before God in the wilderness? It is all romance.” And, you know, we hear worldlings say to us poor Christians that we don’t know what real life is. Of course we don’t—“real life”—well, when putrid carrion is the representation of real life, we may be pretty content with our ignorance!

Vain show! Vain disquietude! Vain question! Such was the Psalmist’s picture. That is the real life of the world, but we want a better life than that—a life more true and real, too, though the world despises it. Brickmaking, brick-making, brick-making—that is Pharaoh’s joy and so it is with the sinner before he is renewed—money-making, dirt-making, heaping together to himself bricks that he may build for himself a fortune. Oh, don’t these fellows turn round and look with supreme contempt on us poor fellows—that we should think that eternity is better than time? That God is better than the devil? That holiness is better than sin? That the pleasures of Heaven are better than the poor pomps and vanities of this world?

Such simpletons as these will look down and say, “Poor fellow he does not know better.” They, indeed, are the rational men, the intellectual men—they are, in fact, the king Pharaoh. Pharaoh gives a laugh, a hoarse laugh, “Let My people go free?” Yes, but there will come a blow in your face that will make you laugh after another fashion by-and-by. You with others shall join in weeping and crying and tears and you with all your chivalry shall sink into the waters and shall you go down and the Red Sea shall swallow you up.

Moses goes to Pharaoh yet again and says, “Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me.” And at one time the haughty monarch says, he will let some go, at another time he will let them all go, but they are to leave their cattle behind. He will hold on to something. If he cannot have the whole he will have a part. It is wonderful how content the devil is if he can but nibble at a man’s heart. It does not matter about swallowing it whole—only let him nibble and he will be content. Let him but bite at the ends and be satisfied, for he is wise enough to know that if a serpent has but an inch of bare flesh to sting, he will poison the whole.

When Satan cannot get a great sin in he will let a little one in, like the thief who goes and finds shutters all coated with iron and bolted inside. At last he sees a little window in a chamber. He cannot get in, so he puts a little boy in, that he may go round and open the back door. So the devil has always his little sins to carry about with him to go and open back doors for him. And we let one in and say, “O, it is only a little one.” Yes, but how that little one becomes the ruin of the entire man! Let us take care that the devil does not get a foothold, for if he gets but a foothold, he will get his whole body in and we shall be overcome.

Observe now, as Pharaoh would not give up the people, the sentence had to be repeated again and again and again, until at last God would bear it no longer, but brought down on him one tremendous blow. He smote the first-born of Egypt, the chief of all their strength and then He led forth His people like sheep by the hands of Moses and Aaron. In like manner, Friends and Brethren, this sentence of God has to be repeated many times in your experience, and mine. “Thus, says the Lord, let My people go free,” and if you are not quite free, don’t despair—God will repeat that sentence till at the last you shall be brought forth with silver and gold and there shall not be a feeble thought in all your soul.

You shall go forth with gladness—and with joy you shall enter into Canaan at last—up yonder where His Throne is glittering now in glorious light that angel eyes cannot bear. It is no wonder then, if it is to be repeated in our experience, that the Church of Christ must keep on repeating it in the world as God’s message. Go, missionary, to India and say to Juggernaut and Kalee and Brahma and Vishnu, “Thus says the Lord, let My people go free.” Go, you servants of the Lord, to China. Speak to the followers of Confucius and say, “Thus says the Lord, let My people go free.” Go to the gates of the harlot city, even Rome and say, “Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me.”

Think not though you die that your message will die with you. It is for Moses to say, “Thus says the Lord,” and if he is driven from Pharaoh’s sight the, “Thus says the Lord” still stands, though His servant fall. Yes, Brothers and Sisters, the whole Church must keep on throughout every age, crying, “Thus says the Lord, let My people go.” We must continue to send our missionaries to lands like Madagascar, where the people of God are speared by hundreds and they must say to the haughty queen, “Thus says the Lord, let My people go.” We must still send our Livingstones and our Moffats through all the wastes of Africa—

*“Through her fertile plains,  
Where superstition reigns,  
And binds the man in chains.”*

And they must continue to say, “Thus says the Lord, let My people go.” Our Brethren must continue in the theatres and in the streets—in the  
highway and in the byway—saying, not in so many words, but still in fact,  
“Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me.” And it will  
be a happy time for the Church when every minister feels that he is sent  
of God—and when he speaks as Moses did. Conscious of Divine authority,  
he looks sin and evil and error in the face and says, “Thus says the Lord,  
let My people go.” When we are galled to enter a protest against an error,  
we shall sometimes be disappointed, because people don’t see with us.  
Very well, very well, but when we have entered the protest we have done all. It was not meant to convince the Egyptians, but it was meant to con  
strain them—“Thus says the Lore, let My people go.”  
When there is a pretended Church of Christ, wherein error is preached,  
the Christian minister is bound faithfully to point out the error, confident  
that God’s people will hear the warning voice and come out of Babylon.  
And as for the rest, they must remain where they are, for the mandate is  
to those whom it concerns—those in whom the Lord has an interest, the  
people who are His “portion” to go.  
IV. Now, my last point, which must, as time and strength alike fail me,  
be brief—is this—THE OMNIPOTENCE OF THE COMMAND—“Thus says  
the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me.”  
“They shall never go,” says Pharaoh. And his counselors say, “Yes, so  
be it, O king, they shall never depart out of this land.” “By my father I  
swear,” says the king of Egypt, “they shall be my slaves forever.” “Back,  
back, you sons of the Hebrew shepherds, to your bricks and to your clay.  
Dare not to stand before Pharaoh’s son and dictate to him. I swear by my  
father’s bones again, you shall never go free.”  
Behold the rivers of Egypt run with blood! There is no fish in Egypt to  
be found through all the land and the Egyptians loathe to drink the waters of the river which they once worshipped, for it is full of blood. Now,  
come these two troublesome men in once more before Pharaoh—“Thus  
says the Lord God of the Hebrews let My people go, that they may serve  
Me.” The king pauses a minute—his haughty soul relents. “You may serve  
God in the land,” says he, “but you shall not go out of the land. You may  
have a three days rest and serve your God.”  
“No,” says Moses, “we cannot serve God in the land of your abominations and we should be an abomination to you as well as you to us. We  
must go.” Then the king tells them to be gone. They may go. He holds a  
counsel of wise men and they determine while they have breath left, they  
will never lose their claim upon those slaves who have so long served  
them and built such mighty cities. Yes, Pharaoh, but God is mightier than  
you. Open wide your gates you hundred-gated Thebes and send out your  
myriads of armed men swarming like locusts on a summer’s day. Come  
up, you mighty hosts of Zoar and you troop of populous No. Come up like  
swarms of frogs from old Nile. Come up against them and they shall break  
you—you shall be as potter’s vessels before them—for His redeemed must  
and shall go free!  
And now I stand tonight to many among yourselves in the position of  
Amram’s son of old and it is my business and that of all God’s minister’s,  
to cry to Satan, to sin, to Rome, to Mohammedanism, to idolatry, to every  
evil—“Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me.” We  
hear the hoarse laughter. We hearken to the cry of the kings of the earth  
as they stand up and the rulers take counsel together. Do you see the  
priests with their treacherous devices—the sons of Belial now plotting in  
the dark to destroy us? Yes, but you may go on to be broken in pieces.  
You may go onward like the sea, but the Rock stands fast and shall break you into spray and send you back and you shall know that there is a  
God who is greater than you all.  
Just as all Israel came forth despite of the determination of Pharaoh, so  
shall all God’s elect be saved, despite the power of Satan, of evil men, of  
false priests and false prophets. “Thus says the Lore, let My people go,”  
and go they must and shall.  
And now, my dear Hearers, have you ever heard the voice of God speaking in your hearts, “Let My people go”? There are some here tonight that  
have never been made free—no, what is worse than that—they think they  
are free while they are the slaves to sin. You think you are free, but this is  
the worst part of your slavery. You dream that you are saved while you  
are standing over the mouth of Hell—and this is the worst part of your  
danger—that you think you are saved. Ah poor souls, poor souls! Your  
gilded slaveries going to the ale-house and the tavern, to the seat of the  
scornful, drinking down sin as the ox drinks down water, the thought  
starts within me—“there will be an end to all that and what will they do  
when the end shall come?”  
When your hairs grow gray and your bodies become feeble. When you  
are drawing near the grave, what will your worldly pleasures do for you  
then? There was a young man died not long ago of extreme old age. I am  
not contradicting myself—that young man died of extreme old age some  
time ago at the age of twenty-six. He had sinned himself into the grave  
and into Hell by a course of debauchery and sin. Perhaps you are not  
such a fast sinner as that, but you are taking in the poison by slower degrees. But what will you do when the poison begins to work—when sin  
begins to pull out the core of your spirit, when the froth has been swept  
from your cup and you begin to taste its dregs.  
Yes, when you are dying you will want to set that cup down, but there  
will be an evil hand that will thrust it to your mouth and say, “No, no, you  
have drunk the sweets and now you must drink the bitters.” Though there  
is damnation in every drop, yet to the dregs must you drink that cup  
which you have begun to drink now. Oh, for God’s sake, dash it to the  
ground—have done with it. “Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts.” There is hope yet. There is mercy yet. Sin is  
a Pharaoh, but God is Jehovah. Your sins are hard—you cannot overcome  
them of yourself—but God can. He can overcome them for you. There is hope yet. Let that hope arouse you to action. Say to your soul  
tonight, “I am not in Hell, though I might have been. I am still on praying  
ground and pleading terms and now, God helping me, I will begin to  
think.” And when you begin to think you will begin to be blessed. There  
are more souls lost by thoughtlessness than anything else. If you want to  
go to Heaven there are a great many things to think of. If you want to go  
to Hell it is the easiest thing in the world. You can go and swear and drink  
as you like. It is only a little trifling matter of neglect to destroy your soul.  
“How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?”  
Well, then, if you begin to think, let me propose to you just this. The  
way of salvation is mapped out before your eyes tonight. He that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. To believe is to trust. Trust Him who hangs upon the tree and you are saved. Just as you are—guilty, helpless, weak and ruined—give up your soul to Christ. Ah, while I am thus advising you, I think I hear the voice behind me saying, “My servant, you are speaking according to My will and pleasure, for I, too, am saying in the heart of your hearers, ‘Go free.’ I, too, am saying to their enemies,  
‘Thus says the Lore, let My people go.’”  
Be it so, good Lord, and may my voice be but as Your voice. Rise, you  
slaves of Satan and be free. Break your bonds asunder and be delivered.  
Jesus comes to rescue you. His arm is strong and His heart is tender.  
Trust Him and be free. Oh, may God grant you grace that you may be free  
now and find Him, whom to find is to find everlasting life! Amen.

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“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”  
NO. 3340

A SERMON  
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**“Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat the Lord, that He may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord.” Exodus 8:8.**

When it pleases God by His judgments to humble men, He is never at a loss for means—He can use lions or lice, famines or flies. In the armory of God there are weapons of every kind, from the stars in their courses down to caterpillars in their hosts. The dust of the earth, out of which man is formed, will at God’s command forget its kinship and overwhelm a caravan, while the waters will forsake their channels, invade the tops of the mountains and drown a rebellious race. When the Lord contends against proud men, He has but to lift His finger and countless legions throng around Him, all loyal to their Lord and valiant for His name! Know you not that the beasts of the field are His servants and the stones of the street obey His bidding? Every wave worships Him and every wind knows its Lord. If you would war against Him, it would be well for you to know what His forces are—consider the battle—do no more.

In the case before us Jehovah has to deal with Pharaoh and He humbles him by frogs. Strange! Amazing! One would have thought that such despicable means would never have been used. The Lord began with the proud monarch by turning the waters into blood, but it may be that Pharaoh said in his heart, “What a great man I am! If Jehovah comes forth against me, He must needs work a terrible miracle in order to conquer.” He goes his way to his house unhumbled. This time the Lord will deal with him in another style. I grant you that the conflict was still sublime in the truest sense, but in Pharaoh’s estimation the croaking frogs which came up from all the banks of the Nile were a mean sort of adversary! From every reservoir and marsh they marched up in countless hordes, entering into his chamber and coming upon his bed and his kneading trough. He could neither sleep nor eat, nor walk abroad without encountering the loathsome reptiles. The Lord seemed by this to say, “Who are you that I should do great things to conquer you? I will even vanquish you by frogs.”

There was a suitableness in God’s choosing the frogs to humble Egypt’s king, because frogs were worshipped by that nation as emblems of the Deity. Images of a certain frog-headed goddess were placed in the catacombs and frogs, themselves, were preserved with sacred honors. These are your gods, O Egypt! You shall have enough of them! Pharaoh himself shall pay a new reverence to these reptiles. As the true God is everywhere present around us—in our bedchambers and in our streets, so shall Pharaoh find every place filled with what he chooses to call Divine! Is it not a just way of dealing with Him?

The Lord has sure ways of reaching the hearts of proud men and if He does not use frogs, today, He can use other means, for He has servants everywhere prepared for each emergency. He knows how to reach the rich and make them sit by the wayside, like Belisarius, begging for food. The strong and healthy man, He can soon place among the invalids and make him cry like a sick girl, “Give me a drink, Titinius.” Your children are about you today—your pride and joy—but He can make you childless in an hour. His arrows can pierce through a sevenfold harness of steel— no man is so encompassed as to be beyond the reach of the Almighty! Let me speak of Pharaoh by way of observation and I will begin by remarking that—

I. IN SORE TROUBLE, THE SERVANTS OF THE LORD ARE GREATLY VALUED.  
“Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron.” The frogs had taught him good manners and he longs to see the ministers of the Lord. How is this? The man was somewhat brought to his senses—and when this happens, men begin to value those whom they aforetime despised. Listen to this story. There came a man of God to Bethel where king Jeroboam was setting up the golden calves and he began to cry against the altar. Then Jeroboam stretched forth his hand and cried, “Lay hold upon him.” In a moment the rebel’s right arm withered, and hung by his side, useless! Then he turned to the man of God, whom he was about to arrest, and said, “Entreat the Lord for me.” Thus have persecutors been forced to crouch at the feet of those whom they would have destroyed! Another story will set forth the same truth. King Saul had been forsaken of God and the Philistines pressed hard upon him. In his extremity he resorted to a woman who professed to deal with the spirits of the dead. With whom would he speak? He cries, “Bring me up Samuel.” Samuel was the man who had most sternly rebuked him! One would have thought that Samuel was the last person he would wish to see, but in his need, he asks for no one else but Samuel. When ungodly men get into straits, how they wish they could consult with one who has gone home, against whom they pointed many a jest. They never say, “Bring me up the jolly fellow who filled and quaffed the bowl with me.” In their tribulation they think not of such. They never cry, “Bring me up the wanton with whom I sported in sin, that I may again enjoy her company.” No, in their distress they desire other advisers—they would rather cry, “Bring me up my holy mother! Oh, for a sight of her dear, loving face as I saw it on her dying bed, when she urged me to follow her to Heaven! Bring me up that old friend whom I ridiculed when I turned aside from the ways of God! Oh, for an hour with the man of God whom once I scorned!” Do you not see that it is the old tale repeated—Pharaoh, when his troubles are multiplied, calls for Moses and Aaron!  
This is also to be accounted for by the fact that God puts a mysterious honor upon His faithful servants. The painters place halos about the heads of the Bible saints—there were no such crowns of light upon them, literally, and yet within the legend there slumbers a great truth. He who leads an upright, holy, gracious life has a power about him which impresses the beholder—his presence in an ungodly company has an influence on wicked men like that of Zephon, of whom Milton sings in Paradise Lost. To the great fallen angel his presence was a rebuke. God hedges the good with a dignity which men feel even when they are not conscious of it. It was so in the case before us. Moses was made to be as a god unto Pharaoh. Pharaoh had said, “Get you unto your burdens,” addressing Moses and Aaron as if they were slaves! But now he sends for them and entreats their prayers on his behalf! This was like the case of Joseph. His brothers hated him and sold him for a slave—but how different the scene when they bowed before him and trembled as he said, “I am Joseph!” The archers had shot at him and wounded him, but still his bow abode in strength!  
Remember, too, Jeremiah, whom Zedekiah, the king, treated with great indignity till the Babylonians had surrounded the city—and then he sent to him and said, “Enquire, I pray you, of the Lord for us.” Our Lord describes an instance still more remarkable. It belongs to the next world, but the same principles rule in all worlds. A poor saint was laid at a rich man’s door, full of sores. He begged for the crumbs that fell from the rich man’s table, “moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.” The rich man, clothed with purple and fine linen, took small note of this saint of God. But what a change happened on a day when the beggar died and was carried by angels into Abraham’s bosom—and the rich man also died and was buried! In Hell the rich man lifted up his eyes, and Lazarus had honor before him, for he begged that Lazarus might be sent to cool his burning tongue with the tip of his finger dipped in water. They had changed places, for God had crowned His poor servant with glory and honor! The halo was around the head of Lazarus most assuredly.  
A light shone upon the face of Moses and a glory settled upon the brow of Jesus. “Such honor have all the saints” in a spiritual sense—and the proudest of men shall be made to know it!  
Once more, let me note that this honor is doubtless set on saints that they may be of service to ungodly men. God intends, by their means, to bless the penitent. When it was wheat harvest and a thunderstorm came because Israel desired a king, you remember that while peal on peal the dread artillery of God was heard, the people trembled and besought Samuel the Prophet to pray for them. And he said, “God forbid that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you.” Holy Samuel’s prayer was heard for them!  
Much later an earthquake shook the foundations of a prison and loosed the bands of the prisoners. Then the jailer woke up in his fright and feared that his prisoners had escaped—and that he should have to die for it—but there stood Paul, the man whom he had thrust into the inner prison, and whose feet he had made fast in the stocks! And the jailer, trembling before him, cried out, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” The answer was given. He was directed to believe and to be baptized— and the jailer and his house were saved! If God’s servants are treated with scorn and harshness they need not fear, for they are put just where they are, that unconverted men may be blessed by their agency. Like Moses to Pharaoh, saints will yet have to say, “Glory over me. I will pray for you, or teach you, so that I may but lead you to the Savior.”  
It is clear that in times of trouble godly men and women are at a premium! Secondly, with ungodly men—  
II. IN TIMES OF SORE TRIAL PRAYER ALSO BEGINS TO BE VALUABLE.  
Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, “Entreat the Lord.” Pharaoh begs an interest in the prayers of good men—this is a fine change since the day wherein he said, “Who is Jehovah that I should obey His voice?”  
When men are sick and near to die, they send for us to pray with them. That old philosopher, Bion, showed much wisdom in his biting sarcasm. He was on shipboard and found that among the passengers there were certain foul-mouthed desperadoes. While they were venting all manner of abominations, a storm came on, and they began to pray! Then Bion cried out to them, “Hold your tongues, for if the gods only know that you are here, they will sink the vessel! Be quiet, lest your prayers should be our ruin.” One’s thoughts have taken somewhat of that form when we have seen men fulfilling the old adage—  
*“When the devil was sick, the devil a saint would be.”*Such prayers are too often an insult to the holiness of God!  
Why is it that reprobates take to praying when they are in deep trouble? Frequently superstition moves them. They regard a prayer as a spell or magical charm. So in their folly they send for a minister and cry, “Entreat the Lord for me!” Among many Londoners, so dense is this superstition that after a poor soul is dead, I have heard relatives say, “We sent for the minister and he came and prayed to him.” Mark that word, “prayed to him”! Does not this discover the ignorance and superstition of the people? They do not know the design and object of prayer. This superstition needs to be spoken of with great truthfulness and fidelity.  
In certain instances the man’s hope in prayer is the result of a condemning faith. There is a justifying faith and a condemning faith. “What?” you say, “does faith ever condemn men?” Yes, when men have faith enough to know that there is a God who sends judgments upon them, that nothing can remove those judgments but the hand that sent them and that prayer moves that hand—there are persons who yet never pray, themselves, but eagerly cry to friends, “Entreat the Lord for me.” That is a measure of faith which goes to increase a man’s condemnation, since he ought to know that if what he believes is true, then the proper thing is to pray himself! It would have been a wonderfully good sign if Pharaoh had said, “Join with me, O Moses and Aaron, while I pray unto Jehovah that He may take the frogs from me.” But, no, he had only a condemning faith which contented itself with other men’s prayers!  
In many instances this desire for prayer is one of the movements of the Spirit upon the heart of man. When a poor, afflicted man, in the depth of poverty, struck with consumption or laid aside by some other deadly disease, desires that a minister would come and pray with him, we will never treat such a wish with neglect. While it is our duty to expose the superstition which often lurks beneath the wish, we also hope that some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel may dwell in it. It is, perhaps, the prodigal saying, “I will arise and go unto my Father, and I will inquire the way home.” I hope it is so.  
Take warning, you that do not pray—you will yet need to pray! There will come a time to the most of you when you will not be able to bear yourselves without crying unto God. May God, in His Infinite Mercy lead you to begin at once! For when it can be said of you, “Behold, he prays,” it will be the best of news! Beginning to pray is the turning point of life! Why not at once set a high price upon that which in times of trouble you will seek for with tears? Our third observation is this—  
III. IN SORE TROUBLE THE PRAYER IS OFTEN A WRONG ONE.  
The petitions which men offer when they are in distress are often wrong prayers. Pharaoh said, “Entreat the Lord, that He may take away the frogs from me.”  
A fatal flaw is manifest in that prayer. It contains no confession of sin. He says not, “I have rebelled against the Lord. Entreat that I may find forgiveness!” Nothing of the kind—he loves sin as much as ever. A prayer without penitence is a prayer without acceptance. If no tear has fallen upon it, it is withered. You must come to God as a sinner through a Savior, but by no other way. He that comes to God like the Pharisee, with, “God, I thank You that I am not

as other men are,” never draws near to God at all! But he that cries, “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” has come to God by the way which God has, Himself, appointed! There must be a confession of sin before God or our prayer is faulty.  
Pharaoh’s prayer dealt only with the punishment. “Take away the frogs! Take away the frogs! Take away the frogs!” That is his one cry. So we hear the sick exclaim, “Oh, Sir, pray that I may get well.” The drunkard begs that he may be helped out of his poverty. The impenitent sinner cries, “Pray that my child may not be taken from me.” It is not wrong to pray, “Take away the frogs.” We should all have prayed so if we had been surrounded by such pests. The evil is that this was the whole of his prayer. He said not, “Take away my sins,” but, “Take away the frogs.” He did not cry, “Lord, take away my heart of stone,” but only, “Take away the frogs.” Perhaps I am addressing those who are in poverty, sickness, or distress and all they are crying about is, “Lord, take away the frogs! Deliver me from my poverty, my trouble, my hunger, my disgrace, my punishment!” Now, if you have brought yourself into evil by a vicious life, your prayer must not be, “Take away the disease and the poverty,” but “Take away the sin.” The drunkard’s prayer must not be, “Lord, take away the result of my intoxication,” but, “Remove from me the poisoned cup.” Lay the axe at the root and cry, “Lord, take the sin away.” Alas, most of the prayers of men in trouble are only like Pharaoh’s selfish prayer, “Take away the frogs.” The Lord did hear his petition, but nothing came of it. The frogs were gone, but flies came immediately after and all sorts of plagues followed in rapid succession—and his heart was still hardened.  
When ungodly men are under a sense of Divine Wrath they turn not to God aright—their prayer is devoid of spiritual requests. When Cain had murdered his brother, did he express a regret? No. He only murmured, “My punishment is greater than I can bear.” Esau sold his birthright. Did he repent of the sin of having been a profane person, and seek pardon carefully? Not he! He sought carefully with tears to get back his birthright, but he found no place for repentance in his father Isaac! The blessing had gone to Jacob and on Jacob it must remain. Another telling case is that of Simon Magus. When Peter told him that he was in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, he replied, “Pray you to the Lord for me that none of these things which you have spoken come upon me”—that was all he cared about. He expressed no desire to be delivered from his evil way, but only to be screened from the consequences of it! Every knave cries out against punishment—but he is attaining to honesty who entreats to be freed from his pilfering habits! Our last remark is that—  
IV. THE SINNER IN HIS SORE TROUBLES IS VERY APT TO MAKE GREAT PROMISES.  
Pharaoh cried, “Take away the frogs and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord.” In this way one of you talked when you were down with fever, or when you were likely to lose your employment through your folly. You said, “Please God, if You let me escape this once, I will be a very different man.” Such promises are generally boastful. Notice here the proud language of Pharaoh. “I will let the people go.” He does not long talk in this fashion, but now he is a great king and he gives his royal word, “I will let the people go.” Some folks are very big when they promise God, “I will do this and I will do that.” But you cannot, my Friend! You reply that you are going to have a new heart and a right spirit. Are you looking to create them yourself? You talk as if you were! I think you said that you were going to “turn over a new leaf,” but a new leaf in a bad book may be worse than the old leaf! But you are going to be entirely new, are you? Are you to do all this yourself? You are greatly mistaken—true conversion does not begin by talking of what “I” will do! It begins in casting ourselves upon the Lord and begging Him to work all our works in us!  
But this man’s promises were all a lie. I daresay that for the moment he meant them—but he did not keep his word, for he did not let the people go. “When Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.” Has not that been the case with many others? You promised “faithfully,” as you said. You pledged yourself that it would be so, but it is not so. Stand still awhile and hear a message from the Lord—“You have not lied unto men, but you have lied unto God.” Let that sentence pierce the innermost heart of your conscience! “You have lied unto God.” Remember Ananias and Sapphira and what followed upon their falsehood? Be astonished that it has not followed upon yours, for you made the promise before witnesses in the Presence of the Lord Himself!  
Mark well that in all this, Pharaoh increased his guilt. His vows heaped up his transgressions. He forgot his promises, but God did not. They were laid by in store against him—and the blows of God upon him fell heavier and heavier until, at last, Jehovah drowned him and his chosen captains in the Red Sea! Oh, Sirs, if God comes to deal with you in this fashion, what will become of you? Your promises are filed in Heaven to be witnesses against you! God reaches out these promises of yours at this hour and holds them up before your eyes. And what does your conscience say? If you had promised a kind friend and broken your word, it would have been base enough, but you have been ungrateful to your God in whose hands your breath is, and whose are all your ways! Let a sense of guilt overwhelm you and, in the name of Jesus Christ, ask mercy of your God!  
I will tell you how God deals with His own children and then leave you to infer how He will deal with you if you are not His children. A certain man, to all appearances, feared God. Yes, and did so with a sincere heart. He was once an earnest Christian, a member of the Church and a worker in the service—faithful to his light and fervent in spirit—but he grew cold. He had a farm and it occupied nearly all his time. He was filled with an intense desire to grow rich and, therefore, he devoted his attention to his business till he grew colder and colder in Divine things— and the means of Grace on the weekdays were forsaken. Work for God was dropped, communion with God ceased and the religious professor became to all appearance an utter worldling. But yet he was a child of God and this is how his Father restored him. He took from him the wife of his youth, to whom his heart was knit. But this made him more worldly than before because his wife had been a great help to him in the farm—but now she was gone—so he must stick to it more than ever! Nothing came of the first chastisement except increased sin. He had only one son, for whom he was saving up his money and working his business—and he saw that son cut down with consumption, like his mother. This also made him still more worldly. It ought to have brought him to his knees, but it did not. He carried on the practice of prayer, but with little heart. He said, “Now, my dear son, who was such a comfort to me, has gone, I can hardly get out on Sundays at all. I must look after the cows and attend to the stock.” So he sank deeper in the mire.  
Then the Lord began to deal with him in another way. He had a bad season and lost money farming, careful as he was. Next year was worse, and the cattle plague emptied his stalls. He was brought down to poverty. He could scarcely keep the farm, for he could not pay the rent. Still he did not yield. He had tender moments now and then, but he was usually hard, for he felt that God was dealing severely with him. He felt angry against God and stuck to his business more than ever, while the things of God were forgotten. Then the Lord took His erring child more closely in hand than before, and sent him an incurable disease in his body. The worldly farmer lay upon a sick bed fretting about his business—he did not turn to the Lord even then! Last of all, his house took fire and as the barn and the ricks and the house were all ablaze and all that he had was going, they carried him out into the open air upon the bed from which he could not stir, and he was heard to say, “Blessed be the Lord! Blessed be the Lord! I am cured at last.” But, dear Friends, nothing would cure him till everything was gone from him! Was not that a pity? He was saved so as by fire. He would be “as the horse and the mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle” and, therefore, he had to suffer for it. I pray you do not copy him. People of God, do not make rods for your own backs in that way! Do not drive your heavenly Father to hard measures.  
But oh, you ungodly, if He will deal thus with His children, how will He deal with you who are not His children? If He means to bless you, He will not let you go unpunished, but He will smite you with heavy strokes. I remember one who used to bless God for a broken leg—he said that he never ran in the ways of God until he was lame. I believe that some parents never loved the heavenly Father till their dear infant child was taken away. The shepherd tried to get the mother sheep into the fold, but she would not come, so he took up her lamb and carried it away in his arms—and then the mother followed him! He has done that to some of you. You would never have come to Christ if dear little Johnny had not gone Home to Jesus. You lost one and another for that same purpose— have you not had enough strokes? You have been smitten till your “whole head is sick and your whole heart faint.” Will you not turn unto your God without more ado? His blows are sent in mercy! It is far better that you should have a Hell here than Hell hereafter! It were better for you to live a lifelong agony than to be cast into Hell forever! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved! He died for sinners—died for aggravating, guilty, willful sinners! And if they look to Him, they shall at once be forgiven! I cannot give the look of faith for you, or I would gladly do so, but I beseech you to look and live! May God the Holy Spirit lead you to do so, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**EXODUS 3:1-14; ROMANS 9:1-25.**

This Chapter in Exodus tells of the appearance of God to Moses in the Wilderness. Has He departed from us, Brothers and Sisters? He used to be seen by godly souls by mount and stream and sea—and even bushes were alive and blazing with the indwelt Godhead! Oh, that He would reveal Himself to us tonight! I am going to read this Chapter with this longing in my heart. I pray that the same longing may be in the heart of every child of God—“Show me Your face: show me Your face, my God, tonight!”

Verse 1. Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back side of the desert, and came to the Mountain of God, even to Horeb. There is nothing dishonorable about common trade and matters of business at all. Here is a shepherd who keeps his flock—and God keeps him and reveals Himself to him. When God wants a man to lead His people, He seeks for him not among idlers, but busy, active men. And God was pleased to show Himself more to Moses, as a shepherd, than He had ever shown Himself to him as a prince in Egypt. I find no glowing Deity in the halls of Pharaoh, but I find the Consuming Fire manifested in the lone wastes of the Sinai Desert!

2. And the Angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. Well might it say, “Behold.” I have seen a bush set alight by a match. It blazed in a moment, but it was gone in another moment! It burned up fiercely and hastily. But God was pleased to make a poor consumable bush to be the unharmed place of His abiding. He dwells today in the Human Person of the Savior. The Godhead is in Christ. He dwells today in the Church which might well enough be consumed by His Presence—but it is not. He can come and dwell in my heart and in yours, tonight, and yet we shall bear the Presence of Deity to the hour of our death! He has a way of so throwing Himself into our feebleness that it becomes strong—and that which might otherwise have been destroyed, is even preserved by His Presence! The bush burned with fire and was not consumed.

3, 4. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. Oh, that personal call—that voice from God to the heart! How much we need it. Do you not remember when first the Lord called some of you? Then He says to you tonight, “I have called you by My name. You are Mine.” Acknowledge that sweet impeachment, confess that you are His and say to Him, “For suffering or for service, here am I ready, yes ready, even as Moses was. Here am I.”

5. And He said, Draw not near here: take your shoes from off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. Stand as a servant stands in the presence of his master in the East. He is not expected to wear, in the court of his master, the shoes which have trodden in the mire of the world. Now, put away your cares, put away your carnal thoughts, put away yourself, put away your sins. When God is near, solemnity and deep reverence become us. “The place where you stand is holy ground.”

6. Moreover He said, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. You need not hide your face if God shall appear to you, though I am sure you will do it. You may come boldly. It is your Father’s face! It is the face of One who is reconciled to you in Christ. Therefore open your eyes and look—and may the Lord show Himself to you!

7. And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows. Now, you troubled ones, are not these verses real music to you? God has seen your afflictions—there are God’s eyes! God has heard your cry—there are God’s ears. “I know their sorrows.” There is God’s mighty understanding. He is thinking about you. He knows all that which tries you tonight.

10. “Come now therefore”—This was a very extraordinary thing to follow after all that. God has seen the affliction of His people. What then? Does He say, “I am come down to deliver them”? What then? Why, the next thing is that He is going to use this trembling man who stands awestruck with his shoes off in the presence of the still burning bush! “Come now, therefore”—

10. And I will send you unto Pharaoh, that you may bring forth My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt. You have been praying for a blessing. God is going to give it through you. You have been looking east and west and north and south for some deliverer that shall win souls and stir up the Church. God calls you to do it! He invites you to undertake this gigantic service and I think that I see the color come into your face and then fly away again! You are ready to faint at the thought of such a charge laid upon you!

11. And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? Now, catch this—

12. And He said, Certainly I will be with you. What more does Moses need? He said, “Who am I?” This showed his weakness. God said, “Never mind who you are. Certainly I will be with you.” Here was strength enough for him!

12. And this shall be a token unto you, that I have sent you: When you have brought forth the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God upon this mountain. And he did! You know how Sinai trembled while God made it His Throne and how Moses must have been strengthened when he did exceedingly fear and quake before God when he remembered that this same God had appeared to him when he was alone in the desert—and had promised that they should worship Him there.

13. Then Moses said to God, Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they say to me, What is His name? what shall I say to them?

14. God said unto Moses, I AM WHO I AM. That is His name—The Infinite, Eternal and Unchangeable God!  
14. And He said, Thus shall you say unto the children of Israel, I AM has sent me unto you. Oh, what a glorious commission—to receive it direct from the self-existent God, who is the same forever and ever, and only has immortality! Speak to us tonight, you great I AM, JAH, Jehovah, God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. Speak to this company in this House of Prayer tonight, because of Jesus, Joshua, Jehoshua, Jehovah, Jesus. I have tried to show you how that name of Jesus has the name “Jehovah” hidden away in it. Because of Him, draw near to us, O Lord!

*ROMANS 9:1-25.*The Jews thought that God must certainly save them. They thought they had a birth claim. Were they not the children of Abraham? Surely they had some right to it. This Chapter battles the question of right. No man has any right to the Grace of God. The terms are inconsistent. There can be no right to that which is free favor. We are all condemned criminals, and if pardoned, it must be as the result of pure mercy, absolute mercy, for there is no good in any one of us!

Verses 1, 2. I say 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. He never thought about his unbelief, Brothers and Sisters, without the deepest imaginable regret. How far is this from the spirit of those who look upon the ungodly without tears—settle it down as a matter that cannot be altered and take it as a question of hard fate—but are never troubled about it! Not so the Apostle. He had great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart.

3. For I could wish that I, myself ,were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh. He had just that selfsacrificing spirit of Moses, that he would lose anything and everything if they might but be saved. And this is the spirit which ought to actuate every Church of Christ. The church that is always caring for her own maintenance is no church. The Church that would be willing to be destroyed if it could save the sons of men—which feels as if, whatever her shame or sorrow, it would be nothing if she could but save sinners—that Church is like the Lord, of whom we read, “He saved others: Himself he could not save.” Oh, blessed heartbreak over sinful men which makes men willing to lose everything if they might but bless and win men to Christ! “My kinsmen,” he says, “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, God blessed forever. Amen. What dignity has God put upon ancient Israel! How favored far beyond any of us in these particulars! They had the Light of God when the rest of the world was in darkness! Theirs was the Law of God, and theirs the Covenant promises! Above all, of them it was that Christ came! Our Savior was a Jew! Forever must that race be had in respectful honor and we must pray for their salvation.

6, 7. Not as though the Word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel. Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but in Isaac shall your seed be called. Now the Apostle is getting to his point. You Jews claim to have the mercy of God because you are of the seed of Abraham, but there is nothing in that, he says, for God made a distinct choice of Isaac to the rejection of Ishmael, as he did afterwards of Jacob, and then Esau was left out.

8. That is, your flesh which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. Now Isaac was not the child of Abraham’s flesh. He was born according to promise, when his mother was past age and his father well stricken in years. His was the birth according to the promise and that is the way the line of Grace runs—not according to the flesh, but according to the promise! If, then, all my hope of Heaven lies upon my being a child of godly parents, it is an Israelite hope and good for nothing! If my hope of Heaven lies upon my having been born according to the promise of God—born of His Grace and of His power—in that line the Covenant stands! God has determined that it shall be so.

9-13. For this is the word of promise. At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calls) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. So, then, there is no claim of birth, for he that had the claim of birth, even Esau, is passed by! There is, indeed, no claim at all, for God gives freely according to His own will, blessing the sons of men.

14. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid! There is no unrighteousness in anything that He does! And in the winding up of all affairs, it shall be seen that God was righteous as well as gracious.

15-16. For He says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy. That is where it must begin. When men are condemned, what can they appeal to, but the mercy of God? Where is the hope of men, but in the sovereignty of the Most High?

17-24. For the Scripture says unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised you up, that I might show My power in you, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore has He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will, He hardens. You will say then unto me, Why does He yet find fault? For who has resisted His will? No but, O man, who are you that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why have You made me thus? Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction? And that He might make known the riches of His Glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto Glory, even us, whom He has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? There was the sting of it. They could not endure that God should, in His Divine Sovereignty save Gentiles as well as Jews! But He has done so and He has sent the Gospel to us while they, having refused it, are left in the darkness which they chose.

25. As He says also in Hosea, I will call them My people, which were not My people: and her beloved, which was not beloved. Oh, what a splendid verse is this! Let some here who have been far from God until now and never had a gracious thought, nevertheless hear what He has done and will do again! “I will call them My people that were not My people, and her beloved which was not beloved.”

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CONFESSION OF SIN—A SERMON WITH SEVEN TEXTS  
NO. 113

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 18, 1857, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“I have sinned.”  
PHARAOH—Exodus 9:27.**

MY sermon this morning will have seven texts and yet I pledge myself that there shall be but three different words in the whole of them. For it so happens that the seven texts are all alike, occurring in seven different portions of God’s Holy Word. I shall require, however, to use the whole of them to exemplify different cases. And I must request those of you who have brought your Bibles with you to refer to the texts as I shall mention them.

The subject of this morning’s discourse will be this—CONFESSION OF SIN. We know that this is absolutely necessary to salvation. Unless there is a true and hearty confession of our sins to God, we have no promise that we shall find mercy through the blood of the Redeemer. “Whoever confesses his sins and forsakes them shall find mercy.” But there is no promise in the Bible to the man or woman who will not confess his sins. As upon every point of Scripture, there is a liability of being deceived, so more especially in the matter of confession of sin. There are many who make a confession and a confession before God who, notwithstanding, receive no blessing because their confession has not in it certain marks which are required by God to prove it genuine and sincere and which demonstrate it to be the work of the Holy Spirit. My text this morning consists of three words, “I have sinned.” And you will see how these words, in the lips of different men, indicate very different feelings. While one says, “I have sinned,” and receives forgiveness—another we shall meet with says, “I have sinned,” and goes his way to blacken himself with worse crimes than before and dive into greater depths of sin than heretofore he had committed.

THE HARDENED SINNER  
**PHARAOH—“I have sinned.”—Exodus 9:27.**

I. The first case I shall bring before you is that of the HARDENED SINNER who, when under terror, says, “I have sinned.” And you will find the text in the book of Exodus, the 9th chapter and 27th verse—“And Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous and I and my people are wicked.”

But why this confession from the lips of the haughty tyrant? He was not often likely to humble himself before Jehovah. Why does the proud one bow himself? You will judge of the value of his confession when you hear the circumstances under which it was made. “And Moses stretched forth his rod toward Heaven. And the Lord sent thunder and hail and the fire ran along upon the ground. And the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So that there was hail and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.” “Now,” said Pharaoh, while the thunder is rolling through the sky, while the lightning-flashes are setting the very ground on fire and while the hail is descending in big lumps of ice—“now,” he says, “I have sinned.” He is but a type and specimen of multitudes of the same class. How many a hardened rebel on shipboard, when the timbers are strained and creaking, when the mast is broken and the ship is drifting before the gale, when the hungry waves are opening their mouths to swallow the ship up alive and quick as those that go into the pit of Hell— how many a hardened sailor has then bowed his knees, with tears in his eyes and cried, “I have sinned”? But of what use and of what value was his confession? The repentance that was born in the storm died in the calm! That repentance of his that was begotten amidst the thunder and the lightning ceased as soon as all was hushed in quiet. And the man who was a pious mariner when on board ship became the most wicked and abominable of sailors when he placed his foot on terra firma!

How often, too, have we seen this in a storm of thunder and lightning? Many a man’s cheek is blanched when he hears the thunder rolling. His eyes start to tear and he cries, “O God, I have sinned,” while the rafters of his house are shaking and the very ground beneath him reeling at the voice of God which is full of majesty! But alas, for such a repentance! When the sun again shines and the black clouds are withdrawn, sin comes again upon the man and he becomes worse than before! How many of the same sort of confessions, too, have we seen in times of cholera and fever and pestilence? Then our churches have been crammed with hearers, who, because so many funerals have passed their doors, or so many have died in the streets, could not refrain from going up to God’s house to confess their sins! And under that visitation, when one, two and three have been lying dead in the house, or next door, how many have thought they would really turn to God? But, alas, when the pestilence had done its work, conviction ceased and when the bell had tolled the last time for a death caused by cholera, then their hearts ceased to beat with penitence and their tears flowed no more!

Have I any such here this morning? I doubt not I have hardened persons who would scorn the very idea of religion, who would count me a cant and hypocrite if I should endeavor to press it home upon them—but who know right well that religion is true and who feel it in their times of terror! If I have such here this morning, let me solemnly say to them, “Sirs, you have forgotten the feelings you had in your hours of alarm. But, remember, God has not forgotten the vows you then made!” Sailor, you said if God would spare you to see the land, again, you would be His servant. You are not so, you have lied to God, you have made Him a false promise—you have never kept the vow which your lips did utter! Many of you have said, on a bed of sickness, that if He would spare your life, you would never again sin as you did before—but here you are and this week’s sins shall speak for themselves! You are no better than you were before your sickness. Could you lie to your fellow man and yet go unreproved? And do you think that you will lie against God and yet go unpunished? No! The vow, however rashly made, is registered in Heaven and though it is a vow which you cannot perform, yet as it is a vow which you have made yourself and made voluntarily, too, you shall be punished for not keeping it. And God shall execute vengeance upon you at last because you said you would turn from your ways and then, when the blow was removed, you did not!

A great outcry has been raised of late against tickets-of-leave. I have no doubt there are some men here who before high Heaven stand in the same position as the ticket-of-leave men stand to our government! They were about to die, as they thought. They promised good behavior if they might be spared and they are here today on ticket-of-leave in this world— and how have they fulfilled their promise? Justice might raise the same outcry against them as they do against the burglars so constantly let loose upon us. The avenging angel might say, “O God, these men said if they were spared they would be so much better. If anything, they are worse! How have they violated their promise and how have they brought down Divine wrath upon their heads!” This is the first style of penitence. And it is a style I hope none of you will imitate, for it is utterly worthless. It is of no use for you to say, “I have sinned,” merely under the influence of terror and then to forget it afterwards.

THE DOUBLE-MINDED MAN  
**BALAAM—“I have sinned.”—Numbers 22:34.**

II. Now for a second text. I beg to introduce you to another character— the double-minded man who says, “I have sinned,” and feels that he has and feels it deeply, too, but who is so worldly-minded that he “loves the wages of unrighteousness.” The character I have chosen to illustrate this is that of Balaam. Turn to the book of Numbers, the 22nd Chapter and the 34th verse—“And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned.” But yet he went on with his sin afterwards. One of the strangest characters of the whole world is Balaam! I have often marveled at that man. He seems really, in another sense, to have come up to the lines of Ralph Erskine—

*“To good and evil equal bent*

*And both a devil and a saint.”*  
For he did seem to be so. At times no man could speak more eloquently and more truthfully, but at other times he exhibited the most mean and sordid covetousness that could disgrace human nature! Think you see Balaam. He stands upon the brow of the hill and there lie the multitudes of Israel at his feet. He is bid to curse them and he cries, “How shall I curse whom God has not cursed?” And God, opening his eyes, he begins to tell even about the coming of Christ and he says, “I shall see Him but not now: I shall behold Him but not near.” And then he winds up his oration by saying—“Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like His!” And you will say of that man, he is a hopeful character. Wait till he has come off the brow of the hill and you will hear him give the most diabolical advice to the king of Moab which it was even possible for Satan, himself, to suggest! Said he to the king, “You cannot overthrow these people in battle, for God is with them. Try and entice them from their God.” And you know how, with wanton lusts, they of Moab tried to entice the children of Israel from allegiance to Jehovah, so that this man seemed to have the voice of an angel at one time and yet the very soul of a devil in his heart! He was a terrible character. He was a man of two things—a man who went all the way with two things to a very great extent. I know the Scripture says, “No man can serve two masters.” Now this is often misunderstood. Some read it, “No man can serve two masters.” Yes he can, he can serve three or four! The way to read it is this— “No man can serve two masters.” They cannot both be masters! He can serve two, but they cannot both be his master. A man can serve two who are not his masters, or twenty. He may live for twenty different purposes, but he cannot live for more than one master purpose—there can only be one master purpose in his soul. But Balaam labored to serve two—it was like the people of whom it was said, “They feared the Lord and served other gods.” Or like Rufus, who was a loaf of the same leaven. For you know our old king Rufus painted God on one side of his shield and the devil on the other and had underneath, the motto—“Ready for both, catch who can.”

There are many such, who are ready for both! They meet a minister and how pious and holy they are! On the Sabbath they are the most respectable and upright people in the world, as you would think. Indeed they even effect a drawling in their speech, which they think to be eminently religious. But on a week day, if you want to find the greatest rogues and cheats, they are some of those men who are so sanctimonious in their piety! Now, rest assured, my Hearers, that no confession of sin can be genuine unless it is a whole-hearted one! It is of no use for you to say, “I have sinned,” and then keep on sinning. “I have sinned,” you say, and it is a fair, fair face you show. But, alas, alas, for the sins you will go away and commit! Some men seem to be born with two characters. I noticed when in the library at Trinity College, Cambridge, a very fine statue of Lord Byron. The librarian said to me, “Stand here, Sir.” I looked and I said, “What a fine intellectual countenance! What a grand genius he was!” “Come here,” he said, “to the other side.” “Ah, what a demon! There stands the man that could defy the Deity!” He seemed to have such a scowl and such a dreadful leer on his face even as Milton would have painted Satan when he said—“Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.” I turned away and said to the librarian, “Do you think the artist designed this?” “Yes,” he said, “he wished to picture the two characters— the great, the grand, the almost superhuman genius that he possessed— and yet the enormous mass of sin that was in his soul.” There are some men here of the same sort. I dare say, like Balaam, they would overthrow everything in argument, but with their enchantments, they could work miracles.

And yet at the same time there is something about them which betrays a horrid character of sin-as great as that which would appear to be their character for righteousness! Balaam, you know, offered sacrifices to God upon the altar of Baal—that was just the type of his character. So many do. They offer sacrifices to God on the shrine of Mammon. And while they will give to the building of a church and distribute to the poor, they will, at the other door of their counting-house, grind the poor for bread and press the very blood out of the widow, that they may enrich themselves. Ah, it is idle and useless for you to say, “I have sinned,” unless you mean it from your heart! That double-minded man’s confession is of no avail.

THE INSINCERE MAN  
**SAUL—“I have sinned.”—1 Samuel 15:24.**

III. And now a third character and a third text. In the First Book of Samuel, the 15th Chapter and 24th verse—“And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned”

Here is the insincere man—the man who is not like Balaam, to a certain extent sincere in two things. But the man who is just the opposite— who has no prominent point in his character at all but is molded everlastingly by the circumstances that are passing over his head. Such a man was Saul. Samuel reproved him and he said, “I have sinned.” But he did not mean what he said—for if you read the whole verse you will find him saying, “I have sinned: for I have transgressed the Commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people,” which was a lying excuse! Saul never feared anybody. He was always ready enough to do his own will—he was the despot! And just before this, he had pleaded another excuse, that he had saved the bullocks and lambs to offer to Jehovah and, therefore, both excuses could not have been true. You remember, my Friends, that the most prominent feature in the character of Saul was his insincerity. One day he fetched David from his bed, as he thought, to put him to death in his house. Another time he declares, “God forbid that I should do anything against you, my son, David.” One day, because David saved his life, he said, “You are more righteous than I. I will do so no more.” The day before he had gone out to fight against his own son-in-law in order to slay him! Sometimes Saul was among the Prophets, easily turned into a Prophet and then afterwards among the witches. Sometimes in one place and then another and insincere in everything. How many such we have in every Christian assembly! Men who are very easily molded! Say what you please to them, they always agree with you. They have affectionate dispositions, very likely a tender conscience. But then the conscience is so remarkably tender that when touched, it seems to give and you are afraid to probe deeper—it heals as soon it is wounded! I think I used the very singular comparison once before, which I must use again—there are some men who seem to have rubber hearts. If you do but touch them, there is an impression made at once. But then it is of no use—it soon restores itself to its original character! You may press them whatever way you wish, they are so elastic you can always effect your purpose. But then they are not fixed in their character and soon return to be what they were before. O Sirs, too many of you have done the same—you have bowed your heads in church and said, “We have erred and strayed from Your ways.” And you did not mean what you said. You have come to your minister. You have said, “I repent of my sins.” You did not, then, feel you were a sinner! You only said it to please him. And now you attend the House of God—no one more impressible than you. The tears will run down your cheeks in a moment but yet, notwithstanding all that, the tears are dried as quickly as they are brought forth and you remain, to all intents and purposes, the same as you were before! To say, “I have sinned,” in an unmeaning manner, is worse than worthless, for it is a mockery of God thus to confess with insincerity of heart!

I have been brief upon this character, for it seemed to touch upon that of Balaam—though any thinking man will at once see there was a real contrast between Saul and Balaam—even though there is an affinity between the two. Balaam was the great bad man, great in all he did. Saul was little in everything except in stature—little in his good and little in his vice, but he was too much of a fool to be desperately bad, though too wicked to be at any time good. Balaam was great in both—the man who could at one time defy Jehovah and yet at another time could say, “If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the Word of the Lord, my God, to do less or more.”

THE DOUBTFUL PENITENT **ACHAN—“I have sinned.”—Joshua 7:20.**

IV. And now I have to introduce to you a very interesting case. It is the case of the doubtful penitent, the case of Achan, in the book of Joshua, the 7th Chapter and the 20th verse—“And Achan answered Joshua, indeed I have sinned.”

You know that Achan stole some of the prey from the city of Jericho— that he was discovered by lot and put to death. I have singled this case out as the representative of some whose characters are doubtful on their death beds. They apparently repent, but the most we can say of them is that we hope their souls are saved at last but, indeed, we cannot tell. Achan, you are aware, was stoned with stones for defiling Israel. But I find in the Mishna, an old Jewish exposition of the Bible, these words, “Joshua said to Achan, the Lord shall trouble you this day.” And the note upon it is—“He said this day, implying that he was only to be troubled in this life, by being stoned to death but that God would have mercy on his soul, seeing that he had made a full confession of his sin.” And I, too, am inclined, from reading the Chapter, to concur in the idea of my venerable and now glorified predecessor, Dr. Gill, in believing that Achan really was saved although he was put to death for the crime, as an example. For you will observe how kindly Joshua spoke to him. He said, “My son, give, I pray you, glory to the Lord God of Israel and make confession unto Him and tell me now what you have done, hide it not from me.” And you find Achan making a very full confession. He says, “Indeed, I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel and thus and thus have I done. When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonian garment and two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them and took them and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent and the silver under it.” It seems so full a confession that if I might be allowed to judge, I would say, “I hope to meet Achan the sinner before the Throne of God.” But Matthew Henry has no such opinion. And many other expositors consider that as his body was destroyed, so was his soul. I have, therefore, selected his case as being one of doubtful repentance. Ah, dear Friends, it has been my lot to stand by many a deathbed and to see many such a repentance as this! I have seen the man, when worn to a skeleton, sustained by pillows in his bed—and he has said, when I have talked to him of judgment to come—“Sir, I feel I have been guilty, but Christ is good. I trust in Him.” And I have said within myself, “I believe the man’s soul is safe.” But I have always come away with the melancholy reflection that I had no proof of it, beyond his own words, for it needs proof in acts and in future life in order to sustain any firm conviction of a man’s salvation. You know that great fact, that a physician once kept a record of a thousand persons who thought they were dying and whom he thought were penitents. He wrote their names down in a book as those, who, if they had died, would go to Heaven. They did not die, they lived. And he says that out of the whole thousand he had not three persons who turned out well, afterwards, but they returned to their sins again and were as bad as ever.

Ah, dear Friends, I hope none of you will have such a deathbed repentance as that! I hope your minister or your parents will not have to stand by your bedside and then go away and say, “Poor fellow, I hope he is saved. But alas, deathbed repentances are such flimsy things, such poor, such trivial grounds of hope that I am afraid, after all, his soul may be lost.” Oh, to die with a full assurance! Oh, to die with an abundant entrance, leaving a testimony behind that we have departed this life in peace! That is a far happier way than to die in a doubtful manner, lying sick, hovering between two worlds and neither ourselves nor our friends knowing to which of the two worlds we are going! May God grant us Grace to give in our lives evidences of true conversion, that our case may not be doubtful!

THE REPENTANCE OF DESPAIR **JUDAS—“I have sinned.”—Matthew 27:4.**

V. I shall not detain you too long, I trust, but I must now give you another bad case—the worst of all. It is THE REPENTANCE OF DESPAIR. Will you turn to the 27th Chapter of Matthew and the 4th verse? There you have a dreadful case of the repentance of despair. You will recognize the character the moment I read the verse—“And Judas said, I have sinned.” Yes, Judas the traitor, who had betrayed his Master. When he saw that his Master was condemned, he “repented and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood, and he cast down the pieces in the temple and went”—and what?—“and hanged himself.”

Here is the worst kind of repentance of all—in fact, I know not that I am justified in calling it repentance. It must be called remorse of conscience! But Judas did confess his sin and then went and hanged himself. Oh, that dreadful, that terrible, that hideous confession of despair! Have you ever seen it? If you never have, then bless God that you were never called to see such a sight! I have seen it once in my life. I pray God I may never see it again—the repentance of the man who sees death staring him in the face and who says, “I have sinned.” You tell him that Christ has died for sinners. And he answers, “There is no hope for me. I have cursed God to His face. I have defied Him. My day of Grace I know is past, my conscience is seared with a hot iron. I am dying and I know I shall be lost!” Such a case as that happened long ago. You know it and it is on record—the case of Francis Spira—the most dreadful case, perhaps, except that of Judas, which is upon record in the memory of man! Oh, my Hearers, will any of you have such a repentance? If you do, it will be a beacon to all persons who sin in the future! If you have such a repentance as that, it will be a warning to generations yet to come!

In the life of Benjamin Keach—and he, also, was one of my predecessors—I find the case of a man who had been a professor of religion but had departed from the profession and had gone into awful sin. When he came to die, Keach, with many other friends, went to see him, but they could never stay with him above five minutes at a time, for he said, “Get you gone! It is of no use your coming to me. I have sinned away the Holy Spirit. I am like Esau, I have sold my birthright and though I seek it carefully with tears, I can never find it again.” And then he would repeat dreadful words, like these—“My mouth is filled with gravel stones and I drink wormwood day and night. Tell me not, tell me not of Christ! I know He is a Savior, but I hate Him and He hates me. I know I must die. I know I must perish!” And then followed doleful cries and hideous noises, such as none could bear. They returned again in his placid moments only to stir him up once more and make him cry out in his despair, “I am lost! I am lost! It is of no use your telling me anything about it!”

Ah, there may be a man here who may have such a death as that. Let me warn him, before he comes to it. And may God the Holy Spirit grant that that man may be turned unto God and made a true Penitent. And then he need not have any more fear, for he who has had his sins washed away in a Savior’s blood need not have any remorse for his sins, for they are pardoned through the Redeemer!

THE REPENTANCE OF THE SAINT **Job—“I have sinned.”—Job 7:20.**

VI. And now I come into daylight. I have been taking you through dark and dreary confessions. I shall detain you there no longer but bring you out to the two good confessions which I have to read to you. The first is that of Job in the 7th Chapter at the 20th verse—“I have sinned, what shall I do unto You, O You preserver of men?” This is the repentance of the saint. Job was a saint, but he sinned. This is the repentance of the man who already is a child of God, an acceptable repentance before God. But as I intend to dwell upon this in the evening, I shall now leave it, for fear of wearying you. David was a specimen of this kind of repentance and I would have you carefully study his penitential Psalms, the language of which is always full of weeping humility and earnest penitence.

THE BLESSED CONFESSION **THE PRODIGAL—“I have sinned.”—Luke 15:18.**

VII. I come now to the last instance which I shall mention. It is the case of the prodigal. In Luke 15:18, we find the prodigal says—“Father, I have sinned.” Oh, here is a blessed confession! Here is that which proves a man to be a regenerate character—“Father, I have sinned.” Let me picture the scene. There is the prodigal. He has run away from a good home and a kind father and he has spent all his money with harlots. And now he has none left. He goes to his old companions and asks them for relief. They laugh him to scorn. “Oh,” he says, “you have drunk my wine many a day. I have always been paymaster to you in all our revelries. Will you not help me?” “Get you gone,” they say. And he is turned out of doors. He goes to all his friends with whom he had associated but no man gives him anything. At last a certain citizen of the country said—“You need something to do, do you? Well, go and feed my swine.” The poor prodigal, the son of a rich landowner who had a great fortune of his own, has to go out to feed swine. And he a Jew, too!—the worst employment (to his mind) to which he could be put! See him there, in squalid rags, feeding swine! And what are his wages? Why, so little, that he “would gladly have filled his belly with the husks the swine eat, but no man gave to him.” Look, there he is, with the fellow commoners of the sty, in all his mire and filthiness. Suddenly a thought put there by the good Spirit, strikes his mind. “How is it,” says he, “that in my father’s house there is 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.” Off he goes. He begs his way from town to town. Sometimes he gets a lift on a coach, perhaps, but at other times he goes trudging his way up barren hills and down desolate vales, all alone. And now, at last, he comes to the hill outside the village and sees his father’s house down below. There it is—the old poplar tree—and there are the stacks round which he and his brother used to run and play. And at the sight of the old homestead, all the feelings and associations of his former life rush upon him and tears run down his cheeks—and he is almost ready to run away, again. He says “I wonder whether Father’s dead. I daresay I broke Mother’s heart when I went away. I always was her favorite. And if they are, either of them, alive, they will never see me again. They will shut the door in my face. What am I to do? I cannot go back—I am afraid to go forward.” And while he was thus deliberating, his father had been walking on the housetop, looking out for his son. And though he could not see his father, his father could see him! Well, the father comes down stairs with all his might, runs up to him and while he is thinking of running away, his father’s arms are round his neck and he begins kissing him, like a loving father, indeed! And then the son begins—“Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in your sight and am no more worthy to be called your son,” and he was going to say, “Make me as one of your hired servants.” But his father puts his hand on his mouth! “No more of that,” he says. “I forgive you all. You shall not say anything about being a hired servant—I will have none of that. Come along,” he says, “come in, poor prodigal.” He says to the servants, “bring here the best robe and put it on him and put shoes on his poor bleeding 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.” Oh, what a precious reception for one of the chief of sinners! Good Matthew Henry says—“His father saw him, there were eyes of mercy. He ran to meet him, there were legs of mercy. He put his arms round his neck, there were arms of mercy. He kissed him, there were kisses of mercy. He said to him, there were words of mercy—bring here the best robe, there were deeds of mercy, wonders of mercy—all mercy! Oh, what a God of mercy He is.”

Now, prodigal, you do the same! Has God put it into your heart? There are many who have been running away a long time now. Does God say, “Return”? Oh, I bid you return, then, for as surely as ever you do return, He will take you in! There never was a poor sinner, yet, who came to Christ, whom Christ turned away! If He turns you away, you will be the first. Oh, if you could but try Him! “Ah, Sir, I am so black with sin, so filthy, so vile.” Well come along with you—you cannot be blacker than the prodigal! Come to your Father’s house and as surely as He is God, He will keep His word—“He that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out.”

Oh, if I might hear that some had come to Christ, this morning, I would indeed bless God! I must tell, here, for the honor of God and Christ, one remarkable circumstance and then I have done. You will remember that one morning I mentioned the case of an infidel who had been a scorner and scoffer but who, through reading one of my printed sermons, had been brought to God’s House and then to God’s feet. Well, last Christmas day, the same infidel gathered together all his books and went into the marketplace at Norwich and there made a public recantation of all his errors and a profession of Christ! And then taking up all his books which he had written and had in his house, on evil subjects, burned them in the sight of the people! I have blessed God for such a wonder of Divine Grace as that and pray that there may be many more such, who, though they are born prodigal, will yet return home, saying, “I have sinned.”

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 #1830 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

ALL OR NONE—OR, COMPROMISES REFUSED— A SERMON WITH FIVE TEXTS  
NO. 1830

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MARCH 29, 1885, DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON NOVEMBER 25, 1883.

I SHALL have five texts—one of them a good one, the other four bad. The first text is good. It is God’s text.  
*“There shall not an hoof be left behind.”  
Exodus 10:26.*

That is God’s text and the whole sermon will illustrate it by exposing the compromises with which it was met. The other four are Pharaoh’s texts, or, if you like, the devil’s, for that is exactly what the devil says to men. Exodus 8:25—“Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go you, sacrifice to your God in the land.” That is his first proposal. Then we find him saying, at the 28th verse, “I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away.” That is the second of his compromises. In the 10th chapter, at the 8th verse, you have the third. He said to them, “Go, serve the Lord your God: but who are they that shall go?” Adding, “Go now, you that are men, and serve the Lord.” And Pharaoh’s fourth and last proposal is in the 24th verse of that same 10th chapter—“Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Only let your flocks and your herds be stayed.”

Satan is very loath to give up his hold on men. He is quite as loath as Pharaoh and he must be driven to it by force of arms—I mean by force of Divine Grace—before he will let God’s people go. Having once got them under his power through the Fall, through their sin and through their hardness of heart, he will not lose his subjects if he can help it. He will put forth all his craft and all his strength, if possible, to hold them in his accursed sway! Many of Satan’s slaves altogether disregard the voice of God. For them there are no Sabbaths, no Bibles, no religion. Practically, they say, “Who is Jehovah that we should obey His voice?” Now, when God means to save men—when the eternal purpose so runs and the Divine determination is to be accomplished, He soon puts an end to this. For some reason quite unknown to the man—it may be quite unthought of by him—he feels uneasy. He is disturbed. He thinks, one morning, that he will go up to a place of worship—not that he cares much about it—but he thinks that he shall, perhaps, be a little easier there. He takes his Bible— he begins to read a chapter. A very striking passage comes before his eyes. He is not more easy, for the text has fixed upon him. Like a barbed shaft it has stuck into his soul and he cannot possibly draw it out. He is more troubled than ever! He begins to enquire a little about the things of God— there is now some outwardly respect to religion—the man is considerably changed.

But do not imagine that the work is accomplished! Our blessed Master has to fight for every inch of ground which He wins in human hearts. With the matchless artillery of His love, He drives the enemy back farther and farther, till, at last, He conquers! But it is often a long and slow process and, were He not possessed with infinite patience, He would give it up. But where it is His resolve that a man shall come out of the world and shall be saved, that resolve must and will be carried into effect! And the man, though he is only brought so far that he begins to think a little about Divine and eternal matters, he will have to go a great deal farther than that.

You see him sitting under the Word of God and, perhaps, Satan now says, “Well, you are a fine fellow! You are beginning to occupy a seat Sunday after Sunday in the house of prayer. You have given up your evil habits to a large extent. You are quite a different man. Now that you have done something very pleasing to God, you may rest content with this.” And it is a very sad thing when men do rest content with such a paltry hope as can have come out of poor performances like these! But still, they will stop just there if they can, for Satan does not mind where he makes men stop so long as they will stay under the dominion of sin and refuse to come to Christ.

Now the Lord begins to deal with the man, perhaps, in a way of affliction and trouble. His wife sickens. A child dies. He is, himself, unhealthy—he fears he is about to die and his fancied righteousness evaporates before his eyes and he thinks that now, surely, he must seek after something better. Then will Satan come in and say, “There is time enough! Do not be in too much of a hurry.”

If the Lord drives a man from that, by the solemn movements of the Spirit upon his soul, then the devil will say to him, “How do you know that this is all true?” And he has not to go far before he finds infidels to help his unbelief. I am sorry to say that he can find them in the pulpit pretty plentifully, preaching their infidelities as “advanced thought!” And so poor souls get bewildered and scarcely know their right hand from their left! They begin, again, to relapse into a condition of indifference and remain where they were.

Blessed be God, if He means to save such, He will, by push of pike and point of bayonet, carry the day! They shall not rest where they are. The right hand of the Lord is still stretched out and He will make the Pharaoh of evil yet know that Jehovah is stronger than he! Grace is mightier than nature and the eternal purpose more sure of fulfillment than all the resolves of case-hardened consciences! And so, at last, it comes to this— that the man is driven to yield to God and when he is driven to that point Satan comes in, again, with his promises.

We are going to speak about these four compromises tonight. The first compromise is found in the 8th chapter at the 25th verse.

*“Sacrifice to your God in the land.”*  
“Yes,” says the devil, “you must be a Christian, that is evident. You cannot hold out any longer, for you are too uneasy in your sins. You will have to be a Christian.” “But,” he says, “stay in the world and be a Christian. Remain where you are. ‘Sacrifice to your God in the land’”—by which he sometimes means this—live in sin and be a Believer. Trust yourself with Christ and then indulge yourself in whatever your heart desires. Do you not know that he is a Savior of sinners? Therefore stay in your sin and yet trust in Him.

Oh, I charge you, by the living God, never be duped by such a treacherous lie as this, for it is not possible that you can find any rest or salvation while you live in sin! My dear Hearers, Christ came to save us from our sins, but not in our sins! He has built a hospital of mercy into which He receives the worst possible cases. All are welcome, but He does not receive them that they may continue to be sick! He heals them and make sound men of them. When the Lord Jesus Christ takes hold upon a thief, the man is a thief no longer! His inmost heart becomes honest. When the Lord meets with the harlot, He blots out her iniquity and she is affected with deep repentance for her crimes—and she turns to her Savior, desiring, from that time on, to walk in purity all her days. It is impossible that you should serve God and yet continue to indulge in knowing sin!

What a fool that man is who thinks that he may drink and be a Christian! That he may cheat in his business and be a Christian! That he may act like the ungodly world in all respects and yet be a Christian! It cannot be. Mark Anthony yoked two lions together and drove them through the streets of Rome—but he could never have yoked together the lion of the Pit and the lion of the tribe named Judah! There is a deadly hate between these two. The principle of good, if it is yielded to, will destroy the mastery of evil. There cannot be a compromise between them. No man can serve two masters. He may serve two, but not two when each determines to be master! Satan will be master if he can, and Christ will be master and, therefore, you cannot serve the two! It must be one or the other.

If you are to have your sin forgiven you, you must leave your sin. Remember that voice which came to Master John Bunyan when he was playing tip cat on Elstow Green on Sunday morning? He thought that he heard a voice say, “Will you leave your sins and go to Heaven, or will you have your sins and go to Hell?” That problem is proposed to you if you are unconverted and undecided. But as to the idea of keeping your sins and going to Heaven, shut that out of the question, for it must not, cannot and shall not be! It is a compromise proposed by Satan, but the Lord will not have it.

Yes, but then Satan, retreating a little, says, “Well, now, of course I did not mean that you were not to give up your grosser sins, but I mean to tell you of something better. Love the world and live with worldlings—and find your company and your joy among them—and yet be a Christian. Surely you are not going to throw up everybody, are you? You know you must not be singular. You must not make yourself altogether an oddity! You have many merry companions—stay with them. They do not, perhaps, do you much good, but you must not be too particular and precise.” So he says, “Continue in the world and be a Christian!”

Shall I tell you God’s Word about that? “If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” That is short, though not sweet. A man says, “Well, I shall be a Christian, but I shall find my chief pleasure and my amusement where the world finds theirs.” Will you? “I shall be a Christian, but I shall hold with the hare and run with the hounds. I shall be with the church on Sunday, but nobody shall know that I am not the best worldling on the week-day. Can I not put my hymn book in one pocket and a pack of cards in the other, and so go to Heaven and stay friends with the world?” No, it is not possible. “Let My people go, that they may serve Me,” is God’s Word. Not, “Let them stay in the land and still serve you and serve Me, too.” It cannot be!

“Know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” That text is another sharp, drawn sword cutting to the quick and there are professors who ought to feel it go to their very hearts, for they are trying all that they possibly can to go as near as ever they can to the border and yet to keep up a hope. What would you think of a man who went as near as he could to burning his house down, just to test how much fire it would stand? Or of one who cut himself with a knife to see how deep he could go without mortally wounding himself? Or of another who experimented as to how large a quantity of poison he could drink? Why, these are extreme follies! But not so great as that of a man who tries how much sin he may indulge in and yet be saved! I pray you, do not attempt such perilous experiments. “Come you out from among them; be you separate, and touch not the unclean thing.” Shun with horror Satan’s old compromise—dream not that you can love the world and yet have the love of the Father in you.

When the enemy cannot get on with that, he draws back a little and cries, “That is very proper; you are hearing very faithful teaching this time, but listen to me—you can live for yourself and be a Christian! Do not go out into worldly company, but enjoy yourself at home. You see, you need to have your own soul saved. Well, live for that.” This is only a subtler and uglier form of selfishness. It is nothing better. “Look,” says Satan, “I do not ask you to be profligate with your money, be penurious with it— be very thrifty. Everybody will pat you on the back and say, ‘He is taking care of number one and he is doing the right thing.’ Come, now, and make a good thing of religion. Believe in Jesus Christ, of course, in order that you, yourself, may be saved, and then live all the rest of your life trying to hear sermons that will feed you and read books that will comfort you— and become a great man among religious folks.”

Hateful advice! Do you not know, dear Friends, that the very essence of Christianity is for a man to deny himself? Self can never properly be the end-all and be-all of a man’s existence. Self is to religion, in fact, nothing but the flesh in a pretended spiritual form! If a man lives to himself, he is under the dominion of an evil spirit just as much as if he went out into open sin. So you must come out of that. Selfishness will not do. You must love the Lord with all your heart, and you must love your fellow men. There must be an obedience to that command that you “love the Lord your God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself,” or else there is no coming out into safety. Thus the first compromise will not hold at all.

Pushed back from the first compromise, Pharaoh proposes a second, and this is found in the 28th verse of the 8th chapter—

*“Only you shall not go very far away.”*  
Satan says, “Yes, I see your conscience tells you that you must come out from the world and come out from sin, but do not go very far away, for

you may want to come back, again. In the first place, do not make it public. Do not join a church. Be like a rat behind the wainscot—never come out except it be at night to get a mouthful of food. Do not commit yourself by being baptized and joining the church—do not go so far as that! Just try, if you can, and save yourself from the wrath to come by secret religion, but do not let anyone know it. There really cannot be any need of actually saying, ‘I am a Christian.’”

My Friend, this is the very depth of Satan! When a soldier goes to the barracks, if he is a child of God, he may say, “I shall not kneel down to pray because they might throw a boot at me, as they generally do in the barracks. I can keep my religion to myself.” That man is wrong. But if he boldly says, “I will fly my flag. I am a Christian and I will never yield that point, come what may”—he will stand! The beginning of yielding is like the letting out of water—no man knows to what a flood it will come. This is what Satan would have with some of you, that you may fall by little and little. Therefore defeat him—come out boldly! Take up your cross and follow Jesus. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.”

The Tempter also says, “Do not be so very precise and exact. The Puritan saints—well, people point the finger at them. You need not be quite so particular.” By which he means this—that you may sin as much as you like so long as you do not violate propriety and that, after all, you are not to obey God thoroughly, but only to obey Him when it pleases you. This is flat rebellion against God! This will never do!

“Well,” he says, “if you are to be so precise, yet do not be so desperately earnest! There are some of those friends down there at the Tabernacle who are always looking after the souls of others and trying to proclaim Christ to everybody. You know they are a very dogmatic lot and they are a great deal too pushy and fanatical. Do not go with them.” Just so. He means, stand and serve the Lord because you dare not do any other, but never give Him your heart. Never throw your soul into His cause. That is what Satan says—and do you think that such traitorous service will save you? If Moses had thought that going a little way into the wilderness would have saved Israel, he would have let them go a little way into the wilderness and that would have been the end of it. But Moses knew that nothing would do for God’s Israel but to go as far away as ever they could—and put a deep Red Sea between them and Egypt! He knew that they were never to turn back, come what might, and so Moses pushed for a going forth to a distance—as I would, in God’s name, push for full committal to Christ with everybody who is tempted to a compromise.

“Oh, but,” Satan will say, “be earnest, too. Yes, be earnest. Of course that is right enough. And be precise in all your actions—but do not be one of those people who are always praying in secret. You can keep an open religious profession going without much private praying, without heartsearching, without communion with God. These are tough things,” he says, “to keep up. You will find it difficult to maintain the inward life and preserve a clean heart and a right spirit. Let these go by default and attend to externals—be busy and active—and that will do.” But it will not do, for unless the heart and soul are renewed by the Spirit of God, it little matters what your externals may be. You have failed before God unless your very soul is joined unto Him by a perpetual covenant that shall never be forgotten.

What a blessing it is when a man can say, “I have done with these compromises! I do not want to serve God and win favor with the world. I do not want to go just a little way from the world. I pray God to divide me from the world by an everlasting divorce, just as it was with Paul when he said, ‘The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.’” Happy man who has come right out under Divine guidance to seek the eternal Canaan! His is the path of safety and acceptance! But they that temporize and parley with sin and Satan will find mischief come out of it.

Pushed back from that, the enemy suggests another compromise in the 10th chapter, at the 8th and 11th verses—“Go, serve this Lord your God: but who are they that shall go? Go now, you that are men, and serve the Lord.” Yes, that is his next point. “Yes,” he says, “we see what it has come to. You are driven, at last, to this—that you must be an out-and-out Christian. But, now,” he says, “do not worry your wife with it; do not take it home.” Or he says to the woman, “You are to follow Christ. I see you must. You seem driven to that, but never say anything to your husband about it.” Was not that a pretty idea of Pharaoh’s—that all the men were to go and were to leave the women and children to be his slaves? And that is just the idea of Satan. “You have plenty to do to look after yourself—but your wife—well, leave her to her own ways. Your husband—leave him to his irreligion.”

Let us answer him thus—“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” So said Joshua of old and so let every man here say! Remember Paul’s words to the Philippian jailer, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, and your house.” Let us pray that we may have the whole house for Christ! Up to your measure of influence over your family, say within yourself, “My Lord, I will never rest until I see all my family brought to Your dear feet. Lord, save my wife: save my husband: save my father: save my brothers and sisters! Bring these out of bondage!” You cannot be a Christian unless that is your heartfelt desire. He that cares not for his own house is worse than a heathen and a publican!

And then the children. “Oh,” Pharaoh says, “leave the children!” Do you not see he knew very well that if they did that, they would, themselves, come back? What man among us would go away into the wilderness and leave his wife and children in slavery? Should we not want to come back to them? Should we not think that we heard their cries? Should we not want to look into their dear faces again? Leave them in slavery? Oh, that cannot be! And yet, let me sorrowfully say that there are many professing Christians who seem as though they were, themselves, determined to be the Lord’s, but their children should belong to Pharaoh and to the devil!

For instance, the boy is getting to be a certain age. Let him be sent to a foreign school, and, preferably, a Roman Catholic school. Will that be useful to his religion? Yet if he should turn out a Papist, his foolish father will almost break his heart! It was all his own doing, was it not? Well, the girls, of course, they must go into society—of course they must, “go into society.” And so everything is done to put them into places of danger, where they will not likely be converted and where, in all probability, they will become frivolous, vain and light. Then a situation is looked for the boy. How often there is no question about the employer being a Christian! Is it a business that the lad can follow without injury to his morals? “No, it is a fine roaring trade, and it is a cutting house, where he will pick it up in a smart way. Let him go there.”

Yes, and if he goes to Hell? Alas, there are Christian men who do not think of that! The children of some professors are offered up to the Moloch of this world. We think it a horrible thing that the heathens should offer their children in sacrifice to idols and yet many professors put their children where, according to all likelihood, they will be ruined. Do not let it be so! Do not let the devil entangle one of you in that compromise, but say, “No, no, no! My house, God helping me, shall be so conducted that I will not put temptation in my children’s way. I will not lead them into the paths of sin. If they will go wrong, despite their father’s exhortations and their mother’s tears, why, they must—but, at any rate, I will be clear of their blood, for I will not put them into places where they would be led astray.”

I am sure there is a great deal of importance in this remark—and if it cuts anybody very closely and he says, “I think you are very personal,” that is exactly what I mean to be—the precise thing I am aiming at! I desire to put this thing before every individual Christian, that all may see the right and the wrong of it—so that they may resolve, “Our women and our children shall go with us to worship God. They, as well as ourselves, shall leave this Egypt, as far as God’s Grace can help us to accomplish it.”

Now the devil is getting pushed into a corner. Here is the man’s whole house to go right for God and the man gives himself up to be a Christian out and out! What now? “Well,” says the enemy, in the 24th verse of that 10th chapter—

*Go you, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed.”*Just so. What does Moses say to that? “You must give us, also, sacrifices and burnt-offerings, that we may sacrifice unto Jehovah our God. Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not a hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; and we know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come there.” This was the Divine policy of, “No surrender!” And I plead for it with you. Satan says, “Do not use your property for God. Do not use your talents and your abilities! Especially do not use your money for the Lord Jesus. Keep that for yourself! You will need it one of these days, perhaps. Keep it for your own enjoyment. Live to God in other things, but as to that, live to yourself.” Now, a genuine Christian says, “When I gave myself to the Lord I gave

Him everything I had. From the crown of my head to the sole of my feet I am the Lord’s. He bids me provide things honest in the sight of all men and care for my household—and so I shall, by His Grace. But yet I am not my own, for I am bought with a price and, therefore, it becomes me to feel that everything I have, or ever shall have, is a dedicated thing and belongs to the Lord, that I may use it as His steward, not as if it were mine, but at His discretion and at His bidding. I cannot leave my substance to be the devil’s. That must come with me and must be all my Lord’s, for His it is, even as I am.”

The Christian takes the line which Moses indicated—“I do not know what I may be required to give. I know that I am to sacrifice unto the Lord my God, but I do not know how much. I cannot tell what may be the needs of the poor, the needs of the Church, the needs of Christ’s Church all over the land. I do not know, but this I do know—that all that I have stands at the surrender point. If my Redeemer wants it, He shall have it. If Satan wants it, he shall not have a penny of it! If there is anything that is asked of me that will not contribute to good morals—that will not contribute to the promotion of that which is right in the sight of God—I withhold it! But if there is anything that is for Christ’s Glory and for the good of men, then, as the Lord shall help me, it shall be given freely and not be begrudged as if it were a tax. It shall be my joy and my delight to devote all that I am and all that I have to Him who bought me with His precious blood.”

Now, Brothers and Sisters, you that profess to be Christians, come, stand right square out and acknowledge yourselves wholly and altogether the Lord’s—

*“‘Tis done! the great transaction’s done;  
I am my Lord’s, and He is mine.”*

“My house is His and my all is His. Whether I live or die—whether I work or suffer, all that I am and all that I have shall be forever my Lord’s.” This is to enter into peace—this, indeed, is to be totally delivered from the power of Satan! This is to be the Lord’s free man and what remains but with joyful footsteps to go onward toward Canaan, shod with shoes of iron and brass, fed with heavenly bread, guarded by the Lord, Himself, guided by His fiery-cloudy pillar, enjoying all things in Him and finding Him in all things? This is to be a Christian of the true order! The Lord make you so by faith in His dear Son! Amen and Amen!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Selections from the 8th and 10th chapters of Exodus.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—645, 656, 658.

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FULL REDEMPTION  
NO. 309

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 22, 1860, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

**“There shall not a hoof be left behind.”  
Exodus 10:26.**

THE controversy between Jehovah, the God of the whole earth, and Pharaoh, king of Egypt, was intended to be remembered and spoken of throughout all generations. On that occasion God permitted human nature to arrive at its highest degree of stubbornness and obstinacy. But He, nevertheless overcame it. He did, indeed, raise up Pharaoh for this purpose, that He might show forth His power in him. Pharaoh, as an absolute monarch, is permitted to go to the utmost degree of hardness of heart and yet the Lord would show to all coming generations that His decrees shall stand and He will do all His pleasure.

You will remember that the quarrel was about this—God had sent His people into Egypt in the olden times, there to dwell in the land of Goshen. They had multiplied exceedingly. They had been favorably treated by succeeding kings, till at length a new king arose who knew not Joseph. He began to oppress the people, but the more he oppressed them, the more they increased. He made their lives bitter with hard bondage. In mortar and in brick and in all manner of service of the field, did he make them to serve with rigor. Probably they were employed in building many of those mighty piles, the pyramids, which now stand upon the plains of Egypt.

He subjected them to the most rigorous tasks. They worked under the whip continually and had to make bricks without straw, the hardest possible exaction that even a tyrant could have imagined. At last the cry of the people went up to their God in Heaven. He saw their affliction, He heard their cry, He knew their sorrows and He determined, with His own bare arm, to be avenged on Pharaoh and to bring out all his people, the seed of Jacob, from their house of bondage.

He raised up Moses and He sent him in with this message to Pharaoh, “Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me.” Pharaoh laughs at it, “You are idle,” says he, “you are idle, you shall not go.” A plague at once is God’s answer to Pharaoh’s laughter. He turns their water into blood and the fish that were in the river died. Pharaoh gives way a little. For, if he must yield, it must be by degrees. “You shall have,” says he, “two or three days of rest, to serve your God, but it must be in this land.” “No,” says Moses, “We cannot serve our God in this land, we must go forth into the wilderness.” Pharaoh bids them be gone.

Another plague and yet another. And now Pharaoh yields this much— “They may go into the wilderness, but they must not go very far.” “No, but,” says Moses, “we will have no such stipulation.” Pharaoh, therefore, again deals deceitfully, again refuses, again grows angry and waxes proud. And God smites the land with lice, with flies, with a very grievous disease, with all manner of plagues. Then Pharaoh says, “You may go,

you may go into the wilderness. But only the strong men among you shall go. You shall leave your wives and your little ones. “No,” says Moses, “we must all go, with our wives and with our little ones must we serve the Lord our God.” Pharaoh again refuses—his heart is hardened. He will not yield.

Moses, at the command of the Lord, then stretched forth his hand toward Heaven and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt, even darkness that might be felt. Then Pharaoh’s subjects clamored to him, “Let these men go.” Pharaoh yields again—“For,” he says, “You shall go, your wives and your little ones, but you shall leave your cattle and your goods behind.” “No,” says Moses, “We must have all or none. Not a hoof shall be left behind. Not a single sheep shall stay in Egypt. The whole of God’s host and all they have, their sick, their aged and all their possessions must go forth out of Egypt.” And you will remember that the Lord never yielded a single point to Pharaoh, but exacted all of him and at last buried him with his horses and his riders, in the depths of the sea.

Now it seems to me, that this grand quarrel of old is but a picture of God’s continual contest with the powers of darkness. The mandate has gone forth to earth and Hell—“Thus says the Lord, let My people go that they may serve Me.” “No,” says Satan, “they shall not.” And if he is compelled to yield one point, he still retains his hold upon another. If he must give way, it shall be inch by inch. Evil is hard in dying, it will not readily be overcome. But this is the demand of God and to the last will He have it—“All My people.” The whole, every one of them and all that My people possess, all shall come out of the land of Egypt. Christ will have the whole. He will not be contented with a part and this He vows to accomplish. “Not a hoof shall be left behind.”

I think you will now see the drift of the discourse. I use the text as an aphorism which I hope to be enabled to illustrate. God bless it to our souls. “Not a hoof shall be left behind.” Christ will have all that He has died to purchase. All that He has bought with blood He will have. Not a fraction of the purchased possession will He lose.

First, then, Christ will have the whole man—“Not a single hoof shall be left behind.” In the next place, He will have the whole Church—“Not a hoof shall be left behind.” In the next place, He will have the whole of the lost inheritance of His Church—“Not a hoof shall be left behind.” And at last, in the fourth place, He will have the whole world to serve Him—“Not a hoof shall be left behind.”

I. First, then, Christ will have THE WHOLE MAN. In His people whom He has purchased with His blood, He will reign without a rival. As for the world that lies in the Wicked One, the prince of this world shall have his power over it, until his time shall be accomplished. But as for the Lord’s people whom He has redeemed, on whom His heart is set, He will not have a single hair of their heads to be alienated from Himself. “They shall be Mine,” says the Lord, “they shall be wholly Mine.’’ Christ will not be part proprietor of any man. He will not have one part of the man and leave the other part to be devoted to Satan.

In entering upon this point, that Christ will have the whole man, I shall have to notice that He does already possess the whole of His people in their intent and purpose and that by-and-by, when He has sanctified them wholly, He will then actually possess the whole spirit and soul and body of the man whom He has purchased with His precious blood. Mark then, my Hearers, if you are children of God, if you are saved, you belong wholly and entirely to Christ. By this may you know this morning whether you are subjects of that old Pharaoh, or whether Jehovah is the Lord your God and your great Deliverer. Are there not multitudes of men who seem to imagine that if they save a corner in their souls for their religion, all will be well? Satan may stalk across the broad acres of their judgment and their understanding and he may reign over their thoughts and their imaginations—but if in some quiet nook there is preserved the appearance of religion, all will be right.

Oh, be not deceived, Brothers and Sisters, in this. Christ never went halves in a man yet. He will have the whole of you, or He will have none of you. He will be Lord paramount, Master supreme, absolute Lord, or else He will have nothing to do with you. You may serve Satan, if you will, but when you serve him, you shall not serve Christ, too. He will not permit you to have your right hand in His service and your left hand employed for the black designs of Hell. The whole man, Christ died to purchase, and if you are not wholly given up to God, if in the intent and purpose of your souls every thought and wish and power and talent and possession, are not devoted and consecrated to Christ, you have no reason to believe that you have been redeemed by His precious blood.

Christ will not allow us to spare a single sin. We may not select some favorite evil and say, I will give my heart wholly up to God, but this vice is to be spared. No, no, my Hearers, you are not Christ’s if you have one pampered lust, one sin which you fondly indulge. Sin you will, even though you are Christ’s, but if you indulge sin, if you love it and delight in it, if it is not to you a plague and a curse, you have no reason whatever to conclude that your name is on His breast, or that you belong to Christ at all.

Suppose a house is attacked by seven thieves. The good man of the house has arms within and he manages to kill six of the thieves. But if one thief survive and he permits him to be in his house, he may still be robbed, perhaps still be slain. And if I have seven evil vices and if by the grace of God six of these have been driven out, should I yet indulge and pamper the one that remains, I am still a lost man. I am not His so long as I willingly yield and joyfully hold fellowship with a single evil and false thing.

I contend not for creature perfection—I believe it to be impossible for us to attain it in the present life—but I do contend for perfection in purpose, perfection in design and if we wantonly and willfully harbor a solitary sin, we are no friends of Jesus Christ. Not one sin, then, is to be spared. And as no sin is to be spared, so no duty is to be neglected. If I am Christ’s, I am not to look down His Law and say, “Such-and-such a precept is agreeable to me, I will keep it.”

No, as I hate every foolish way, so must I love every right one. I count all Your precepts concerning all things to be right. We have not come to be Christ’s verified property, to be Christ’s disenthralled people—unless we feel that in all the commandments of God we desire to walk blamelessly. “Not a hoof is to be left behind.” As no sin is to be spared and no service to be shunned, so no power is to be reserved from entire consecration. Christ bought the whole man and the whole man must be devoted to Christ. I am not to use my judgment for the Savior and let my imagination lie idle. I am not to reserve for sin the freedom of my will, while I give to God my conscience. The whole man is to be given up to Christ—he is not enlisted in Jesus Christ’s army, who has not given up to Christ—head and hands and feet and heart and all.

I am told that in Scotland, in the olden times, the farmers used to save one field which they did not sow. They saved that for the devil, it was called, “The gude man’s croft”—so that Satan might roam there as much as he liked and not disturb the crops elsewhere. A strange whim. Oh, how many Christians have tried to do the same in their hearts? They have had just the gude man’s croft, a little corner where Satan might have his way, but, oh, this will never do—the whole land must be tilled. Every acre must be sown with the good seed, for it is all Christ’s, or else it is none of it Christ’s—we are wholly consecrated, or else unconsecrated. We belong from the crown of our head to the sole of our feet to Christ, or else we do not belong to Christ at all. Man—the entire nature must be surrendered. The demand is imperative. To the letter it shall be verified, “there shall not a hoof be left behind.”

Yet, further—if no power is to be unconsecrated, how much less will Christ ever permit our hearts to be divided? If we seek to serve God and mammon, God and self, God and pleasure, we don’t serve God at all. When the Romans erected the statue of Christ and put it up in their pantheon, saying that he should be one among their Gods, their homage was worthless. And when they turned their heads, first to Jupiter, then to Venus, and then to Jesus Christ, they did no honor to our Lord, they did but dishonor Him. Their service was not acceptable and so if you imagine in your heart that you can sometimes serve God and sometimes serve self— and be your own master—you have made a mistake.

Christ will have no such service as this—He will have all or nothing. And indeed, Brothers and Sisters, it is necessary for us to escape entirely from the snares of sin, or else we cannot be saved. A quaint old Divine uses the following figure—“If,” says he, “a hart be caught in a trap and it shall extricate all its limbs except one foot, it has not escaped as long as the foot is in the trap. And if a bird is taken and if with much struggling it gets its liberty all but one wing, yet when the fowler comes he will seize it unless that wing also is delivered.”

So is it with you and me. If any part of our heart is devoted to Satan we might as well devote the whole, for we are still his bond slaves. If you say, “Well, I was once bound hand and foot, but now I have broken off the chain from my hand.” Yes, but if the ring of iron encircles one foot and it is fastened down to the floor, you are still a slave. You may have filed through the chain of your drunkenness, but if you have not filed through the chain of your self-righteousness, you are still as much a bondman as ever. It is all in vain for you to fight half the battle. It is not the half but the whole that gives the victory.

It is not the slaying of here and there a sin, like the stopping of here and there a leak in the ship. She must be re-keeled, or else she will sink. She must be new-bottomed and newly made. And so must you. All those slight amendments and improvements, good as they are in a moral aspect, are worthless as to any spiritual salvation of your soul. Remember this, you who think you are a Believer, see whether it can be said of you, “I have wholly come out of Egypt in my heart’s intent, ‘not a hoof has been left behind.’ ”

But to proceed—what is already true in our intent and purpose shall before long be true in reality. Tarry a little while, Christian, a few more struggles against the flesh, a little more battling and of warring against the evil powers within you and you shall put your foot upon the neck of your old corruptions—sin and self shall both be slain and Jesus Christ shall reign triumphantly. What a joy it is to the Christian to believe that he shall one day be perfect. As we have worn the image of the earthy, so shall we also wear the image of the heavenly. The tongue that has spoken many an evil thing—bought with the blood of Christ—shall one day be full of the sonnets of Paradise.

There shall be no strife in the soul. The Canaanite shall no more dwell in the land. We shall be vessels fully purged as by fire, fully sanctified and made fit for the Master’s use. When we shall come up dripping from the shelving banks of Jordan, we shall have left behind us all our sins. Up those celestial hills our feet shall climb and our garments shall be whiter than any fuller can make them. Not Jesus in His transfiguration shall be more complete and perfect than we shall be in ours. The black drops of depravity will have been wrung out of our hearts. The virus of deep corruption shall have been extracted and we shall take our place among the angels, pure as they—among the perfect spirits, the Prophets and the glorious host of martyrs—as truly sanctified, as fully redeemed, as effectually delivered from sin, as even they are. The redemption shall be complete— “not a hoof shall be left behind.”

Before I leave this point, let me remark that there is one part of man seemingly the most worthless, which we sometimes think will be left behind. The poor body! It shall be put into the grave, the worms shall hold a carnival within it and soon it shall crumble down into a few atoms of dust. But Christ, who redeemed His people, bought their flesh and their bones as well as their souls, “and not a hoof shall be left behind.” Not the eye shall be left any more than the judgment, nor the arm any more than the spiritual vigor. For the Redeemer lays claim to the organs of the body as well as the faculties of the mind. He will raise from the dead the very bones of His people and as the whole host shall go marching up behind their conquering Leader, He shall cry, “Of them that You have given Me I have lost none, not a bone in My own body has been broken and not a bone of their bodies has been left behind.”

The whole man, body, soul and spirit—all consecrated—all filled with the Spirit, shall stand before the Throne and clap its hands and sing the everlasting song of glory unto God forever and ever. “Not a hoof shall be

left behind.”  
II. To proceed to the second part of our discourse—it is equally true of  
THE WHOLE CHURCH as of the whole man—“Not a hoof shall be left behind.” I never have subscribed—I think I never shall—to the doctrine of  
universal redemption. I believe in the limitless efficacy of the blood of  
Christ. I would not say, with some of the early Fathers, that a single drop  
of Christ’s blood would have been sufficient for the redemption of the  
world. That seems to me to be an expression too strained, though doubtless their meaning was correct. I believe that there is efficacy enough in  
the blood of Christ if it is applied to the conscience to save any man and  
every man. But when I come to the matter of redemption it seems to me  
that whatever Christ’s design was in dying, that design cannot be frustrated, nor by any means disappointed.  
When I look at the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, I cannot imagine  
that such an One, offering such a sacrifice, can ever be disappointed of  
the design of His soul. Hence I think that all whom He came on purpose to  
save He will save—all who were graven on the strong affections of His  
heart as the purchase of His blood He assuredly shall have. All that His  
heavenly Father gave Him shall come to Him. All that He chose from before the foundation of the world, He will raise up at the last day. All who  
were included among the members of His mystic body, when He was  
nailed to the tree, shall be one with Him in His glorious resurrection—“not  
a hoof shall be left behind.”  
I know there are some who believe in a disappointed Christ, who affect  
to lament concerning Christ a design not accomplished—a frustrated  
Cross, agonies spent in vain—blood that was poured out on the ground as  
water that cannot be gathered up. I believe in no such thing. God creates  
nothing in vain, nor will I believe that Jesus Christ died on the Cross in  
vain in any sense or in any degree whatever. Not a hoof of all His purchased flock shall be left behind.  
Come, then. Methinks I see before my mind’s eye the countless multitudes whom Jesus bought with His blood. The day shall come when their  
great Shepherd, walking in front of them, shall lead behind Him the entire  
flock and not one shall be absent. But suppose for an instant—we take  
that ground to see how untenable it is—suppose for an instant that one of  
those purchased ones should be absent. Of what sort shall that one be? Suppose it to be a suffering one, one that has lain tossing on the bed of  
pain for many months and years, some aged disciple filled with twitching  
and convulsions, who for the last few years seemed to suffer pains like  
those of Hell, though she lay on the borders of Paradise—shall she be left  
behind? Such a supposition impugns the love of Christ. If He left any, certainly it should not be the suffering ones. If one should be cast away, certainly not of that martyr band who for His sake endured, nor of that pilgrim band of the despised who through much tribulation inherit the kingdom of Heaven.  
Who, then, shall it be? Shall it be the strong ones that shall be lost?  
Imagine it so. But how were they strong? They were strengthened through  
Christ and yet can they perish? Such a supposition impugns the immutability of God. Did He gird them with strength one day and leave them  
helpless the next? What? Did God pour the full vigor of His Grace into a  
heart and then restrain that vigor and suffer the strong one to perish?  
Samson, shall you be lost after you have slain heaps upon heaps, your  
thousand men? Shall you at last die ingloriously? No, if you die upon  
earth you shall hear the groans of your Philistine enemies about you, and  
die, as a warrior should, in the midst of battle, an undefeated one. Shall the minister of Christ whom God has greatly blessed be deserted  
by the faithful God and shall the shame of his fall ring round the world  
and become the jest and mockery of drunkards and harlots? God forbid!  
He shall keep the strong and they shall enter into life. But suppose for a  
minute it should be one of our weak ones, our poor friend, Mr. Feeble  
Mind, or our excellent sister, Miss Despondency. Suppose these must perish? Ah, then this would impugn the power of God, for then the enemy  
would cry, “Aha! Aha! He kept the strong but He could not keep the weak.  
Those who took care of themselves He kept, but the weak ones He suffered to perish.” Yes, Beloved, but there shall “not a hoof be left behind.”  
Not that poor lingering sheep, not that poor newly-born and feeble lamb.  
They shall, every one of them, be brought in. No, “not a hoof shall be left  
behind.”  
“But,” says one, “perhaps it will be the erring ones among them.” Ah,  
but if the erring ones in the Church are lost then should all be lost, for  
they all err. “But suppose there be some that specially err?” Well, if these  
were lost, it would be to impugn the Grace of God, because then it might  
be said and said with truth, “It was of works and not of grace.” For if it is  
of Divine Grace, then must the erring be brought back and forgiven and  
even those sheep that break the hedge and leave the pasture—these must  
be brought in, that it may be said on earth and sung in Heaven that it was  
of Divine Grace, free grace and grace alone, that any were saved—that all  
were saved—that none are left behind.  
Methinks I see the great Shepherd, now, and there are all His sheep.  
They have been wandering. They have got into a dark glen in the mountains and a snowstorm is coming on and He goes to seek them. There they  
are. The grim spirit of the tempest, the Prince of the power of the air meets  
Him and says, “Back, Shepherd! What are You doing here?” “I have come  
to reclaim My own.” “They are not Yours now,” says Satan, “they have  
strayed into my grounds and they are mine, not Yours.” “No, Fiend,” Jesus says, “they are Mine. They have My blood-mark on them. They were  
given Me of My Divine Father and I am bound by solemn obligations to  
keep every one of them safely.”  
“You shall not have them,” says Satan. “I must, I will,” says Jesus. They  
fight and the Good Shepherd overcomes. He dashes down the enemy and  
tramples him under foot and crushes him—crushes the serpent. Then the  
serpent with wily craft replies, “They are Yours—Yours I confess, and I will  
give You some of them—the fattest of them.” “No,” says Jesus, “No, Satan,  
I have bought them all and I will have them all.” And there they come, a  
goodly company. But He keeps back a few.  
“They are not all here,” says the Shepherd, “and I will have all.” “But,”  
says Satan, “there are some of them that are speckled sheep and some that are black and diseased. Do You want them, too? Let me have a few at least.” “No,” says He, “No. I must have the black ones, the speckled ones, the diseased ones—let them all come. Fiend, stand back, let them come, I tell you, or my right arm shall fell you to the ground again.” And now they all come but one, and Satan says, “No, but this is such a little one. This one is so weak. You would not have such a shriveled, scabby one as this in Your bright flock, You fair Shepherd of God.” “Yes,” says He, “but sooner than lose one of them I will die again and shed My blood once  
more to buy it back. All that My Father gave Me I will have.” And now methinks I see Him in the last tremendous day when the  
sheep pass again under the hand of Him that counts them. He cries, “Of  
all You have given Me, I have lost none. They have none of them perished.  
The lion has not devoured them, nor has the cold destroyed them. I have  
brought them all safely here, “not a hoof is left behind.”  
III. The third point was to be this—Jesus Christ will not only have all of  
a man and all the men he bought, but He will have ALL THAT EVER BELONGED TO ALL THESE MEN. That is to say, all that Adam lost, Christ  
will win back. All that we fell from in Adam, Christ will restore us to and  
that without the diminution of a single jot or tittle. Not an inch of Paradise  
shall be given up, nor even a handful of its dust resigned. Christ will have  
all, or else He will have none—“Not a hoof shall be left behind.” Very briefly let me run through a list of all those precious things which  
we lost in Adam. And first, with reference to God. Christ’s blood-bought  
ones once enjoyed in their father, Adam, Divine likeness. “Let Us make  
man in Our own image, in Our own likeness,” says God. Alas, that likeness has been defiled and debased. Like the king’s superscription on the  
coinage, which has been worn for many a year, you cannot tell whose image and superscription it now is.  
Yes, but we shall have that back again. God will re-stamp His precious  
things—re-engrave His name upon His gems and we shall wear the likeness of God as Adam did, when he came fresh from his Maker’s hand. We  
have lost, too, as we know to our cost, by nature, the Divine favor. God  
loved Adam, He showed that love to him, but when Adam sinned, though  
God was merciful, He could not show love to one who had become a rebel.  
I mean—not the love of complacency—though the love of benevolence  
never ceased for a moment.  
Yes, but God delights in His people now in Christ. Christ has gotten  
back for us the full light of God’s favor. The sun shone fully on Adam, and  
it will not shine on us with less brightness. God loved Adam very tenderly  
but He loves us just as much. We have gotten back the two Divine privileges of heavenly likeness and heavenly favor. But you will remember,  
also, Adam had the celestial blessing of Divine fellowship—“The Lord God  
walked with Adam in the garden in the cool of the day.”  
And some of you know what it is to have that blessing again, for he has  
walked with us and God has talked to his people till our eyes have shone  
and our hearts have been ready to break for very joy. Our poor weak body  
was not able to contain its overflowing bliss. Christ will get back for his  
people all the likeness of God, all the favor of God and all the fellowship  
with God, of which Satan robbed them. Not a particle less shall they have—but I think I may venture to say even more—God loved Adam for Adam’s sake—He loves you and me for Christ’s sake and that is a better motive. A higher, a deeper and grander consideration, than loving a man for his own sake. Because of His only-begotten and well-beloved Son, He loves all His people with an infinite, unfailing affection. This is the first  
part of the inheritance which we lost and which Christ will get us back. Then again, Adam lost happiness and we have lost it, too. And we have  
become the heirs of sorrow—and like our Master we are acquainted with  
grief. Yes, but He will get us back our happiness. We have had some portion of it already. That well of living water into which Satan cast a great  
stone so that it could not spring up—Christ has rolled away the stone and  
now we drink the water. If a man drinks, he shall never thirst and shall  
never need to go to earthly fountains to draw. Oh, courage, courage,  
Christian, in all your sorrows—Christ will win you back that glorious  
happiness which Adam lost for you. Besides, you all know that in Adam  
we lost the right to live. “In the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely

die.” Man became a dying soul and not a living soul any more. But Christ  
has brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel and because He  
lives, we shall live also.  
And yet again, Adam of old was king. Wherever he went there was a  
dignity about him that made the lordly lion crouch and lick his feet. The  
birds of the air did him homage. He bade the fish of the sea leap in their  
waters and they did it—for he was king—God’s crowned cherub who  
walked in the Garden of Eden like a king in his palaces. But now, what  
are we? The servants of servants, toiling creatures that wipe the sweat  
from our face and strain our nerves and empty out our veins with labor.  
Yes, but that dignity is restored already to the people of God, for He has  
raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in  
Christ Jesus our Lord.  
And visibly shall that dignity come back to us. When the leopard shall  
lie down with the kid, when the lion shall eat straw, like the ox—man on  
earth shall be lord of the creation just as he was of old. The master of the  
sea, the leviathan, shall do his bidding and the behemoth shall stay in his  
course to hasten to the voice of puny, but redeemed man. We shall have  
back, I believe, everything that Adam had and much more. “Not a hoof  
shall be left behind.”  
And yet further, not to keep you longer, we believe that in Adam we lost  
sonship—but in Christ we have received the adoption. In Adam we lost  
safe standing—but he has plucked us out of the miry clay and set our feet  
upon a rock. In Adam we lost righteousness—but he that believes is justified from all things. Whatever Adam lost, Christ has found and infinitely  
more. A man once wrote a book to prove the devil a fool. Certainly, when  
all matters shall come to their destined consummation, Satan will prove to  
have been a magnificent fool. Folly, magnified to the highest degree by  
subtlety, shall be developed in Satan.  
Ah, you trailing serpent, what have you now, after all? I saw you but a  
few thousand years ago twining around the tree of life and hissing out  
your deceptive words. Ah, how glorious was the serpent then—a winged  
creature, with his azure scales. Yes, and you did triumph over God. I heard you as you did go hissing down to your den, I heard you say to your brood—vipers in the nest as they are—“My children, I have stained the Almighty’s works—I have turned aside His liege subjects, I have injected my poison into the heart of Eve and Adam has fallen, too. My chil  
dren let us hold a jubilee, for I have defeated God.”  
Ah, Satan, I think I see you now, with your head all broken and your  
jaw-teeth smashed and your venom-bags all emptied and you, yourself, a  
weary length of agony, rolling miles afloat along a sea of fire—tortured,  
destroyed, overcome, tormented, ashamed, hacked, hewed, dashed in  
pieces and made a hissing and a scorn for children to laugh at and made  
a scoff throughout eternity. Ah, well, Brethren, the great Goliath has  
gained nothing by his vaunting. Christ and His people have really lost  
nothing by Satan. All they lost once has been retaken. The victory has not  
simply been a capture of that which was lost, but a gaining of something  
more. We are in Christ more than we were before we fell. “Not a hoof shall  
be left behind.”  
IV. I shall want your patience and your prayers while I now attempt to  
dwell upon my last illustration. CHRIST WILL HAVE THE WHOLE  
EARTH—“not a hoof shall be left behind.”  
God has made this world for Himself and when He made it He looked  
around on all His works and He said, “They were very good.” All creation  
was meant to be a grand orchestra, the angels occupying the higher seats  
and sounding the higher notes, while descending in the scale, the inhabitants of the various worlds, which are perhaps countless in multitude,  
taking their places in the one harmonious song.  
In one place there was an old and almost empty spot without a singer—  
blessed be God, the singers have, many of them, taken their places already and there are others on the way. That spot was left for men to sing  
in, for men who should praise God and magnify His name always. Yes,  
but Satan came and took away all the singers, spoiled their voices and ruined them, and now this world, instead of being an orchestra for God’s  
praise, has become an arena for evil passions, a battlefield for lust and  
plunder and murder and sin.  
But mark this, God will not be disappointed of His purpose. This ruined  
world shall yet sing forth His praises and without a marring or a jarring  
voice, the whole of His creatures shall magnify His holy name. Satan is  
now lord of most of the world and he seems to say today, “You King of  
kings, take England for Yourself and America be Yours, here and there  
You shall take an island, or a city, but let me have the masses of mankind, I will be lord of China’s teeming multitudes and India shall lie within  
my coils.”  
Brethren, shall it be so? Shall it be so?—Are you content in your Master’s name to resign those mighty empires to the Prince of Darkness?  
Unanimously your hearts speak out your Master’s language, “it must not  
and it shall not be!” The tramp of Christian heroes shall yet shake those  
nations and the trumpet of Jubilee shall proclaim liberty to those sons of  
Adam that are weeping there in bondage. They must—they shall belong to  
Christ. And now the black prince comes forward and he proposes another  
thing. “Oh,” says he “great King why this perpetual duel, why must Your servants fight and live, and my servants continually be defeated? Let us  
divide the empire.”  
You remember that in the olden times of England, when Chanute and  
the Danes were fighting against the Saxons under Edmund, it was decided at last that the two kings should fight it out. A most agreeable and  
proper method. I only would that it were always taken in hand and that  
all kings who choose to engage in warfare had to fight their own battles. I  
am sure we should all be patrons of their encounters and we should sincerely thank God that there was such a saving of blood. Let them fight if  
they will, but why should their poor subjects die?  
The fight went on with various success and at last, the champions having parted, it was decided that one should take one part of England and  
the other the other and so a truce was made. And so, black fiend, you  
propose this to the king of Heaven, do you? A division, shall it be, shall  
the fight be suspended, shall Christ have half and Satan the other half?  
No, listen to the cry of that half, which we might give up. “You men, you  
men of Israel, come here, help! Help! Come to the help of the Lord against  
the mighty! Why should we be given up to intolerable tyranny and devoted  
forever to Hell’s monarch and his mighty power?” No, we cannot consent,  
you Fiend! that you should have one half.  
Imagine, then, that the Gospel has spread in every country, but one,  
and now Satan pleads, “No missionaries shall be sent there to disturb  
their unhallowed peacefulness. Let me reign there,” says he, “and I will be  
content.” But it must not be—Soldiers of Christ to the battle! To the battle! All the line, all the rampart must be stormed. Not a single castle must  
be left in the possession of the enemy. We must dash him down from his  
hills and rend him up from his valleys. He must not have a single spot  
whereon to place his foot.  
Now I hear him flap his broken wings and fly into the grim north.  
“There are a few Eskimos,” says he, “who live in the dreary region long  
consecrated to my power. I will betake myself to the land of icebergs and  
of rocks, of the wild bear and of the dog and there will I keep my last resting place.” Brethren, shall it be, shall it be? Shall he reign king of the icebergs and lord even of the frozen north? No, by Heaven and Him that redeemed the earth, out even of that region must he be dashed—as of old he  
fell from Heaven, so must he fall from earth.  
And now I see the Icelanders bowing before Christ and the vilest and  
most depraved of men submitting to Jehovah’s sway. But Satan has one  
dark-soured being—the last man that is left unconverted. Ring your Sabbath bells, my Brethren! Go up to your House of Prayer! Be happy! But I  
see a gloom upon your face. What does it mean? You reply, “there is one  
man left unsaved, Satan has still a lodging place in the heart of one  
man—surely our songs would lose their melody if that were the case.” No,  
Master, no! “Not a hoof shall be left behind.” You shall walk through this  
world and meet no more with sin. There shall not be found one inhabitant  
of this globe who is not Your subject, not a single being who is not fully  
consecrated to Your will.  
That is a consummation devoutly to be wished. Equally may I say, it is  
a consummation confidently to be expected. Wait a little while, labor a little longer, and He that will come shall come and will not tarry—then  
shall the world see and Hell shall tremble at the sight—that Christ has  
conquered and has taken back all His possessions. “Not a hoof shall be  
left behind.”  
And now, before you disperse, I have just a word or two of practical  
doctrine to deliver, Give me your solemn attention. I will not detain you  
more than one or two minutes. On whose side are you, Man, Woman? Are  
you Christ’s, or are you Satan’s? Remember, if your soul belongs to sin,  
living and dying as you are, Hell’s greedy jaws must devour you. For Satan says, as Christ says, “Not a hoof shall be left behind.” The waves of  
the deluge of wrath shall drown every man who is not in the ark. Not a  
single thorn, or tare, shall be left to grow—they must all be bound up in  
bundles to be burned and cast into the fire. Answer that question, then—  
Whose are you?  
Answer now, another. If you hope that you are Christ’s, Christ’s motto  
with every man is, “Aut Caesar, aut nullus.” He will be Caesar in your  
hearts, king, emperor, or nothing at all. He will reign entirely over you, or  
not at all. Christ will not go shares in your heart. Are you wholly Christ’s,  
then? “Oh,” says one, “I hope so.” Yes, but take care it is not mere hope,  
but that it is the fact. And lift up your heart and pray, “Great God sanctify  
me wholly—spirit, soul and body—take full possession of all my powers,  
all my members, all my goods and all my hours, all I am and all I have.  
Take me and make me what You would have me to be.” God hear that  
prayer for you and make you wholly Christ’s.  
Yet, one other question. Is there one who says, “I fear I am not Christ’s,  
but I wish to be”? Is that a sincere wish? I am happy, happy, thrice  
happy, that you feel thus—for you could not even wish to be Christ’s—  
unless Christ’s Grace had made you wish. Oh, remember, if you will to  
have Christ, there is no question about Christ’s willingness to have you.  
Come just as you are and with a full surrender, say—  
*“Just as I am without one plea  
But that His blood was shed for me,  
And that He bids me come,  
Oh, Lamb of God, I come.”*  
Trust Christ and you are saved. Rely on Jesus and your sins are forgiven and you are Christ’s and shall be Christ’s in that day when He  
makes up His jewels. May God bless these thoughts and meditations to  
each and all of us. Amen.

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THE QUESTION BETWEEN THE PLAGUES  
NO. 2503

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1897. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
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**“How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?” Exodus 10:3.**

PHARAOH is the type and image of proud men. God permitted him to be left to the natural hardness of his heart and he stood up against Jehovah in a very remarkable way. Those who are students of the ancient history of Egypt, those especially who have seen the remains of the colossal statues of the kings and those tremendous pyramids which probably were the places of their sepulture, will know that man worship was carried on to the very highest degree in connection with the ancient kingdom of Egypt. Our modern civilization has deprived kings of much of the dignity which once hedged them round. We have grown wonderfully familiar with our fellow men in the very highest places of the earth, but in those old monarchies, when the king was absolute and supreme, when his wish, even though he was little better than a maniac—was the law that governed the people—when not a dog dared move his tongue against the despot, then kings seemed to be like little gods and they lorded it over their subjects with a vengeance!

No doubt they grew intoxicated with the fumes of the incense which their subjects willingly offered to them and so came to think themselves almost, if not quite, Divine—and assumed the position and honors of God, Himself. It is not so very amazing, therefore, that Pharaoh should have thought that, in the God of the Hebrews, he had merely met with just another one of the same stamp as himself, against whom he could carry on war and whom he might even subdue. He said within himself, “Who are these Hebrews? Their fathers were a company of shepherds who came and settled in Egypt! And as for these people, they are my slaves. I have built cities with their unpaid labor and I mean to hold them in captivity. They talk about their God, their ‘Jehovah.’ Who is Jehovah that I should obey His voice? Let it be a battle of Pharaoh against Jehovah and let it be fought out to the bitter end! I will show these people that I care not for them, or their Prophets, or their God.”

That same pride which grew so strong in Pharaoh—growing upon that whereon it fed until it came to a colossal form—that same kind of pride is in the hearts of men even to this day! They do not take upon themselves the same high and mighty airs, but, as far as their circumstances will allow, it is still a duel between man and his Maker, between the sinner and his Judge. In the case of some here present, there is now going on a battle between yourselves and your God. Oh, that you would consider this matter in the right light! That you would look at it with calm, steady and reasonable consideration, for then, I think, you would at once throw down your weapons and beg for peace on Gospel terms—and this would be the happiest hour that you have ever lived! God grant that it may be so! I am going to make a running application of my text all through my discourse, and I pray that the Holy Spirit, Himself, may make a direct application of it to anyone whom it may concern.

I. To aid your memory, let me say, first of all, that THIS QUESTION HAS ABOUT IT AN AIR OF ASTONISHMENT—“How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?” I have no doubt that as Moses and Aaron uttered this question, they put it in tones indicative of surprise—“How long is it to be that you, proud Pharaoh, will refuse to humble yourself before the only living and true God?”

And, surely, that astonishment must have arisen partly from the judgments which God had inflicted upon Pharaoh. You know what Jehovah had already done. He had turned the water into blood and destroyed the fish. He had made frogs to come even into the king’s bedchamber. He had brought innumerable lice and flies throughout all the land. He had sent disease upon the cattle, boils and sores upon man and beast, storms of hail and rain and mighty thunder! With stroke after stroke, almost without a pause, Jehovah had smitten the proud king! Yet still, after seven plagues, Pharaoh stood out as proud and obstinate as ever and, therefore, the Lord sent to him the question of our text, “How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?”

I think I know some cases that are almost parallel with that of Pharaoh. Here is a man who has been very lofty and proud, but already he has been brought from wealth to poverty. At this moment he scarcely knows where to lay his head, yet in his poverty he has not turned to God. He has been smitten with sickness and that not merely once or twice, but many times. Turning over the pages of his diary he can note on such a day, fever—on such a day some other deadly disease—and these strokes have followed one after another. Yet, on being able to creep out again and to come into the place of public worship, he is still found as hardened in heart as ever he was. How long will it be, my Friend, before you humble yourself before God? The Prophet Isaiah might well ask concerning you the question he put in his day, “Why should you be stricken any more?” The rod seems to be wasted upon you—you have been struck till “the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint,” and you are covered with “wounds, bruises and putrefying sores.” Yet you turn not unto the God who smites you, but you grow prouder and yet prouder still notwithstanding all His chastisements and judgments!

What shall God do next with you? Where shall the next arrow be aimed? An eye, a hand, a foot—shall these be struck? Or shall the Lord lay the cold hand of death upon your heart? Shall “the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern”? I cannot tell how or when the summons may come for you, but I would very earnestly say to any of you who have been the subjects of many Providential trials and Divine judgments, “How long will it be before you humble yourselves before God?”

The question of our text may have been put in astonishment from another point of view, namely, because of the many false pretences of humility which Pharaoh had made. When he was struck, he sent for Moses and Aaron again and again, and he cried out to them, “I have sinned, pray for me. Forgive me just this once.” Then, when his prayer had been heard and the plague had been removed, Pharaoh went back to his old natural hardness and said, “I will not let the people go.” Therefore the Lord sent to him the question, “How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?” Is it not much the same with some of you, my Hearers? I want to speak right home to your hearts and consciences! Have you ever, in the time of your sickness, promised God that if you should get better, your life should be altogether different? Yet, though the Lord spared you, there has not been any true change in you! Did you not say, “Please God, if I am delivered this time, I will be a better man in all respects”? Yet you are not any better than you used to be! Remember that those resolves of yours are all preserved upon God’s file in Heaven—you have the counterfoils of those resolutions in your memory, but the resolutions, themselves, are registered in the Court of King’s Bench above! And one of these days you shall see those broken resolutions again and, as you hear them read, you shall have to answer for having acted falsely towards the Omniscient God and for having lied to Him! God deliver you from the great sin of thus mocking Him!

Meanwhile, I press this question upon the heart and conscience of any to whom it applies, “How long will it be before you humble yourselves before the Lord? Will you go on all your lifetime with the mimicry of repentance, with the mere pretense of faith? Will you always be trying to play fast and loose with God? Will you never shake yourselves clear of this shameful play-acting and come to downright earnest repentance before your God? Will you play yourselves into Hell? Will you go on sporting with eternal realities as if they were only a child’s game?” Oh, let it not be so! Let this question of the Lord, Himself, come rolling, like a peal of thunder, into your heart and conscience, “How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?”

Do you not think, too, that this question came from Moses with surprise as remembered the many mercies of God to Pharaoh? God had heard the prayers of Moses on behalf of Pharaoh. The proud king might think it a little matter, but he who had prayed for him and obtained the answer to his petitions did not think it a small thing. When the frogs were in all the land—only by the prayer of Moses were they all slain! When the swarms of flies came and defiled the whole country, it was the prayer of Moses that removed the plague so that there remained not one! It might be a little matter to Pharaoh—for men who receive favors often think but little of them—but they who win favors from God by prayer always highly esteem them! So Moses seems to be astonished as he says to Pharaoh, “Has God done all this for you? Has He removed His rod from you? Has He said to the executioner, ‘Put back the axe’? Has He fetched you out of the prison of His judgments, taken the chains off your wrists and set you free—and do you still stand out against Him? How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Him?”

Let me put this question to some who are here. God has been very gracious to you, my Friend, in delivering you from many accidents and diseases—and you are spared till your hair is turning gray. It would have been easy enough for your life to have come to an end long ago, yet here you are, still spared by God’s mercy! You are not a pauper, as you once thought you would be. You are still living in comfortable circumstances and that great trial which, at one time, darkened your life like a heavy cloud, has passed away. And you can now look up with a cheerful countenance and remember times of great despondency and threatened distress. Will you not, then—won by this mercy, subdued by this great love—humble yourself before your God? What more can He do for you than He has already done? See how He has made you the special objective of singular Providential care! I refer you to your diary and ask you to remember how kindly and tenderly and graciously God has dealt with you these many years. O Sirs, if terrors will not move you, let love subdue you! Oh, that the Grace of God might find out the secret spring of your heart and bring you now, at once, to humble yourselves before the Lord!

So I think I am right in saying, in the first place, that there is an air of surprise about this question to Pharaoh, because of wasted judgments, forgotten promises and neglected mercies—“How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?”

II. Now, in the second place, to change the strain a little, and but a little, let me add that THE QUESTION BREATHES A SPIRIT OF KINDNESS.  
You know that when a person does not intend another’s good, he strikes the fatal blow at once without a word of warning. But he who is a father, though he must use the rod, speaks many times and pleads, and admonishes, and persuades before he gives a stroke. This is just what God did with Pharaoh by His servants Moses and Aaron. He said, “How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?”  
In Pharaoh’s case, that which God required of him was right. It was humbling to his pride, but it was right. What right had Pharaoh to hold the Israelites as his slaves? They were not his people—they had been admitted into the kingdom as honored guests. One of that race had saved the nation in the time of famine. Joseph had preserved Egypt and made the king strong in the midst of his people. Gratitude to Joseph ought to have caused the Israelites to be treated in a very different way. At any rate, if Pharaoh did not wish to have them in Egypt, he ought, at least, to have permitted them to go in peace and not to have held them in bondage. This was all that God asked of him—“Let My people go. They are none of yours, they are Mine. Let them go that they may serve Me.”  
And, Brothers and Sisters, that which God requires of a sinner is a right thing. He bids you leave your sin. Is not that right? He bids you break off your sins by righteousness. Is not that right? He has provided a way of salvation through the Atonement of His Son, Jesus Christ, and He bids you accept it. Is not that right? All that He asks you to do is to confess and forsake your sin. Is not that right? If you cannot undo your sin, the least you can do is to acknowledge it like a man—and that is what God asks of you. He bids you trust His dear Son. Is that a hard thing, an unreasonable thing? If He has appointed a Savior and equipped Him for the service of salvation, and has bid you, who need salvation, to trust Him to save you and never think of self-salvation, but to take Jesus Christ to be the beginning and the end of salvation to you—is not that a right thing? Well, then, how long will it be that you will still refuse to humble yourself before Him? A right-minded man never desires to postpone a right action! If it is just and right, He wishes to let it be done at once. And, oh, dear Friends, it is the most just and right thing that can be conceived of, that a sinner, guilty against the God of Love, should confess his guilt, seek mercy and accept pardon in the way in which God provides it for men!  
This question is put in a spirit of kindness and I desire to put it very kindly to any one of you who has not yet yielded to the Lord—“How long will you refuse to humble yourself before God?” Dear Friend, you say that you intend, one day, to humble yourself beneath the mighty hand of God. Do you think it will grow any easier while you delay? Is it difficult, now, to yield yourself to the Lord? It will be more difficult in a year’s time, even if you are spared till then, for a man’s habits harden every day that he lives! They spin new webs about him. They hold him fast, poor fly that he is, every hour that he lives. If it ever is an easy matter to bow before the Lord, it is easier at this moment than it will be tomorrow. Say not, therefore, “I am waiting for a more convenient season,” for the most convenient season that ever can come is now! There will be greater inconveniences tomorrow than there are tonight—and so will it be ad infinitum! If you would be free from your bondage, break loose at once! You have waited too long, already, and you do not find it easier from day to day, neither will you if you still delay to submit to the Lord. Therefore, yield to Him at once. God help you to do so!  
Do you not know that if God means to save you, He will send heavier plagues upon you than any you have felt as yet? If you will not come to Him with one blow, you shall have two! And if two will not suffice, you shall have twenty, for He will have you. It would be better to yield at once! There is no greater wisdom than the moment the Lord says, “Seek you My face,” to answer, “Your face, Lord, will I seek.” “Be you not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding,” which must be driven to their work and goaded on in their labor. There are some who come to Christ like vessels towed into port, all but wrecked, with torn sails and broken timbers. It is better by far that you be gently wafted into the haven by the soft south wind of Love, or that you spread your canvas to a favoring gale and fly before the breeze into the Fair Havens of salvation by Christ! I would put it to you, dear Friend—Why do you want to be beaten, bruised, cut and wounded? Why not, as you are, say tonight— *“Just as I am—without one plea  
But that Your blood was shed for me,  
And that You bid me come to You,  
O Lamb of God, I come”?*

At any rate, there is one other thing I will say to you— a time for decision should be set. I would like to press the question of the text, “How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?” I remember a man of God who was talking with a young lady to whom he had spoken many times about her soul. At last he said to her, “Well, Hannah, you do intend to come to Christ one day?” “Yes, Sir,” she replied, “I do intend.” “Well, now,” he said, “will you give me a date when you will come to Christ? You are 20 now, will you come to the Lord Jesus Christ when you are thirty? Will you put that down as a definite promise?” The young lady answered, “Well, Sir, I should not like to promise that because I might be dead before I was thirty. Ten years is a long time and I might be dead and gone before that time. I hope I shall know the Lord before that.” “Well, Hannah,” the good man said, “we will say nine years, then. That is to be the time that you fix when you will yield to the mercy of God.” “Well, Sir,” she said, “I hope it will be before then.” “No,” he said, “the bargain is made—you will have to run risks for nine years, you know. You make the bargain that you will come to Christ in nine years’ time. Let it stand so and you must run the risk.”

“Oh, Sir!” she exclaimed, “it would be an awful thing, a dreadful thing, for me to say that I would wait nine years, because I might be lost in that time.” The friend then said, “Well, suppose we say that you will serve the Lord in 12 months’ time? Will you just take this year and spend it in the service of Satan, and then, when you have enjoyed yourself that way, give your heart to Christ?” Somehow, the young woman felt that it was a long time and a very dangerous time, so she answered, “I should not like to be hung over an awful chasm and for somebody to say, ‘I will pull you up at the end of a year and set your feet on a rock.’” No, she could not bear that thought! And as her minister pressed her to set a time and brought it down by little and little, at last she said, “Oh, Sir, it had better be tonight! It had better be tonight! Pray to God that I may now give my heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, for it is such a dreadful thing to be without a Savior! I would have Christ as my Lord this very night.” So I put it to you—yield to Christ at once and do not keep on saying, “I hope it will not be long before I become a child of God.”

You know how people often talk when they owe you money—they promise to pay you “next Monday.” Then, when the next Monday comes, they say that, unfortunately, there was a remittance which they fully expected on the Saturday, but it did not come. They feel quite certain it will come on Wednesday morning, so they will be round at your house with it, or, would you mind calling upon them at noon on Wednesday? When you call on Wednesday, they are so sorry—such a thing never happened to them before, but they lost a purse when they were out in the street, so could you allow them another month’s credit? That is how they go on, until at last you say, “Well now, look here, will you tell me once and for all when you will pay me? Do fix a day.” And you think you have done something when you get a day for payment fixed at last. So shall I think that there is something gained—though, mark you, I have not much confidence in such an arrangement—if there is a deliberate attempt made to fix some kind of time when you will yield yourself to Christ! And, of all the times that I can think of—if I may, for once, be your solicitor and sit down quietly and give you my best advice—my experience suggests to me that I had better quote to you this passage of Scripture, “Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” Today is in your power, it is here at present! It has almost gone, flying with the setting sun, but you have today at present—therefore use it, for tomorrow is not yours, and tomorrow may never come for you!

The question of our text is asked, then, not only with an air of surprise, but also with a great measure of kindness. And in that kindly spirit I wish you to suppose that I am walking round the front of this lower gallery and shaking hands with every unconverted person and asking, “How long will it be before you trust in Jesus?” And then, mounting the stairs to get to you who are in the upper gallery, that I may put to you the same question. And, after making the round of the whole building, threading my way as best I can through these crowded aisles and taking each one by the hand, giving a hearty grip, and saying, “How long is it to be? How long is it to be?” And, “Had it not better be now?” God grant that it may be now that you will humble yourself before the Lord, for Jesus’ sake!

III. In the third place I will deal with the text in rather a different style, yet still keeping to the same objective though I change the line of argument. THIS QUESTION IS ASKED IN A TONE OF POWER.

If I could speak it as Jehovah would speak it by His servant Moses, I think it would run like this—“Thus says Jehovah, God of the Hebrews, How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go that they may serve Me.” God as God says to Pharaoh, “It is no use for you to stand out against Me. As well might a moth contend with the furnace. It is of no use for you to lift your puny hand against Me. You know not how great My power is. I have given you a taste of it, but I have yet more terrible plagues in the rear which I will bring forward—and you will have to bow before Me.” And you know, Brothers and Sisters, how Pharaoh did at last have to bow before Jehovah! The firstborn of his strength was cut off in the dead of night and there was wailing in the palace and in all the land. And then, when Pharaoh said, “I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil. My lust shall be satisfied upon them. I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them”—he dashed forward to pursue the hosts of the Lord and you know what followed. “For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the Lord brought again the waters of the sea upon them.” Then was heard the song of Miriam, “Sing you to Jehovah, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.” As the rushing waters bore him away, proud Pharaoh learned when, too late, how great a fool he had been to contend against the Infinite Majesty of Almighty God!

And I say to you, Brothers and Sisters, who are fighting against God, you must either bend or break! As God lives, you must bow before Him in repentance, or you shall be crushed beneath Him in the day of His anger! Think not, when we talk to you of God’s mercy, that we come to you as your equal might come, and reason with you as though God were afraid of you! Do you talk of your great strength? He is almighty! As for you, your breath is in your nostrils and the Lord could cause you, in a moment, to fall dead in a fit, as many have done before you! If you will not yield to Him, He is infinitely glorious without you! And if you rebel against Him, in what way can you affect the supremacy of His empire? As well might a drop of spray hope to shake the cliffs of Albion as for you to contend against the Majesty of God!

O Brothers and Sisters, fight not against your God! What profit can there be to you in this rebellion? Already you have found no profit in it. Therefore be not so mad as to continue warring against your God. “Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” He is a God ready to forgive! “He delights in mercy.” He wills not the death of any, but that they turn to Him and live. Still, if you will persist in contending against Him, see what your end will be—“Everlasting destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.” Jesus Himself put the final issue thus, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.”

IV. I conclude my sermon by trying to show that THE QUESTION OF OUR TEXT IS OF WIDE APPLICATION.  
Let me try to put the case to you who are here present. Forget Pharaoh and only think of yourself. Let the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, with the thorn-crowned head and the pierced hands stand by your pew and, looking right down into your soul, say in His matchless tone of music—the music of the heart of love—“How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?”  
What is your difficulty, dear Friend? What is the cause of your quarrel with your Lord? Do you even refuse to think about religion? I know that many do. They get up late on Sunday morning and loiter about the house all day, with no care to go to what they call these “preaching-shops.” They would rather go for a walk. The Bible is never read by them—they say that it is such a dreary book—which shows how unacquainted they are with its contents. Religion they regard as a mere make-up of priests, though they have never fairly examined its claims. Well, Friend, will you not at least give the Gospel a hearing before you condemn it? Will you not listen to God’s message of salvation that you may form a sober judgment concerning it? Will you not, at any rate, read that Book which you have hitherto despised, that you may find out whether it really is the Book of God? Oh, no, you know too much to read the Bible! You are far too cultured to listen to the common preaching of such poor folk as we are. That is how you talk, but are you not ashamed to speak so? Do you not, yourself, judge that when a man thinks he knows everything, he really knows very little? And that when he affects to be such a very superior person, he is not so high and mighty as he thinks himself to be? Humble yourself enough, at least, to be wise? Humble yourself enough to listen to this question of Nicodemus, “Does our law judge any man before it hears him and know what he does?” Hear the story of Christ and examine and weigh the evidence of His Messiahship. Consider the claims of Christ and confess that you have not met them. And then give your whole heart and soul to seek to know the way of salvation!  
But, suppose you have thought of religion, what is your trouble? You say, “Well, I understand that I cannot be saved except by confessing myself a sinner.” You would not need salvation, would you, if you were not a sinner? Surely, there is no hardship in refusing to you what you profess you do not need! If I opened a doctor’s shop and posted in the window a notice stating that I would give away no pills or draughts to men who were perfectly well, nobody would accuse me of a lack of humanity because I acted like that. Those who are well have no need of a physician! So, to qualify yourself for being saved, you must first confess that you need to be saved! Come, Friend, have you always been perfect? I should like to see you stand in the middle of the congregation and let us all look you up and down! If you did not blush, I should know that you were not perfect—and if you did blush, it would be a confession that you were imperfect! We have all transgressed the Law of our God. Some in one way and some in another, but, “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” and we must confess that it is even so. When we have done this, then will be fulfilled to us the ancient promise, “Whoso confesses and forsakes his sins shall have mercy.”  
If you have made a confession of sin, what is further the matter with you? “Why,” you say, “I am told that I must be saved by Divine Grace.” Yes, and how else would you like to be saved? Do you wish to be saved by your own merits? You have not any! You would like to set up some merit of your own, but why try to set up a lie? God is the God of Truth and He cannot endure that which is false. If ever any of us gets to Heaven, it will be by the free and undeserved mercy of God—why should you quarrel with such terms as these? When a thing is to be given away for nothing, I would be the last man to try to run it up in price! The richest man can have it for nothing and that is a price which exactly suits the poorest. Blessed be God that salvation is all of Grace from first to last! Humble yourself to accept it “without money and without price.”  
“But I understand,” says one, “that I am to be saved simply by believing in Christ, and I do not like that way of salvation.” Why do you not like it? Salvation by the atoning Sacrifice of Christ, through the sinner simply trusting in Christ, will greatly glorify Him. This makes the way of salvation possible to lame feet, blind eyes, deaf ears and enables poor guilty souls to find perfect righteousness which they could never find in any other way! Humble yourself, therefore, and submit to God’s plan of salvation! Really, it seems to me that if a man gives anything away, he has a right to give it in his own way. And if God gives salvation, surely He has the right to give it in His own style! And if He will give it to all who confess their need of it, and come and freely accept it because Christ has worked it out, who shall quarrel with such terms as these?  
In closing, I would very affectionately press home this passage upon all whom it concerns. Listen to the Lord, Himself, as He puts to you this solemn question, “How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?” Here are many of us who, long ago, came to Jesus and humbled ourselves before Him, and we did not think it any degradation. I would sooner have some men to put their foot on my neck than I would have the best words of certain other men. One might be willing to sit still and be abused by some men and then say, “It is a pleasure, even, to be noticed by such persons,” while, if certain others were to praise you, you might ask as the philosopher did of old, “What have I been doing amiss that this wretch should speak well of me?”  
Ah, poor Sinner! If you once get a view of the Lord Jesus Christ and know who He is, and what He is—if you can, by faith, perceive His beauties, you will say, “To fall at His feet is a high privilege! To submit myself to such an One as Jesus Christ of Nazareth is a higher honor than to receive a peerage from an earthly sovereign.” Therefore, let us go together— you who never went and some of us who have often been—let us go together and let us cry to Christ, “Lord, receive us! We are nothing but a mass of sin and misery! Receive us and save us, for Your mercy’s sake, and unto Your name shall be the glory forever and ever!” Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**EXODUS 10:1-20; PSALM 105:26-38.**

Exodus 10:1, 2. And the Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might show these My signs before him: and that you may tell in the ears of your son, and of your son’s son, what things I have worked in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them; that you may know how that I am the Lord. God would stamp the early history of Israel with the deep impression of His Godhead. His overthrow of the proud Egyptian king should let Israel know in the very beginning how great a God had chosen her to be His own peculiar portion.

3. And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews, How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me. Can you imagine these humble individuals, Moses and Aaron, thus bearding the great king whose word could make their heads roll upon the ground? They were not afraid, for God was with them, and they who speak in God’s place are traitors if they are not brave. The ambassadors of so great a King must not demean themselves by fear! Therefore right boldly said they to Pharaoh, “Thus says the Lord God of the Hebrews, How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me.”

4-6. Else, if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow will I bring the locusts into your coast: and they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth: and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remains unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which grows for you out of the field: and they shall fill your houses, and the houses of all your servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither your fathers, nor your fathers’ fathers have seen since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day. And he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh. Moses had delivered his message. He had uttered his solemn warning, so he waited no longer in the tyrant’s presence.

7. And Pharaoh’s servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God; know you not yet that Egypt is destroyed? The seven former heavy judgments had so effectually bruised Egypt that the people began to cry against their king for his obstinacy in still farther resisting God.

8, 9. And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the LORD your God: but who are they that shall go? And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the LORD. Pharaoh was inclined to make terms with Moses, but God will have no conditions with men who are rebelling against Him! An unconditional surrender is all that God will accept.

10, 11. And he said unto them, Let the LORD be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you. Not so: go now you that are men, and serve the LORD; for that you did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh’s presence. See how proud, how stouthearted towards evil is this wicked and foolish king! When his people appeal to him to yield, he only does so for a moment, and then he drives out the messengers of God in anger.

12-17. And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail has left. And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. Now therefore forgive, I pray you, my sin only this once, and entreat the LORD your God, that He may take away from me this death only. See how he is obliged to come to his knees at last? He will be soon up again, for his heart is not humbled, though he is eating his own words! An unhumbled heart is not subdued by judgments—it is apparently so—but really it is still a heart of stone.

18-20. And he went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the LORD. And the LORD turned a mighty strong west wind which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red Sea. There remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go. God kept His Divine Grace back from him, so that he relapsed into his natural state of obduracy. Pharaoh is the great mirror of pride and obstinacy! I wonder whether we have a Pharaoh here? Now let us turn to the 105th Psalm and see further what God did against this proud Pharaoh.

Psalm 105:26-28. He sent Moses, His servant, and Aaron whom He had chosen. They showed His signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham. He sent darkness, and made it dark; and they rebelled not against His Word. So cowed were they by that awful darkness, that for a time they seemed to repent of their rebellion against the Lord.

29, 30. He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish. Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings. Though the fish could not live, the frogs could. When good was taken away, evil came. What a strange succession of miracles was this—the fish slain, but the frogs multiplied!

31-34. He spoke, and there came divers sorts of flies, and lice in all their coasts. He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land. He smote their vines, also, and their fig trees; and broke the trees of their coasts. He spoke, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number. There is great sublimity in this expression. God had only to speak and whole battalions of devouring locusts and caterpillars seemed to leap out of the earth, or to drop from the clouds—“He spoke, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number.”

35-37. And did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground. He smote also all the firstborn in their land, the chief of all their strength. He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes. It was a notable miracle that, after all the oppression they had endured, they should be in such a state of health that “there was not one feeble person among their tribes.” When God makes His people march, He puts them into marching trim!

38. Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them. Yet this was the mighty nation whose proud king had defied the Lord! At last they had had enough of the combat; they were glad that the people of God should retire out of their land and they themselves bowed low before Him. May we be taught humility of heart, so that we can sing the hymn I have chosen!—

**“Sovereign Ruler, Lord of all,  
Prostrate at Your feet I fall.  
Hear, oh, hear my earnest cry!  
Frown not, lest I faint and die!”**

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SEPARATING THE PRECIOUS FROM THE VILE  
NO. 305

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 25, 1860, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

**“That you may know how that the Lord has made a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.”  
Exodus 11:7.**

THE difference between the Egyptians and Israel was exceedingly manifest. At first sight it seemed to be very greatly to the advantage of Egypt. They had the whip in their hand and poor Israel smarted under the lash. Egypt possessed the toil of the Israelites. The sons of Jacob made bricks and the subjects of Pharaoh inhabited the houses which the sons of Jacob built. How soon, however, were the tables turned! God worked plagues in Egypt. But Goshen was spared. He sent a thick darkness over all the land, even darkness that might be felt. But in all the land of Goshen there was light. He sent all manner of flies and lice in all their borders, but throughout the habitations of Israel not a fly was to be seen, neither were they molested by the living things which crept upward from the quickened dust of the earth.

The Lord sent hail and a disease upon all the cattle of the Egyptians. But the cattle of the children of Israel were spared and on their fields fell no desolating shower from Heaven. At last the destroying angel unsheathed his glittering sword to smite his last decisive blow. In every house throughout the land of Egypt there was weeping and wailing. He smote the firstborn of Egypt, the chief of all their strength. But as for His people, He led them forth like sheep—He led them through the wilderness like a flock—by the hand of Moses and Aaron. They came to the Red Sea and He divided a path for them—they went through the sea on foot, there did they rejoice in Him. The flood stood upright as a heap and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.

They passed through the depths as through a wilderness, which the Egyptians attempting to do, were drowned. The Lord, in all these things, put a glorious difference between Egypt and Israel. The fiery cloudy pillar which gave light to Israel was darkness to the eyes of Egypt. Whenever God blessed Israel, He cursed Egypt—the same moment that He sent the benediction to the one, He sent the malediction to the other. He looked on Israel and the tribes rejoiced, but when He looked on the Egyptians, their host were troubled.

Now, in your ears this day, Egypt and Israel are declared to be types of two people who dwell upon the face of the earth—the men that fear the Lord and the men that fear Him not. The Egyptians are the pictures of those who are dead in trespasses and sins, enemies to God by wicked works and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. The Israelites, God’s ancient people, are set before us as the representatives of those who

have, through Divine Grace, believed in Christ, who fear God and who seek to keep His Commandments. The task of this morning will be to show you, first, the difference. Secondly, when that difference is seen. And thirdly, the reason why it should be seen, upon which last point I shall stir up your minds, urging you to make the difference more and more conspicuous in your daily life.

I. First, then, THE DIFFERENCE. The Lord has made a difference between those who are His people and those who are not. There are many distinctions among men which will one day be blotted out—but permit me to remind you at the outset that this is an eternal distinction. Between the different classes of men, the rich and the poor, there are channels of intercommunication and very properly so, for the less class distinctions are maintained, the better for the happiness of all. The social fabric is not to be kept up by maintaining one pillar at the expense of another, or by gilding the roof and neglecting the foundations. The commonwealth is one and the prosperity of one class is proportionally the prosperity of all.

But there is a distinction so wide that we may truly say of it, “Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed,” and the broader the line of demarcation, the happier for the Church and the better for the world. There is a distinction of infinite width between the sinner, dead in sin, and the child of God, quickened by the Spirit, who has been adopted into the family of the Most High. Concerning this distinction, suffer me to make the following remarks.

First, the distinction between the righteous and wicked is most ancient. It was ordained of God from before the foundation of the world. In the Everlasting Covenant Jehovah wrote the names of His elect. For them Christ entered into engagements that he would be their surety and their substitute to suffer in their place. Covenant engagements were made for them, and for them only. Their names were from of old inscribed in the Book of God and engraved upon the precious stones of their great High Priest’s breastplate. They were then in the Covenant set apart—“The Lord has set apart him that are His godly for Himself.”

While the whole world lay in the Wicked One, these precious jewels were selected from the dunghill of the Fall. Better than other men by nature they certainly were not. Yet Divine Sovereignty, linked arm in arm with Divine Grace, selected some to be the vessels of mercy, who should be fitted for the Master’s use, in whom Jehovah should show forth not His long-suffering merely, but the plenitude of His grace and the riches of His love. Other distinctions are merely temporary. They are things that grew up yesterday and will die tomorrow. But this is older than the everlasting hills. Before the starry sky was spread, or the foundations of the earth were dug, the Lord had made a difference between Israel and Egypt. This, however, is a mighty secret and though we are to tell it as we find it in the Word, yet we are not intrusively to pry into it.

God has made another distinction, namely a vital one. Between the righteous and the wicked there is an essential distinction of nature. There are some of you who imagine that the only difference between the true Christian and another is just this—that the one is more attentive to his place of worship—that he is more regular in the practice of ceremonies— that he could not live without private prayer and the like. Permit me to assure you that if there is no greater difference than this between you and another man, you are not a child of God. The distinction between the unconverted and the converted is far wider than this. It is one not of dress or of outward form but of essence and of nature. Bring here a serpent and an angel—there is a distinction between the two of such a character, that the serpent could not grow into an angel let it do its utmost. The angel could not eat the dust which forms the serpent’s food, nor could the serpent lift up its voice and sing the seraphic song of the blessed.

As wide a distinction as that is there between the man that fears God and the man that fears Him not. If you are still what you always were by nature, you cannot be a true Christian. And it is utterly impossible for you to grow into one by all your doings. You may wash and cleanse, you may clothe and dress. You will be the child of nature finely dressed—but not the living child of Heaven. You must be born again. There must be a new nature put into you. A spark of Divinity must fall into your bosom and must burn there. Fallen nature can only rise to nature, just as water will only flow up as high as its source. And as you are fallen in nature, so must you remain—unless you are renewed by Divine Grace.

God, by His infinite power, has quickened His people—He has brought them out of their old nature, they now love the things which they once hated and they hate the things they once loved. Old things with them are “passed away. Behold all things are become new.” The change is not that they speak more solemnly and religiously, or that they have left off going to the theater, or that they do not spend their lives in the frivolities of the world—that is not the change—it is a consequence of it, but the change is deeper and more vital than this. It is a change of the man’s very essence. He is no more the man that he once was. He is “renewed in the spirit of his mind,” born over again, regenerated, re-created—he is a stranger and a foreigner here below. He no more belongs to this world, but to the world to come. The Lord, then, in this respect, has made a difference between Israel and Egypt.

We would remark, further, that this difference of nature is followed by a difference in God’s judicial treatment of the two men. With both, His dealings are just and right. God forbid that He should be unjust to any man! The Lord is never severe beyond what justice demands, nor gracious beyond what justice allows. Here comes the unrenewed, the ungodly man—he brings up his good works, his prayers, his tears. The Lord will judge him according to his works and woe is the day to him! It will be a day of sorrow, indeed, for he will soon discover his best perfections are as filthy rags and that all his good works only seemed to be good because he was in the dark and could not see the spots that defiled them.

Another man approaches, it is the renewed man. God deals with him justly, it is true, but not according to the scale of the Law—He looks at that man as accepted in Christ Jesus, justified through Christ’s righteousness and washed in His blood and now He deals with that man, not as a judge with a criminal, nor as a king with a subject, but as a Father with a child. That man is taken to Jehovah’s bosom. His offense is put away, his soul constantly renewed by the influence of Divine Grace

and the dealings of God with him are as different from the dealings of God with another man, as the love of a husband differs from the sternness of an incensed monarch. On the one hand, it is simple justice. On the other hand, fervent love. On the one hand, the inflexible severity of a judge and on the other hand, the unbounded affection of a parent’s heart. The Lord, then, in this also, has made a difference between Israel and Egypt.

This distinction is carried out in Providence. It is true, that to the naked eye one event happens to both. The righteous suffer as well as the wicked and they go to the grave which is appointed for all living. But if we could look more closely into God’s Providence, we should see lines of light dividing the path of the godly from the lot of the transgressor. To the righteous man every Providence is a blessing. A blessing is wrapped up in all our curses and in all our crosses. Our cups are sometimes bitter, but they are always healthful. Our woe is our weal. We are never losers by our losses, but we grow rich towards God when we become poor towards men.

To the sinner, however, all things work together for evil. Is he prosperous? He is as the beast that is fattened for the slaughter. Is he healthy? He is as the blooming flower that is ripening for the mower’s scythe. Does he suffer? His sufferings are the first drops of the eternal hailstorm of Divine vengeance. Everything to the sinner, if he could but open his eyes, has a black aspect. The clouds are to him big with thunders and the whole world is alive with terror. If earth could have its way it would shake off from its bosom the monsters that forget God.

But to the righteous all things work together for good. Come foul, or come fair, all shall end well. Every wave speeds him to his desired haven and even the rough blast swells his sails and drives him the more swiftly towards the port of peace. The Lord has made a difference between Israel and Egypt in this world.

That difference, however, will come out more distinctly on the Judgment Day. Then, when He shall sit upon the Throne of His glory, He shall divide them, the one from the other, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. He shall cry unto His angels and say, “Gather out of My kingdom all things that offend and them that do iniquity.” Then, with the sharp sickle in his hand, will the angel fly through the midst of Heaven and reap the tares and gather them together in bundles to burn. But, stepping from his Throne, not delegating the delightful task to an angel, the King Himself, the crowned Reaper, shall take His own golden sickle and shall gather the wheat into His barn.

Oh, then, when Hell shall open wide its mouth and swallow up the impenitent, when they shall go down alive into the pit, as Korah, Dathan and Abiram did of old—then, when they shall see the righteous streaming up to Heaven, like a stream of light, in their bright and glistering garments, shouting triumphant hymns and choral symphonies—then shall it be seen that the Lord has made a difference. When across the impassable gulf the rich man shall see Lazarus in Abraham’s bosom— when from the lowest pit of Hell the condemned one shall see the accepted one glorified in bliss—then shall the Truth of God stand out written in letters of fire—“The Lord has made a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.”

II. We pass on to our second point—WHEN IS THIS DIFFERENCE SEEN? Our answer is, it is often seen in God’s temple. Two men go up to the temple to worship. They take their seats side by side in God’s House. The Word is preached to them both. They both hear it, perhaps with like attention. The one goes his way to forget, the other remembers. They come again—the one listens and the minister is to him as one that plays a goodly tune upon an instrument—the other listens and weeps. He feels that the Word is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword. It comes home to his conscience. It pierces him, cuts him to the quick. Every word seems to be as an arrow shot from the bow of God and finding a target in his conscience.

And now they come again. The one feels the Word at last to be his. He has been led to repentance and faith in Christ through it and now comes up to sing God’s praises as His accepted child. The other remains to sing as a mere formalist—to join in worship in which he feels but little interest—to lift up his voice in a prayer when his heart is far absent. If I had here this morning a heap of steel filings and of ashes mixed together and I wanted to detect the difference between the two, I should have nothing to do but to thrust in a magnet. The filings would be attracted and the ashes would remain.

So with this congregation. If I would know today who are those who are of God’s Israel and who are still the base-born Egyptians, there is nothing needed but to preach the Gospel. The Gospel finds out God’s people. It has an affinity to them. When it comes to them they receive it, God’s Holy Spirit opening their hearts. They lay hold of it and rejoice in it. While those who are not God’s, who have no part or interest in the redemption of Christ, hear it in vain and are even hardened by it and go their way to sin with a higher hand, after all the warnings they have received.

Come now, my Hearer—to come right home to you—have you ever seen this difference made between you and another man? Do you hear the Gospel now as you have never heard it before? This is the age of hearing. There are more people attending our places of worship now than ever there were but still it is not the hearers, but the doers of the Word that are blessed. So, then, have you been made to hear the Word as you never heard before? Do you listen to it, hoping that it may be blessed to you, desiring that your conscience may be subjected to it—just as the gold is subject to the goldsmith’s hand? If so, there is the first sign of a difference which God has put between you and the Egyptians.

But it goes further. If the Israelite is consistent with his duty, as I think he must be—in a little while he feels it incumbent upon him to come out from the rest of mankind and to be united with Christ’s Church. “The Lord has made a difference,” says he, “now I will show this difference. My Master has said, ‘He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.’ I put no trust in Baptism, but I must show that I am no longer what I was. I desire to be obedient to my Lord and Master. I desire to cross the Rubicon. To draw my sword against the world, once and forever to throw away the scabbard. I long to do a something that shall make the world see that I

am crucified to it and that it is crucified to me.  
“Let me then be buried in water, ‘in the name of the Father and of the  
Son and of the Holy Spirit,’ is the picture of my death to all the world. Let  
me rise out of the water, as the picture of my resurrection to a new life.  
And God help me from that blessed hour to go on my way walking as one  
who is not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world.” As often as the  
Table is spread, upon which we celebrate the memorial of the body and  
the blood of Christ, God again seals that difference. The unconverted, if  
the minister is faithful, are warned to go their way, or if they eat there,  
they will eat and drink damnation to themselves, not discerning the Lord’s  
body. They are invited to come, and they, only, who are Believers in Jesus,  
who have a hope that they are changed men and have been renewed by  
Divine Grace in the spirit of their minds. Thus do we show to the world in  
the two outward symbols that the Lord has made a difference. But further—the whole of a Christians life, if he is what he should be,  
is showing forth to the world that the Lord has made a difference. Here  
are two men in trial, the same trouble has befallen them both. They are  
partners in business. Their money is all gone. The house has gone to ruin.  
They are brought down to beggary and have to start in the world again.  
Now, which of these two is the Christian man? There is one ready to tear  
his hair. He cannot bear that he should have worked all his life and now  
should be poor as Lazarus. He thinks Providence is unfair. “There is many  
a vagabond,” says he, “getting rich and here am I, after toiling hard and  
paying every man his own, brought down to the round, having nothing  
left.”  
But the Christian man—if he really is a Christian, (mark that, for there  
are a great many that profess to be Christians and are not, and it is the  
rough wind that tries them)—says, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken  
away, blessed be the name of the Lord.” “I know,” says he, “that all things  
work together for good. I will put my shoulder to the wheel and work up  
once more.” And so with courage and with confidence in Christ he goes  
again to his labor and God blesses him yet once more, no, blesses him in  
his trials more than he was ever blessed in his prosperity.  
Here are two men again—they have both been doing wrong and when  
the righteous fall as well as the wicked, who is to know the difference? The  
next morning one of them rises and is quite easy about the matter—he  
knows no wounds in his conscience, or if he is uneasy it is because he is  
afraid of being found out. He is like one who, having fallen into the mire,  
lies and rolls there.  
But here comes the Christian. He feels he has done wrong. “What shall  
I do?” says he, “to make reparation to man and to show my repentance  
towards God?” He would be ready to go down on his knees before anyone  
he has injured and confess how wrong he has been. He hates himself, he  
loathes himself, because he has done wrong. He would sooner die than  
sin. And now that he finds he has sinned, he wishes he had died sooner  
than he should ever have dishonored his Lord and Master.  
If you see a sheep fall into the mire, it is quick enough up again. But if  
the swine falls there, it wallows in it again and again and nothing but the whip or the stick can make it rise. So that there is an essential difference between the righteous and the wicked, even in their sins. “A righteous man falls seven times, but he rises up again.” As for the wicked, he rolls and revels in his sin, abiding and continuing in it. God has set a difference and even when that difference is obscured it may yet be discerned. There is a ring about the Christian man that is not to be mistaken. Do what you will with him, he is not what the other man is and  
you cannot make him so.  
Here is a new coin which looks amazingly like a sovereign and I turn it  
over. It is so clever a counterfeit that I cannot discover whether it is gold  
or not. Here is another—it is a light sovereign, I find. I look at them both  
and at first sight I am inclined to think that my new-minted sovereign is  
the better of the two. For, say I, the other is evidently much worn and  
light. But there is a ring about the Christian that proves him to be gold,  
after all, even when he is worn and short in weight. You may deface him  
so that the king’s image is not apparent upon him, but he is gold for all  
that. He only needs to be tried and in the hour of trial that golden sound  
of grace will detect him and he will prove still to be one in whom God has  
made a difference.  
This distinction also comes out in a godly man when he is under the  
pressure of some strong temptation. There are two tradesmen—both seem  
to trade in the same way. But at last a rare chance occurs to them. If they  
have no conscience they can make a fortune. Now will be the test. One  
man looks out for the opportunity and unscrupulously grasps it. That  
man is no Christian—put that down as certain. There is another man—he  
feels a longing for the gain, for he is human, but his heart hates the sin,  
for it is renewed by Divine Grace. “No,” he says. “Better shut up shop than  
earn my living by dishonesty—better for me to be ruined in this life than  
that I should be ruined in the world to come.”  
The maxim of the establishment on the other side of the road is, “We  
must live”—the maxim of this shop will be, “We must die.” You who are  
customers soon know in which place you will be dealt with more honestly  
and there you discover in some degree that the Lord has made a difference  
between Egypt and Israel.  
But not to keep you long on this point—that difference shines forth very  
vividly in the dying hour. Oh, how distinct is that difference sometimes!  
The last time the cholera visited London with severity, though I had many  
engagements in the country, I gave them up to remain in London. It is the  
duty of the minister always to be on the spot in times of visitation and  
disease. I never saw more conspicuously in my life the difference between  
the man that fears God and the man that fears Him not, than I did then. Called up one Monday morning at about half-past three, to go and see  
a man who was dying, I went to him and entered the place where he was  
lying. He had been down to Brighton on the Sunday morning on an  
excursion and came back ill. And there he lay on the borders of the tomb.  
I stood by his side and spoke to him. The only consciousness he had was  
a foreboding of terror, mingled with the stupor of alarm—soon even that  
was gone and I had to stand sighing there with a poor old woman who had  
watched over him, hopeless altogether about his soul.  
I went home. I was called away to see a young woman. She was also in the last extremity, but it was a fair, fair sight—she was singing, though she knew she was dying. Talking to those round about her, telling her brothers and sisters to follow her to Heaven, bidding good-bye to her father, smiling as if it were a marriage day. She was happy and blessed. I then saw very clearly, that if there is not a difference in the joy of life there  
is a difference when we come to the dying hour.  
But the first case I mentioned is not the worst I have ever seen. Many  
have I seen dying, whose histories it would not do to tell. I have seen them  
when their eyeballs have been glaring from their sockets—when they have  
known Christ and have heard the Gospel, but yet have rejected it. They  
have been dying in agonies so extreme that one could only fly from the  
room, feeling that it was a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of an angry  
God and to enter into that all-devouring fire. On the dying bed it will be  
manifest that the Lord has made a difference between Israel and Egypt. III. I have hurried over these first two points because I want to dwell  
very strongly and very solemnly upon my last. We spoke about the  
difference being seen between the righteous and the wicked. My last point  
is, WHY SHOULD THAT DIFFERENCE BE SEEN? I have here a practical  
aim and drift. And I hope that if the first of the sermon has fallen dead  
upon you, this, at least, may quicken your conscience.  
This is an age which has many hopeful signs in it. But yet, if we judge  
according to the rule of Scripture, there are some very black marks upon  
this century. I sometimes fear that the only age to which we can be truly  
likened is the time before the flood, when the sons of God intermarried  
with the daughters of men and when there ceased to be a distinction  
between the Church and the world. It is but the part of candor to  
acknowledge that there is such a mixture nowadays—such a compromise,  
such a giving and a taking on both sides of religious questions—that we  
are like a leavened mass, mingled and united together. All this is wrong.  
For God has always intended there should be a distinction between the  
righteous and the wicked, as clear and as palpable as the distinction  
between the day and the night.  
My first argument is this. Whenever the Church has been thoroughly  
distinct from the world, she has always prospered. During the first three  
centuries the world hated the Church. The prison, the stake, the heels of  
the wild horse—these were thought too good for the followers of Christ.  
When a man became a Christian, he gave up father and mother, house  
and lands, no—his own life, also. When they met together they must meet  
in the catacombs, burning candles at high noon, because there was  
darkness in the depths of the earth. They were despised and rejected of  
men. “They wandered about in sheep’s’ skins and goats’ skins, destitute,  
afflicted, tormented.”  
But then was the age of heroes. That was the time of giants. Never did  
the Church so much prosper and so truly thrive as when she was  
baptized in blood! The ship of the Church never sails so gloriously along  
as when the bloody spray of her martyrs falls upon her deck. We must  
suffer and we must die, if we are ever to conquer this world for Christ.  
Was there ever such a surprising miracle as the spread of the Gospel during the first two or three centuries? Within fifty years after Christ had ascended to Heaven, the Gospel was preached in every known part of the world and there were converts to Christ in the most inhospitable regions.  
Further than the ships of Tarshish had the Gospel flown.  
The pillars of Hercules had not bounded the industry of the Apostles.  
To wild and uncivilized tribes, to Picts and Scots and to fierce Britons, was  
the Gospel proclaimed. Churches were founded, some of which have  
lasted in their purity to this day. And all this, I believe, was partly the  
result of that striking, that marked difference between the Church and the  
world. Certainly, during the period after Constantine professed to be a  
Christian, changing with the times, because he saw it would strengthen  
his empire—from the time when the Church began to be linked with the  
State—the Lord left her. He gave her up to barrenness and Ichabod was  
written on her walls.  
It was a black day for Christendom when Constantine said, “I am a  
Christian.” “By this sign I conquer,” said he. Yes, it was the true reason of  
his pretended conversion, If he could conquer by the Cross it was well  
enough. If he could have conquered by Jupiter he would have liked it  
equally as well. From that time the Church began to degenerate. And  
coming down to the middle ages, when you could not tell a Christian from  
a worldling,

here were you to find piety at all, or life or grace left in the  
lands?  
Then came Luther and with a rough grasp he rent away the Church  
from the world—pulled her way at the risk of rending her in pieces. He  
would not have her linked in affinity with the world and then “The kings of  
the earth stood up and the rulers took counsel together, against the Lord  
and against His Anointed.” But He that sits in the heavens did laugh at  
them. Jehovah had them in derision. The Church went forth conquering  
and to conquer and her main weapon was her non-conformity to the  
world, her coming out from among men. Put your finger on any  
prosperous page in the Church’s history and I will find a little marginal  
note reading thus—“In this age men could readily see where the Church  
began and where the world ended.” Never were there good times when the  
Church and the world were joined in marriage with one another. But though this were sufficient argument for keeping the Church and  
the world distinct, there are many others. The more the Church is distinct  
from the world in her acts and in her maxims, the more true is her  
testimony for Christ and the more potent is her witness against sin. We  
are sent into this world to testify against evils. But if we dabble in them  
ourselves, where is our testimony? If we ourselves be found faulty, we are  
false witnesses. We are not sent of God, our testimony is of no effect. I do  
not hesitate to say there are tens of thousands of professing Christians  
whose testimony before the world is more injurious than beneficial. The world looks at them and says, “Well, I see—you can be a Christian  
and yet remain a rogue.” “Ah,” says another, “you can be a Christian, I  
perceive. But then you will have to be doleful and miserable.” “Ah,” cries  
another, “these Christians like to drink sin in secret behind the door.  
Their Christianity lies in not liking to sin openly. But they can devour a  
widow’s house when nobody is looking. They can be drunkards, only it must be in a very small party. They would not like to be discovered tipsy  
where there were a hundred eyes to look at them.”  
Now, what is all that? It is just this—that the world has found out that  
the visible Church is not the unmixed Church of Christ, since it is not  
true to its principles and does not stand up for the uprightness and  
integrity which are the marks of the genuine Church of God. Many  
Christians forget that they are bearing a testimony—they do not think  
that anybody notices them. Yes, but they do. There are no people so much  
watched as Christians. The world reads us up, from the first letter of our  
lives to the end. And if they can find a flaw—and, God forgive us, they  
may find very many—they are sure to magnify the flaw as much as ever  
they can. Let us therefore be very watchful, that we live close to Christ,  
that we walk in His Commandments always—that the world may see that  
the Lord has made a difference.  
But now I have a very sad thing to say—I wish that I could withhold it,  
but I cannot. Unless, Brothers and Sisters, you make it your daily  
business to see that there is a difference between you and the world, you  
will do more hurt than you can possibly do good. The Church of Christ is  
at this day accountable for many fearful sins. Let me mention one which  
is but the type of others. By what means think you were the fetters riveted  
on the wrist of our friend who sits there, a man like ourselves, though of a  
black skin?  
It is the Church of Christ that keeps his Brethren under bondage. If it  
were not for that Church, the system of slavery would go back to the Hell  
from which it sprung. If there were not found Christian ministers (?) who  
can apologize for slavery from the pulpit and Church members who sell  
the children of nobler beings than themselves—if it were not for this,  
Africa would be free. Albert Barnes spoke right truly when he said slavery  
could not exist for an hour if it were not for the countenance of the  
Christian Church.  
But what does the slaveholder say when you tell him that to hold our  
fellow creatures in bondage is a sin and a damnable one, inconsistent  
with Divine Grace? He replies “I do not believe your slanders; look at the  
Bishop of So-and-So, or the minister of Such-and-Such a place, is not he  
a good man and does not he whine out ‘Cursed be Canaan?’ Does not he  
quote Philemon and Onesimus? Does he not go and talk Bible and tell his  
slaves that they ought to feel very grateful for being his slaves, for God  
Almighty made them on purpose that they might enjoy the rare privilege of  
being cowhided by a Christian master?  
“Don’t tell me,” he says, “if the thing were wrong, it would not have the  
Church on its side.” And so Christ’s free Church bought with His blood,  
must bear the shame of cursing Africa and keeping her sons in bondage.  
From this evil, good Lord deliver us. If Manchester merchants and  
Liverpool traders have a share in this guilt, at least let the Church be free  
of this Hell-filling crime. Men have tried hard to make the Bible support  
this sum of all villainies, but slavery, the thing which defiles the Great  
Republic—such slavery is quite unknown to the Word of God. By the laws  
of the Jew It was impossible that it ever could exist. I have known men quote texts as excuses for being damned and I do not wonder that men  
can find Scripture to justify them in buying and selling the souls of men. And what do you think is it, to come home to our own land, that props  
up the system of deceit that is carried on among us? You all know that  
there are businesses where it is not possible for a young man to be honest  
in the shop, where, if he spoke the downright truth, he would be  
discharged. Why is it, think you, that the system of ticketing goods in the  
window differently from what they are sold indoors, or exhibiting one  
thing and then giving another article, the system of telling white lies  
across the counter with the intention of getting a better price, is  
maintained? Why, it would not stamp an hour if it were not for the  
professing Christians who practice it. They have not the moral courage to  
say once and for all, “We will have nothing to do with these things.” If they  
did, if the Church renounced these unholy customs, business would alter  
within the next twelve months. The props of felony and the supports of  
roguery are these professing Christian men who bend their backs to do as  
other men do. Who, instead of stemming the torrent, give up and swim  
along with it—the dead fish in our Churches—that flow with the stream,  
unlike the living fish which always go against it and swim upward to the  
river’s source.  
I would not speak too severely of Christ’s Church, for I love her. But  
because I love her I must therefore utter this. Our being so much like the  
world, our trading as the world trades, our talking as the world talks, our  
always insisting upon it that we must do as other people do—this is doing  
more mischief to the world than all our preachers can hope to effect good.  
“Come you out from among them, touch not the unclean thing, be you  
separate, says the Lord, and I will be a Father unto you and you shall be  
My sons and daughters “  
This surely, a stern rough argument, might move us to be separate  
from the world. But once again, how is it possible for us to honor Jesus  
Christ, while there is no difference between us and the world? I can  
imagine that a man may not profess to be a Christian and yet he may  
honor his Master—that however is a matter of imagination. I do not know  
of an instance, but I cannot imagine a man professing to be a Christian  
and then acting as the crowd acts and yet honoring Christ.  
Methinks I see my Master now. He stands before me. He has more than  
those five blessed wounds. I see His hands running with blood. “My  
Master! My Master!” I cry, where did You get those wounds? Those are not  
the piercing of the nails, nor the gash of the spear-thrust. From where  
came those wounds?” I hear Him mournfully reply, “These are the wounds  
which I have received in the house of My friends—Such-and-Such a  
Christian fell, Such-and-Such a disciple followed Me afar off and at last,  
Peter-like, denied Me altogether. Such an one of My children is covetous,  
such another of them is proud, such another has taken his neighbor by  
the throat and says, ‘Pay me what you owe,’ and I have been wounded in  
the house of My friends.”  
O, blessed Jesus forgive us, forgive us and give us Your Grace that we  
may do so no more, for we would follow You where ever You go. You know,  
Lord, we would be Yours, we would honor You and not grieve You. O give us now, your own Spirit, that we may come out from the world and be  
like Yourself—holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. I have but just these two things to say and then I have done. To  
professors of religion in this word. There are some of you professors of  
religion that are base coin. When you come to the Lord’s Table you lie and  
when you say of yourself, “I am a member of such-and-such a Church,”  
you say what is a disgrace to you. Now let me remind you, Sirs, that you  
may hold your profession here, but when you come before God’s bar at  
last you will find it a terrible thing not to have had a reality in your  
profession. Tremble, Sirs, at God’s right hand. There hangs the scale and  
you must be put into it and if you are found wanting, your portion must  
be among the deceivers and you know where that is—it is in the lowest pit  
of Hell.  
Tremble, Sir Deacon, tremble, Church-member, if you are not what you  
profess to be, there is a doom awaiting you of a fiercer, a direr sort than  
even for the ungodly and the reprobate. From the height of your  
profession you shall be plucked down. You have built your nest among  
the stars, but you must make your bed in Hell. You have decked your  
head with a crown, but you must wear a crown of fire. You must have  
those fine robes plucked off you, that tinsel and that paint must all be  
removed. And you, naked to your shame, the hooting-mark of devils, shall  
become a hissing even to the damned of Hell, as they shall point to you  
and cry, “There goes the man who destroyed himself by deceiving others.  
There is the wretch who talked of God and talked of Christ and did not  
think himself such an one as we are and now he, too, is bound up in the  
bundle to be burnt.”  
The last word is to those who are not professors at all. God has made a  
difference between you and the righteous. Oh, my dear Friends, I beseech  
you turn that thought over in your minds! There are not three characters,  
no intermediate links. There is no borderland between the righteous and  
the wicked. Today you are either a friend to God or an enemy to Him. You  
are at this hour either quickened or dead and oh, remember, when death  
comes it is either Heaven or Hell with you—either angels or fiends must be  
your companions and either the flames must be your bed and fiery  
coverlet, or else the glories of eternity must be your perpetual inheritance. Remember, the way to Heaven is open. “He that believes in the Lord  
Jesus shall be saved.” Believe on Him, believe on Him and live! Trust Him  
and you are saved. Cast your soul’s confidence on Jesus and you are now  
delivered. God help you to do that, now, and there shall be no difference  
any more between you and the righteous. You shall be of them and with  
them, in the day when Jesus comes to sit upon the Throne of His father  
David and to reign among men.

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THE BEGINNING OF MONTHS  
NO. 1637

DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 1, 1882.

**“And the Lord spoke unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, this month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.”  
Exodus 12:1, 2.**

In all probability up to that time the year had been supposed to begin in the autumn. The question has been raised at what season of the year did God create man and it has been decided by many that it must have been in autumn, so that when Adam was placed in the garden he might at once find fruits ripe and ready for his use. It has not seemed probable that he would have begun his career while as yet all fruits were raw and green—therefore many have concluded that the first year of human history began in the time of harvest—when fruits were mellowed for man’s food. For this reason, perhaps, in the old times the new year began when the feast of harvest had been celebrated.

Here, at the point of the Exodus, by a decree of God, the commencement of the year was altered and, so far as Israel was concerned, the opening of the year was fixed for the time of our spring—in the month called Abib, or Nisan. We know that a little before the barley was in the ear, (see Exodus 9:31), and on the Sabbath after the Passover, the produce of the earth was so far advanced that the first fruits were offered and a sheaf of new barley was waved before the Lord. Of course, when I speak of spring and then of ears of barley, you must remember the difference of climate, for in that warm region the seasons are far in advance of ours.

You must pardon me if my ideas should become a little mixed—you can correct them easily at your leisure. From the time when the Lord saved His people from destruction by passing over them, the ecclesiastical year began in the month of Abib, in which the Passover was celebrated. The Jubilee Year was not altered, but began in the autumnal equinox. The Jews seem to have had two or three beginnings of the year in relation to different purposes, but the ecclesiastical year, the great year by which Israel reckoned its existence, commenced, from then on, in the month Abib, when the Lord brought His people out with a high hand and an outstretched arm.

It is with God to change times and seasons as He pleases and He has done so for great commemorative purposes. The change of the Sabbath is on the same manner, for whereas the day of rest was formerly the seventh, it is now merged in the Lord’s Day, which is the first day of the week. As Herbert says, “He did unhinge the day,” and He set the Sabbath on golden hinges by consecrating the day of His Resurrection. To every man God makes such a change of times and seasons when He deals with him in a way of Grace, for all things are become new within him and, therefore, he begins a new chronology. Some of us used to think our birthday fell at a certain time of the year, but now we regard with much more delight another day as our true birthday, since on that second natal day we began truly to live! Our calendar has been altered and amended by a deed of divine Grace!

This morning I want to bring to your mind the fact that, just as the people of Israel, when God gave them the Passover, had a complete shifting and changing of all their dates and began their year on quite a different day, so when God gives to His people to eat the spiritual Passover, there takes place in their chronology a very wonderful change. Saved men and women date from the dawn of their true life—not from their first birthday—but from the day wherein they were born again of the Spirit of God—and entered into the knowledge and enjoyment of spiritual things.

The Passover is, as we all know, a type of the great work of our redemption by the blood of Jesus, and it represents the personal application of it to each Believer. When we perceive the Lord’s act of passing over us because of Christ’s atoning Sacrifice, then it is that we begin to live and from that day we date all future events. So this morning we shall first describe the event. Secondly, mention varieties of its recurrence and thirdly, consider in what light the day of this grand event is to be regarded according to the Law of the Lord.

I. First, then, let us describe this remarkable event which was to stand at the head of the Jewish year and, indeed, at the commencement of all Israelite chronology. First, this event was an act of salvation by blood. You know how the elders and heads of families, each one, took the lamb and shut it up, that they might examine it carefully. Having chosen a lamb without blemish, in the prime of its life, they kept it by itself as a separated and consecrated creature. And after four days they slew it and caught its blood in a basin. When this was done, they took hyssop, dipped it in the blood, and sprinkled the lintel and the two side posts of their houses with it.

By this means the houses of Israel were preserved on that dark and dreadful night when, with unsheathed sword, the Angel of Vengeance sped through every street of Pharaoh’s domain and slew the first-born of all the land, both of men and of cattle. You will remember, dear Friends, the time when you, yourselves, perceived that God’s vengeance was out against sin. You can even now remember your terror and your trembling! Many of us can never forget the memorable time when we first discovered that there was a way of deliverance from the wrath of God. Memory may drop all else from her enfeebled grasp, but this is engraved on the palms of her hands!

The mode of our deliverance is before us in the type as Moses describes it. The angel could not be restrained; his wings could not be bound and his sword could not be sheathed—he must go forth and he must kill. He must kill us among the rest, for sin was upon us and there must be no partiality—“the soul that sins, it shall die.” But do you remember when you discovered God’s new way—His blessed ordinance by which, without abrogating the destroying Law—He brought in a glorious saving clause by which we were delivered? The clause was this—that if another could be found who could and would suffer instead of us and, if there could be clear evidence that this surety did so suffer—then the sight of that evidence should be enough for our deliverance.

Do you remember your joy at that discovery? For, if so, you can enter into the feelings of the Israelites when they understood that God would accept an unblemished lamb in the place of their first-born! And if the blood was displayed upon the door post as the clear evidence that a sacrifice had died and a substitute had suffered, then the angel would know that in that house his work was done—and he might, therefore, pass over that habitation. The avenger was to demand a life, but the life was already paid, for there was the blood-mark which proved it and the exactor might go on his way! It was the night of God’s Passover, not because the execution of vengeance was left undone in the houses passed over, but for a reason of the opposite kind—because in those houses the death-blow had been struck, the victim had died—and, as the penalty could not be exacted twice, that family was clear!

I do not know whether there is any truth in the statement of a correspondent that whatever part of the earth the lightning once strikes, it never strikes it again. But whether it is so or not, it is certain that wherever the lightning of God’s vengeance has once struck the sinner’s Substitute, it will not strike the sinner! The best preservative for the Israelite’s house was this—vengeance had struck there and could not strike again! There was the insurance mark, the blood-streak! Death had been there, no matter though it had fallen on a harmless lamb—it had fallen on a victim of God’s own appointment—and in His esteem it had fallen upon His Christ, the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world!

Because the claims of retribution had been fully met there was no further demand and Israel was secure. This is my eternal confidence and here is my soul’s sweet hymn—

“ *If You have my discharge procured,  
And freely in my place endured  
The whole of wrath Divine—  
Payment God cannot twice demand,  
First at my bleeding Surety’s hands  
And then, again, at mine!  
Turn then, my Soul, unto your rest.  
The merits of your great High Priest  
Have bought your liberty—  
Trust in His efficacious blood,  
Nor fear your banishment from God,*

*Since Jesus died for thee.”*  
It was to me the beginning of my life, that day in which I discovered that judgment was passed upon me in the Person of my Lord and that there is, therefore, now no condemnation to me! The Law demands death—“The soul that sins, it shall die.” Lo, there is the death it asks and more! Christ, my Lord, has died, died in my place—as it is written, “Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” Such a Sacrifice is more than even the most rigorous law could demand!

“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.” “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us.” Therefore do we sit securely within doors, desiring no guard outside to drive away the Destroyer, for, when God sees the blood of Jesus, He will pass over us! “In His days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jer. 23:6). I say again, it was the beginning of life to me when I saw Jesus as dying in my place! I beheld the first sight that was worth beholding, let all the rest be darkness and as the shadow of death! Then did my soul rejoice when I understood and accepted the substitutionary Sacrifice of the appointed Redeemer. That is the first view of this event—the blood of sprinkling made Israel secure.

Secondly, that night they received refreshment from the lamb. Being saved by its blood, the believing households sat down and fed upon the lamb. They never ate as they ate that night! Those who spiritually understood the symbol must have partaken of every morsel with a mysterious awe mingled with an unfathomable delight. I am sure there must have been a singular seriousness about the table as they stood there eating in haste—and especially if, every now and then, they were startled with the shrieks that rose from every house in the land of Egypt because of the slain of the Lord. It was a solemn feast, a meal of mingled hope and mystery.

Do you remember, Brothers and Sisters, when first you fed upon Christ? When your hungry spirit enjoyed the first morsel of that food of the soul? It was dainty fare, was it not? It was better than angels’ bread, for—

*“Never did angels taste above  
Redeeming Grace and dying love!”*

I hope you have never risen from that table, but are daily feeding upon Jesus. It is a very instructive fact that we do not go to our Lord’s Table, like Israel, to eat in haste, with a staff in our hand. We come there to recline at ease with our heads on His bosom, reposing in His love! Christ Jesus is the daily Bread of our spirits. Observe that the refreshment which Israel ate that night was the lamb “roasted with fire.” The best refreshment to a troubled heart is the suffering Savior—the Lamb roasted with fire.

A poor sinner, under a sense of sin, goes to a place of worship and he hears Christ preached as an example. This may be useful to the saint, but it is scant help to the poor sinner! He cries, “That is true. But it rather condemns than comforts me.” It is not food for him—he needs the lamb roasted with fire—Christ, his Substitute, Christ suffering in his place! We hear a great deal about the beauty of Christ’s moral Character and, assuredly, our blessed Lord deserves to be highly exalted on that score. But that is not the aspect under which He is food to a soul conscious of sin! The chief relish about our Lord Jesus to a penitent sinner is His sinbearing and His agonies in that capacity.

We need the suffering Savior, the Christ of Gethsemane, the Christ of Golgotha and Calvary! Christ shedding His blood in the sinner’s place and bearing for us the fire of God’s wrath! Nothing short of this will suffice to be meat for a hungry heart. Keep this back and you starve the child of God. We are told in the chapter that they were not to eat the lamb raw. Alas, there are some who try to do this with Christ, for they preach a halfatoning Sacrifice! They would make Him in His Person and in His Character to be meat for their souls, but they have small liking for His Passion! And they cast His Atonement into the background, or represent it to be an ineffectual expiation which does not secure any soul from vengeance. What is this but to devour a raw Christ?

I will not touch their half-roasted lamb! I will have nothing to do with their half Substitution, their half-complete Redemption. No, no, give me a Savior who has borne all my sins in His body and so has been roasted with fire to the fullest! “It is finished,” is the most charming note in all Calvary’s music! “It is finished,” the fire has passed upon the Lamb! He has borne the whole of the wrath that was due to His people—this is the royal dish of the feast of love! What a multitude of teachers there are who must necessarily have the Lamb boiled with water, though the Scripture says, “Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water.”

I have heard it said that a great number of sermons are about Christ and about the Gospel, but yet neither Christ nor His Gospel are preached in them! If so, the preachers present the lamb boiled in the water of their own thoughts and speculations and notions. Now, the mischief of this boiling process is that the water takes away a good deal from the meat. Philosophical discourses upon the Lord Jesus take away much of the essence and virtue of His Person, offices, work and Glory. The real juice and vital nutriment of His glorious Word is carried off by interpretations which do not explain, but explain away!

How many boil out the soul of the Gospel by their carnal wisdom! What is worse, still, when meat is boiled, it is not only that the meat gets into the water, but the water gets into the meat—and so, what Truth of God these Gospel-boilers do hand out to us is boiled with error and you receive from them dishes made up partly of God’s Truth and partly of men’s imaginations! We hear in some measure solid Gospel, but in larger measure mere watery reasoning! When certain divines preach the Atonement, it is not Substitution pure and simple—one hardly knows what it is! Their atonement is not the vicarious Sacrifice, but a performance of something they are long in defining!

They have a theory which is like the relics of meat after months of boiling, all strings and fibers. All manner of schemes are tried to extract the marrow and fatness from the grand soul-satisfying doctrine of Substitution, which, to my mind, is the choicest Truth of God that can ever be brought forth for the food of souls. I cannot make out why so many divines are afraid of the shedding of blood for the remission of sin and must stew down the most important of all the Truths of Revelation!

No, no! As the type could only be correct when the lamb was roasted with fire, so the Gospel is not truly set forth unless we describe our Lord Jesus in His sufferings for His people and those sufferings in the place of sinners, presenting absolutely and literally a substitution for them. I will have no dilution—it is substitution—“He bore our sins.” He was made sin for us. “The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed.” We must have no mystifying of this plain Truth of God—it must not be “boiled at all with water,” but we must have Christ in His sufferings fresh from the fire.

Now, this lamb they were to eat, and the whole of it. Not a morsel must be left. Oh that you and I would never cut and divide Christ so as to choose one part of Him and leave another! Let not a bone of Him be broken, but let us take in a whole Christ up to the full measure of our capacity. Prophet, Priest and King—Christ Divine and Christ human, Christ loving and living, Christ dying, Christ risen, Christ ascended, Christ coming again, Christ triumphant over all His foes—the whole Lord Jesus Christ is ours! We must not reject a single particle of what is revealed concerning Him, but must feed upon it all as we are able.

That night Israel had to feed upon the lamb then and there. They might not put by a portion for tomorrow. They must consume the whole in some way or other. Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, we need a whole Christ at this very moment! Let us receive Him in His entirety. Oh for a splendid appetite and fine powers of digestion so as to receive into my inmost soul the Lord’s Christ just as I find Him! May you and I never think lightly of our Lord under any light or in any one of His offices. All that you now know and all that you can find out concerning Christ you should now believe, appreciate, feed upon and rejoice in. Make the most of all that is in the Word concerning your Lord. Let Him enter into your being to become part and parcel of yourself.

If you do this, the day in which you feed on Jesus will be the first day of your life, its day of days, the day from which you date all that follows! If once you have fed upon Christ Jesus, you will never forget it in time or in eternity! That was the second event which was celebrated in each succeeding Passover. The third event was the purification of their houses from leaven, for that was to go in a most important way, side by side, with the sprinkling of the blood and the eating of the lamb. They were told that they must not eat leaven for seven days, for whoever did partake of leaven should be cut off from Israel. It shows the deep importance of this purification, that it is put in equal position with the sprinkling of the blood. At any rate, it might not be separated from it upon pain and penalty that he who divided the two should, himself, be divided from the congregation of Israel.

Now, it is always a pity when we are preaching Justification by Faith, to bring in sanctification as to make it a part of justification—but it is also a horrible error when you are preaching justification, to preach it as to deny the absolute necessity of sanctification—for the two are joined together by the Lord. There must be eating of the lamb as well as the sprinkling of the blood. And there must be the purging out of the old leaven, as well as the sprinkling of the blood and the eating of the lamb. Very carefully, the Jewish householder looked into every closet, corner, drawer and cupboard to sweep out every crumb of stale bread—and if they had any bread in storage, even if it was new and they intended to eat it, they must throw it all away—for there must not be a particle of leaven in the same house with the lamb.

When you and I first came to Christ, what a sweep there was of the leaven! I know I was clean delivered from the leaven of the Pharisees, for all trust in my own good works went, even the last crumb of it. All confidence in rites and ceremonies must go, too. I have not a crust left of either of these two sour and corrupt confidences at the present moment—and I wish never to taste that old leaven again! Some are always chewing at that leaven, glorying in their own prayers, alms and ceremonies. But when Christ comes in, this leaven all goes out.

Moreover, the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy, must be cleared out. “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.” Guile must go, or guilt will not go. The Lord sweeps the cunning out of His people, the craftiness, the deceit—He makes them true before His face. They wish that they were as clear of every sin as they are clear from insincerity. They once tried to dwell before the Lord with double dealing, pretending to be what they were not, but as soon as they ate of Christ and the blood was sprinkled, then they humbled themselves in truth, laid bare their sinnership and stood before God as they were—with their hypocrisy torn away. Christ has not saved the man who still trusts in falsehood. You cannot feed on Christ and at the same time hold a lie in your right hand by vain confidence in yourself, or by love of sin. Self and sin must go! But oh, what a day it is when the old leaven is put out—we shall never forget it! This month is the beginning of months, the first month of the year to us, when the Spirit of Truth purges out the spirit of falsehood.

A fourth point in the Passover is not to be forgotten. On the Passover night there came, as the result of the former things, a wonderful, glorious and mighty deliverance! That night every Israelite received promise of immediate emancipation and, as soon as the morning dawned, he left the house in which he had sheltered during the night and leaving his home, he left Egypt, too. He left forever the brick kilns! He washed the brickearth for the last time from his hands, looked down on the yoke he used to carry when he worked amid the clay, and said, “I have done with you.” He looked at every Egyptian taskmaster, remembered how often he had been struck with the stick, and he rejoiced that he would never be struck again, for there he was, at his feet, begging him to be gone lest all Egypt should die!

Oh what joy! They marched out with their unleavened bread still on their backs, for they had some days in which they were still to eat it and I think before the seventh day of unleavened bread was over they had reached the Red Sea. Still eating unleavened bread they went down into the depths of the Red Sea. And still with no flavor of leaven in their mouths, they stood on its shore to sing unto the Lord the great Hallelujah because He had triumphed gloriously and the horse and his rider had been cast into the sea! Do you remember when the Lord purged you from the love of sin, from trust in self and when He brought you clean out and set you free and said, “Go on to the promised rest. Go on to Canaan”?

Do you remember when you saw your sins drowned forever, never to rise in judgment against you—not merely your destruction prevented, not merely your soul fed with the finest food, not merely your heart and your house cleansed of hypocrisy—but yourself delivered and emancipated, the Lord’s free man? Oh, if so, I am sure you will grant the wisdom of the ordinance by which the Lord decreed—“this month shall be unto you the beginning of months, it shall be the first month of the year to you.” Thus much, then, on describing the event.

II. Now, secondly, I want to mention the varieties of its recurrence among us at this day. The first recurrence is, of course, on the personal salvation of each one of us. The whole of this chapter was transacted in your heart and mine when we first knew the Lord. Our venerable Brother and Elder White, when I saw him the other night, said to me, “Oh, Sir, it is very precious to read the Bible, but it is infinitely more delightful to have it here in your own heart.” Now, I find it very profitable to read about the Passover, but oh, how sweet to have a Passover transacted in your own soul by the work of the Holy Spirit!

Moses wrote of something that happened thousands of years ago, but the substance of it all has happened to me and to thousands who are trusting in the Lord in all its details! Can we not read this story in Exodus and say, “Yes, it is even so”? Every word of it is true, for it has all occurred to me, every atom of it, even to the eating of the bitter herbs, for I recollect right well that at the very moment when I had the sweet flavor of my Lord’s Atonement in my mouth, I felt the bitterness of repentance on account of sin and the bitterness of struggling against the temptation to sin again! Even the minute touches of that typical festival are all correct, as thousands know who have participated in its antitype. This Passover record is not a story of olden times, alone—it is the record of your life and mine—I hope it is. Thus by each separate saved man, the paschal feast is kept.

But then, it happens again in a certain sense when the man’s house is saved. Remember, this was a family business. The father and mother were present when the lamb was slain. I dare say the eldest son helped to bring the lamb to the slaughter; another held the knife; a third held the basin and the little boy fetched the bunch of hyssop. And so they all united in the sacrifice. They all saw father strike the lintel and the side posts. And they all ate of the lamb that night. Everyone that was in the house—all that were really part of the family partook of the meal—they were all protected by the blood! They were all refreshed by the feast and they all started the next morning to go to Canaan.

Did you ever hold a family supper of that kind? “Oh,” some fathers might say, “it would be the beginning of family life to me if I might eat bread in the Kingdom of God with all my sons and daughters! Oh that every chick and child around my table truly belonged to Christ.” A family begins to live in the highest sense when, as a family, without exception, it has all been redeemed, all sprinkled with the blood, all made to feed on Jesus, all purged from sin and all set at liberty to go out of the domains of sin, bound for the Kingdom. Joy! Joy! Joy! “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the Truth of God.”

If any of you enjoy the privilege of family salvation, you may well set up a monument of praise and make a generous offering to God, by whom you are thus favored. Engrave it upon marble and set it up forever—“This household is saved and the day of its salvation is the beginning of its history in connection with the Lord’s Israel.” Extend the thought—it was not only a family ordinance but it was for all the tribes of Israel! There were many families, but in every house the Passover was sacrificed. Would it not be a grand thing if you that employ large numbers of men should ever be able to gather all together and hopefully say, “I trust that all these understand the sprinkling of the blood and all feed upon Christ”?

Dear men and women that are placed in such responsible positions, you might, indeed, say, “This shall be the beginning of months to us.” Labor for it, therefore, and make it your heart’s desire! If you live to see a district in which you labor permeated with the Gospel, what a joy! If we shall live to see London with every house sprinkled with the redeeming blood! If we should live to see all England feeding, not as many do at Christmas to excess, on the delicacies of earth, but feasting spiritually, where there can be no excess, upon Christ, oh, what a beginning of years it would be to our happy island! What a paradise it would be! If it should be so with France; if it should be so in any country, what a day to be remembered! Commence a nation’s annals from its evangelization! Begin the chronicle of a people from the day when they bow at the feet of Jesus!

There will come a day to this poor earth when all over it Jesus shall reign! It may be far away, yet, but the day shall come when Christ shall have dominion from sea to sea! The nations which are called Christians, although they so little deserve the title, do already date their chronology from the birth of Christ—and this is a sort of faint foreshadowing of the way in which men shall one day date all things from the reign of Jesus— for His unsuffering kingdom shall yet come. God has decreed His triumph and on all the wings of time it hastens. When He comes, that month shall be the beginning of months unto us! I say no more.

III. And now, in the last place, I come to show in what light this date is to be regarded if it has occurred to us in the senses I have mentioned. Primarily, if it has occurred in the first sense to us personally—what about it, then? Why, first, the day in which we first knew the Savior as the Paschal Lamb should always be the most honorable day that has ever dawned upon us! The Israelites placed the month Abib in the first rank because it was the month of the Passover—put down the date at which you knew the Lord as the premier day, the noblest hour you have ever known! It eclipses your natural birthday, for then you were born in sin! Then you were “born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.” But now you are born into spiritual life, born unto eternal bliss!

It eclipses your marriage day, for union to Christ shall bring you greater felicity than the happiest of conjugal bonds. If you have ever known a day in which you received the honors of the State, or gained distinction in learning, or attained to a position in society, or arrived at a larger wealth—all these were but dim, cloudy, foggy days compared with this “morning without clouds!” On that day your sun rose never to go down again! The die was cast, your destiny for Glory was openly declared! I pray you never in your thoughts degrade that blessed day by thinking more of any pleasure, honor or advancement than you do of the blessing of salvation by the blood of Jesus!

I am afraid that some are striving and struggling after other distinctions and if they could once reach a certain event, then they would be satisfied. Is not your salvation worth vastly more than this? They would feel that they were made of life if a certain matter turned out right. Brothers and Sisters, you were made for life when you were made anew in Christ Jesus! You came to your estate when you came to Christ! You were promoted when He received you to His friendship! You gained all that you need desire when you found Christ, for a saint of old said, “He is all my salvation and all my desire.” Do not, therefore, if the Queen should knight you, or the people should send you to Parliament, think that the event would overshadow your conversion and salvation!

Think of that act of Grace as the Lord thinks of it, for He says, “Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honorable and I have loved you.” Unto you that believe, Jesus is honor—in Him you boast and glory— and well you may! The blood-mark is a Believer’s chief adornment and decoration—and his being cleansed and set free by Grace is his noblest distinction! Glory in Grace and in nothing else! Prize the work of Grace beyond all the treasures of Egypt! This date is to be regarded as the beginning of life! The Israelites reckoned that all their former existence as a nation had been death. The brick kilns of Egypt, the lying among the pots, the mixing up with idolaters, the hearing of a language which they understood not—they looked on all Egyptian experience as death—and the month which ended it was to them the beginning of months. On the other hand, they looked upon all that followed after as being life. The Passover was the beginning and only the beginning—a beginning implies something to follow it.

Now then, Christian men and women, whenever you speak about your existence before conversion, always do it with shamefacedness, as one risen from the dead might speak of the morgue and the worm of corruption. I feel grieved when I hear or read of people who can stand up and talk about what they used to do, before they were converted, very much in the way in which an old seafaring man talks of his voyages and storms. No, no, be ashamed of your former lusts in your ignorance! And if you must speak of them to the praise and Glory of Christ, speak with bated breath and tears and sighs. Death, rottenness, corruption are all most fitly left in silence, or, if they demand a voice, let it be as solemn and mournful as a knell. Let your sin story be told in a way which shall show that you wish it had never been true. Let your conversion be the burial of the old existence and as for that which follows after, take care that you make it real life, worthy of the Grace which has quickened you.

Suppose these Israelites had loitered about in Egypt? Suppose one of them had said, “Well, I did not finish that batch of bricks. I cannot go out just yet. I should like to see them thoroughly well baked and prepared for the pyramid”—what a foolish fellow he would have been! No, but they left the bricks, the clay, the stuff behind and went straight away—and they let Egypt take care of itself. Now, child of God, quit the ways of sin with determination. Leave the world, leave its pleasure, leave its cares and get right away to Jesus and His leadership! You are now the Lord’s free man—shall the blood be sprinkled for nothing? Shall the lamb be eaten and mean nothing? Shall the leavened bread be purged out in vain? Shall the Red Sea be crossed, the Egyptians drowned and you remain a slave? The thought is abhorrent!

That was the mischief about the Israelites, that they had, still, a hankering after the leeks and garlic of Egypt! These strong smelling things had scented their garments and it is hard to get such vile odors out of one’s clothes. Alas, that Egyptian garlic clings to us—and the smell of it is not always so abominable to us as it ought to be! Besides, they pined for fish which they ate in Egypt in plenty, muddy fish though it was. There were better fish for them in Jordan, Gennesaret and the Great Sea, if they had gone ahead. And there were sweeter herbs on Canaan’s hills than ever grew in Egypt’s mire. Because of this evil lusting, they were kept dodging about for 40 years in the wilderness. They might have marched into Canaan in 40 days if it had not been for that stinking garlic of theirs and their Egyptian habits and memories!

Oh, that God would cut us quite free and enable us to forget those things of which we are now ashamed! I have nearly finished when I have added this, that inasmuch as the Passover was now the beginning of the year to them, it was the putting of all things right. I told you that the year had formerly begun in autumn, according to most traditions—was this really the best season to pitch upon? Upon second thoughts, was autumn the best season in which to begin life, with winter all before you and everything declining? By the institution of the Passover, the year was made to begin in what is our spring. If I judge from the condition of our land I should ask—When could the year begin more fitly than in the springtide of early May? It seems to me that it actually does begin in the spring.

I do not see that the year naturally begins today, though it does so arbitrarily. We are in about the middle of winter and the year, as yet, lies dead. When the birds sing and the flowers rise from their beds on earth, then the year begins! It seems to me a strange supposition that our first parents commenced life in autumn, amid lengthening nights and declining forces. No, we say, by all means let the date be fixed in spring, so that the salutations of the new year shall be sweet with fragrant flowers and rich with joyous songs. Nor would the time of our spring in the East be a season without supplies, for in April and May the first ears of corn are ready and many other fruits are fit for food. It was good for the Israelites to have the feast of the first fruits in the month of Abib, to bring the first ears to the Lord and not to wait till they were ripe before they blessed the Giver of all good.

We ought to be grateful for green mercies and not tarry till everything comes to ripeness. In some parts of the East there is fruit all the year round and why not in Eden? In the delightful country where I have sojourned, which bears a very close resemblance to the East, there are fruits still ripening upon the trees and one tree or another will be found to bear fruit every month all the year round, so that if Adam had been created in the month of April there would have been food for him, followed by a succession of fruits which would have supplied all his needs. Then he would have had summer before him with all its ripening beauties—and this is a more paradisiacal outlook than winter. It is right that the year should begin with the first fruits and I am sure it is quite right that the year should begin with you and with me when we come to Christ and receive the first fruits of the Spirit.

Everything is out of joint till a man knows Christ! Everything is disorderly and bottom upwards till the Gospel comes and turns him upside down—and then the right side is up again! Man is all wrong till the Gospel puts him all right. Though Grace is above nature, it is not contrary to nature, but restores true nature. Our nature is never so truly the nature of a man as when it is no longer man’s sinful nature. We become truly men, such as God meant men to be, when we cease to be men such as sin has made men to be! Our life, beginning, as it does, at our spiritual Passover, and at our feeding upon Christ, we ought always to regard our conversion as a festival and remember it with praise. Whenever we look back upon it, the memory of it should excite delight in our hearts.

I wonder how long a man ought to thank God for forgiving his sins? Is life long enough? Is time long enough? Is eternity too long? How long ought a man to thank God for saving him from going down to Hell? Would 50 years suffice? Oh no, that would never do—the blessing is too great to be all sung of in a millennium! Suppose you and I never had a single mercy except this one, that we were made the children of God and coheirs with Christ Jesus? Suppose we had nothing else to enjoy? We ought to sing about that, alone, forever and ever! Yes, if we were sick, cast on the bed of pain with a hundred diseases—with our bones sticking through our skin—yet since God’s everlasting mercy will sanctify every pain and every affliction, should we not still continue to lift up happy Psalms to God and praise Him forever and ever?

Therefore, let that be your watchword all through the year—“Hallelujah, praise the Lord!” The Israelite always closed the Passover with a hymn of praise and, therefore, let us close our sermon this morning with holy joy and continue our happy music till this year ends, yes, till time shall be no more! Amen.

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THE SACRED LOVE-TOKEN  
NO. 1251

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 22, 1875, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And the blood shall be to you for a token.”  
Exodus 12:13.**

You remember that last Lord’s-Day morning we spoke upon the witness within the child of God. We tried to show that Believers did not need any man to assure them that they are forgiven, that they could get on exceedingly well without absolution from a priest and could know their salvation altogether apart from the ghostly father, seeing that they have the evidence of it in their own souls by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. We shall not think or speak much of that miserable impostor, the priest, this morning, for he really is not worth thinking of. But we shall continue our consideration of the witness which the Lord has given to His believing people concerning their safety in Jesus Christ. May the Holy Spirit help us while we meditate upon the most vital of all subjects, which lies at the very heart of true religion.

There are some, as we have said, who desire a token of their safety from man—a poor thing when they get it and not worth asking for! And there are others who desire it from God in the form of a sign or a wonder, or else they will not believe. “Show me a token for good” is a prayer which is often used in a very mistaken sense. They desire some special transaction of Providence, or remarkable dream, or singular feeling. But God says to all those who desire a token for good, “The blood shall be to you for a token.” What more can we desire? All the squadrons of the angelic host could not better assure us if each one brought a message from Heaven. The best of all evidences of Divine Love is the Cross!

The strongest of all assurances of safety, the surest of all pledges of favor, the best token of Grace that a man can possibly behold is the sprinkled blood by which he is cleansed from sin. “The blood shall be to you for a token.” Before we dive into this subject, let us notice that the blood which was a token to God’s people was not merely that which had been shed by the sacrifice of all unblemished lambs, but blood which had been caught in a basin, had been taken by the person at the head of the household in his own hands and recognized as shed for him.

Then a bunch of hyssop was laid to soak in a basin and afterwards the blood was sprinkled upon the lintel and the doorposts—this blood, thus appropriated, was the token. By an appropriating faith we must take Christ to be ours. We must, in a word, believe in the Atonement which He has made, for an Atonement which is not believed in is no Atonement to us. Our Lord Jesus laid down His life for us, but He that believes not in Him shall by no means partake of any of the blessings of His death. The sprinkled blood preserved the houses of the Israelites and it is the blood of

Jesus accepted by us, relied upon and applied to our consciences which delivers us from death.

This sprinkling, moreover, was done in a very public manner. They stained the lintel and the two side posts, so that every passerby might see it, yes, and must see it. So salvation is promised, not alone, to believing, but to confession with the mouth. “He that with his heart believes, and with his mouth makes confession of Him shall be saved.” And so the grand commission at the end of the Gospel by Mark puts it, not, “he that believes shall be saved,” but “he that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” For if we believe in Christ we must not be ashamed of Him! Shame about faith would argue insincerity of faith. True faith in the Savior is so potent a principle of our lives that it must be seen whether we publish it or not—and we must be willing that it should be seen!

Yes, this should be the most visible point in our lives—our glory and our delight—that we do, indeed, believe in the Savior, Jesus Christ. Oh, that every one of you, my dear Hearers, used the Cross for its proper purpose! I grieve that any among you should need to have it asked of you—

*“Is it nothing to you, oh you that pass by,*

*Is it nothing to you that Jesus should die?”*The Lamb is slain but you have never caught the blood, you have never sprinkled it with the hyssop of faith and, consequently, you are not saved! Oh that each one of you could say, “My faith is resting in the substitutionary work of Jesus.” I could, indeed, sing that blessed hymn just now, and I drank it in with all my heart! And I heartily wish you could all sing it, too—

*“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!”*

Now, to the text. The blood of Jesus Christ is to Christians a token and in order to bring out the whole sense we must have five words—it is a distinguishing token, an assuring token, a significant token, a love-token, and a recognition token.

I. First, then, the blood shall be to you for a token, A DISTINGUISHING TOKEN. You could tell where the Israelite dwelt, for the blood-mark was there that night. You knew the Egyptian’s abode, for he knew nothing of the token. Nothing so truly distinguishes Christians as the blood of Jesus Christ. Where the blood is not believed in, nor prized, you have dead Christianity, for “the blood is the life thereof.” A bloodless Gospel is a lifeless Gospel! If the Atonement is denied or frittered away, or put into a secondary place, or obscured—in that proportion the life has gone out of the religion which is professed.

But we, Brethren, bear this distinguishing token, the mark of the blood. Our religion is, in many respects, a very singular one—one open to a world of objection and ridicule from carnal minds. It is one which always has been criticized and always will be, for we believe, first, that our sin deserves death. We do not believe transgression to be a trifle, or a mere misdemeanor of the first class. We know it to be a capital offense deserving the death penalty! When the Lord says, “The soul that sins, it shall die,” our conscience says, “Amen,” to the sentence of the Most High. The blood on the doorpost meant that those who dwelt there confessed that they deserved to die as much as others and would have done so had it not been for the paschal lamb.

The crimson mark was virtually a confession of deserving death. So every Believer feels that his sin is great and grievous, terrible and overwhelming. He does not subscribe to theories which make little of man’s guilt. He has no ear for those who try to mitigate the penalty and endeavor to make the guilt appear small. He does not call sin a mistake, a failure or a lapse. I think I have heard all those words, lately, used about sin, by those who say, “Poor unhappy man! So mistaken, seeking after the light and crying after God in the dark. How sad that he should stumble! Surely God will not be so harsh as to punish him forever.”

Such talk has no charm for us! We admit the heinous criminality of sin and the justice of the awful sentence which declares that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment. Our God is just and takes vengeance on iniquity. The God who smote all the first-born of Egypt and overthrew Pharaoh in the Red Sea, is the God whom we adore! And as we bow before Him we admit that He might righteously have smitten us, also, and have utterly destroyed us. For us the blood-mark is virtually an acknowledgment that we have the sentence of death in ourselves and dare not trust in ourselves.

We are singular enough to believe in Substitution. The blood upon the lintel said, “Someone has died, here, instead of us.” We also hold and rest in this Truth of God, that Christ died, “the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.” We believe, “He was made a curse for us, as it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” The belief in the greatness of sin distinguishes Christians from Pharisees, and all other self-justifiers. And the belief in Substitution separates Christians from all those philosophic adulterators of the Gospel who are willing to hold up Christ’s example, but cannot endure His expiatory Sacrifice. They will speak to you of Christ’s spirit and the power of His teaching, but reject His vicarious death.

We do not subscribe to the lax theology which teaches that the Lord Jesus did something or other which, in some way or other, is, in some degree or other connected with the salvation of men! We hold as vital Truths of God that He stood in His people’s place and for them endured a death which honored the Justice of God, and satisfied His righteous Laws. We firmly believe that He bore the penalty due to sin, or that which, from the excellence of His Person, was fully equivalent thereto. My Brothers and Sisters, this is and always will be assailed, but it is the keystone of the Gospel arch!

As at Waterloo all the battle seemed to rage around the chateau of Hugoumont, so does the conflict center around the doctrine of the atoning death of our great Substitute—and we are not going to shift our ground for a moment—nor adopt any other phraseology. We stand to the literal Substitution of Jesus Christ in the place of His people and His real endurance of suffering and death in their place. And from this distinct and definite ground we will not move an inch! Even the term, “the blood,” from which some shrink with the affectation of great delicacy, we shall not cease to use, no matter who may take offense at it, for it brings out that fundamental Truth of God which is the power of God unto salvation.

We dwell beneath the blood-mark and rejoice that Jesus poured out His soul for us unto death when He bore the sins of many. But we believe more—and what will seem very strange to some—we believe that we died in Jesus. The Israelite knew that when the angel went through Egypt he meant to exact a life at every house, and so he exhibited the blood, as much as to say, “The first-born is dead here.” The lamb had died instead of the first-born and, virtually, the first-born is dead, and there is no cause for smiting, because the smiting has been done. So, when Jesus died, His elect died in Him and their sins received the vengeance due in that day when on the accursed tree He yielded up His life a ransom for many.

How can we die? We are already dead in Him and have been buried with Him by virtue of our union with His blessed Person. This is a most precious Truth of God and those who hold it are thereby distinguished from the rest of mankind. Believing this, we next come to the conclusion that we are safe, for when the Hebrew had struck the blood upon the door-posts of his house, he went in to feast, not to fret—he went into the house to eat the lamb whose blood had been sprinkled—and to stand at the table with his loins girt about, expecting not to die, but to go forth to a land which the Lord his God would give to him!

This is the distinguishing mark of a Christian that he knows himself to be saved and, therefore, he keeps the feast rejoicing in the Lord! And, standing with his loins girt, he is expecting, soon, to be called away to the land which the Lord his God has given to him, that he may inherit and dwell there forever. Other men are not saved, nor dare they profess that they are! They acknowledge that they have a great deal to do before they will be saved—present salvation they know not. Or if they think they are saved, yet they dream that their continued salvation depends upon themselves—there is still something needed besides the sprinkled blood. The Israelite needed nothing but the blood—his was perfect satisfaction with that.

And so is the Believer! He has believed in Christ as dying in his place. He is delighted to know that he is complete in Him and accepted in the Beloved. He waits till the summons shall come and he shall be called to ascend to the Glory Land where Christ has gone to prepare a place for him. The Israelite in Egypt made this distinction prominent. As we have already said, he put it upon upper part of his door and upon the two side posts, too. We read in Revelation that those who received the mark of the beast sometimes bore it in their forehead, but sometimes also on their right hand, while he who had the mark of God always received it on his forehead, never on his right hand where it could be hidden within the palm.

It has been very well remarked that there is a back door to Hell, but there is none to Heaven. The way to Heaven is the King’s Highway, a way which is not made for concealment, but for honest travelers who have nothing to hide! Believers must be seen, for they are the lights of the world! Yet there are some who try to go to Heaven up the back stairs and serve the Lord only by night. It must not be! Strike the blood where all can see it, and let men know that you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ’s atoning Sacrifice! Whether they like it or not, let them know that this is all your salvation and all your desire.

I had the pleasure of riding into the Leonine city in Rome a short time after the Italian troops had taken possession, and I noticed that every house had marked up, most conspicuously, the arms of the kingdom of Italy and the name of Victor Emmanuel. They were not content to have it over their doors, but all over the front of the houses you read, “Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy,” showing that they were right glad to escape from the dominion of the Pope and to avow their allegiance to a constitutional king. Surely if for a human monarch and the earthly freedom which he brought, men could thus set up his escutcheon everywhere, you and I who believe in Jesus are bound to exhibit the blood-red token, and to keep it always conspicuous!

Let others believe the priest, we believe Jesus! Let others trust their works, we trust the sprinkled blood! Let others rely on frames and feelings, discipline and development, we believe in Jesus Christ and Him only! And we nail to the mast the blood-red banner of the atoning Sacrifice!—

“ **My faith is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.”**

Thus much, then, upon the blood as the distinguishing token.

II. Now, secondly, the blood was an ASSURING TOKEN. When we mean to do a special kindness for a friend it may be we say to him, “That you may be sure I shall do it, here is a token of my faithfulness.” God gave to His people the blood of sprinkling as the token that He would preserve them safely. And surely, the more the Israelite studied that token, the more at ease would he be, for he would say, “God has appointed this unblemished lamb to take our place, and seeing that He appointed it, and the lamb has been slain, we are sure He will not run back from the substitution which He has, Himself, ordained, so we are perfectly safe.”

Now, I want you, for a few minutes, especially you who have any doubts and fears, to look upon the blood of Christ and see its suitableness to be an assuring token to your consciences. Remember, first, what it was— blood, the token of suffering. Your sin deserves suffering. Christ has suffered for sin. Think what suffering He endured, what contradiction of sinners and what forsaking of His Father! Suffer no one to depreciate the physical sufferings of Christ, but still, remember that His mental sufferings were greater! His soul sufferings were the soul of His sufferings. Go to dark Gethsemane, go to shameful Gabbatha, go to deadly Golgotha and

as you see your Lord and mark that wondrous spectacle of woe, will you not feel that He can put away your sin and that if He so terribly suffered, you need not suffer?

God has accepted an expiation worthy of His Justice! That Heavenrending cry, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” shows how keen were the pangs with which our hope was born! Think, further—blood signifies not only suffering but death—for our Lord could only put away sin by actually dying. All His tears, all His holy living, all His painful sufferings, even, could not recompense for sin till the death penalty was paid, for death was that which God had appointed as the reward of sin, and Jesus died.

Oh see Him die—see HIM die! Was ever such a spectacle? Every drop that distils from His pierced hands cries aloud, “Safety for the Believer! The ransom price is paid!” That gash in His side, like the mouth of love, speaks eloquently to our hearts, “Pardon, acceptance, eternal love!” I cannot see that bowed head, those eyes glazed in death and that dear body taken down to be laid in the tomb without feeling, “If Christ has died, there must be boundless mercy for the guilty sons of men.” Think of it and I pray God the Holy Spirit to lead you to see the sweetness and comfort which lie in this token.

Remember, too, that you rest, not merely on suffering and death, but on the excellence of the Person so suffering and dying. Ask whose suffering and death it is? In the Israelites’ case it was an unblemished lamb. In your case and mine it is the spotless Lamb of God! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, think of the life of Jesus in its innocence and disinterestedness! Was ever such a life, was ever such a death of such a sacred Person? He was God, “very God of very God.” Those hands that were pierced had healed the sick with their touch! And those nailed feet had trod the sea! Those eyes, all closed in death, had looked into men’s hearts and those silent lips had spoken miracles! It was God, Himself, who, on the bloody tree, offered expiation for sin against Himself!

There must be power in such a death as that to put away sin. Do you not admit that it must be so? Is not the token full of comfort to you? Think, again, that it was not merely the lamb, but it was the Lamb of God. That is to say, when the Israelite killed the lamb he was doing what God commanded him to do, and when Jesus died in our place, He did not die as an amateur Savior, but as one appointed by God. Now, if God appointed the Atonement, He must accept it. Surely if He said that Christ should die in our place, if He “laid upon Him the iniquity of us all,” then the Atonement must be accepted since God, Himself, set it forth, provided it and ordained it!

How sweetly do I rest in this! I feel, when I look up to my dear Lord, and I desire evermore to do so, as if I could say to the Justice of God, “What can You do against me? Do I not present to You all You can demand—a death? I bring before You a death which You did appoint to be instead of my death? If You have appointed it, I know You will not refuse it.” This is one of the sweetest parts of the whole matter of Atonement and fills the token with assurance. One other thought, and a sweet one, this token was that of blood which was shed—not to be shed, but shed already! They had killed the lamb, they had taken the warm blood in the basin and smeared the door-posts, it was all done and all over!

You and I, also, are resting in a finished Sacrifice, not in a sacrifice to be offered, nor in a sacrifice which continues to be offered, according to this Anglican Popery which reeks in so many parish Churches, but a complete Sacrifice, for, “by one offering He has perfected forever them that are set apart.” There is no continuance of the offering of Christ in the sacrifice of the “mass”—it is a barefaced lie before Almighty God, for Christ declares that when He had once offered Himself, He forever sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. By that word, “It is finished!” He has put an end to all sacrifices and offerings by way of expiation for sin, because they are not needed—one death has accomplished it all!

Beloved, what joy is here! Suffering, suffering to the death, the suffering of the Son of God, a suffering ordained of God to be the vicarious Sacrifice and a suffering which is perfect and complete! Let us look at the token and let our hearts be glad within us from now on and forever. One of our kings once gave a ring to his favorite, and said to him, “I know that at the council tomorrow a charge of heresy will be brought against you. But, when you come in, answer them if you will, but you need be in no fear—if you find yourself brought to a strait, simply show them the ring and they will go no further.”

It is even so with us. The Lord has given us the precious blood of Christ to be like a ruby ring upon our finger and now we know how far conscience may go, and how far accusations from Satan may go—we have only to produce that token and bar all further proceedings. “He that believes in Him is not condemned,” neither can he be. God cannot and will not go back from His promise! The blood is the faithful assurance of the security of all the saints.

III. But now, thirdly, this is A MOST SIGNIFICANT TOKEN. Tokens generally mean something. Some inner sense is implied in them. Now, our token of the blood means four things. When the Jew smeared the blood upon the lintel and the two side posts he meant redemption. He did as good as say, “We are redeemed by blood! The people who live in this house are free! They have been slaves but they are redeemed! They are going out tomorrow morning and old Pharaoh and all his army cannot hold them.”

That is just what the blood of Jesus Christ means to us. We are bought and paid for and we are a free people! And if the Son has made us free, we are free, indeed! “O Lord, I am Your servant! By Your Grace I am Your servant! You have loosed my bonds. You have brought me up out of the house of bondage and out of the iron furnace. You have broken all my chains—the sprinkled blood declares it.” Then the blood meant, next, that the people who lived beneath that sign belonged to God. It was the mark of the Lord’s property—“You are not your own, you are bought with a price.”

He who redeemed us ought to possess us. The blood, when it bought us, also set us apart to be forever the property of the Redeemer. Whenever you think of Jesus, crucified, think of yourself also as crucified to the world, as no more belonging to self or sin or Satan—no longer bound by

worldly customs, fashions, maxims, laws—but under law to Christ, for you are the Lord’s freeman. Give up the members of your body to His service! Yield them as servants unto righteousness, because you have not been purchased—spirit, soul, and body—with corruptible things as with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot! The token set forth our redemption and also God’s property in us.

This token next means acceptance. He who has the blood of Christ sprinkled on him has that to show which renders him acceptable before the Lord. There has been a war and a wounded soldier comes home. He goes to the house of a father and mother who have a son out in the army, and he inquires, “Does So-and-So live here?” “Yes.” “Can I see him?” “Yes.” “I have a letter from your son, whom I left in the army, he was my dear comrade.” “Are you sure you have such a letter?” The man looks disreputable, his garments are torn, and he is evidently very poor, but he replies, “Yes, I have a letter from your son.” He puts his hands into his pockets, and he cannot find it. The master of the house is angry and says “It is of no use your coming here with this tale, you are deceiving me.”

He fumbles, still, in his pockets and at last he brings it out. Yes, there is the token, the father knows the handwriting of his dear boy. The letter says, “Father, this is a choice companion of mine and I want you, when he reaches home, to treat him kindly for my sake. Tell mother that anything she does for him shall be the same as if she had done it to her own boy.” See how well he is received at sight of that token! And even so, when we present the blood-mark, we say to the Lord, “There is the token that we are Jesus’ friends,” and the Lord does not look at the rags in which our poor nature is arrayed, but He looks at the token of His own Son’s blood and accepts us for His sake. What surer and more suggestive token could we desire? When cleansed in the blood of Jesus we are comely with His comeliness and dear to the heart of God for His Son’s sake.

Yes, Beloved, and it moreover means perfect safety. As soon as ever the blood was on the lintel those inside the house were perfectly secure. The angel could not strike them, for if he had done so he would have struck his Master and insulted the Lord of Angels. To use his sword while the Divine shield was exhibited outside the door would have been to bid defiance to God’s honor, and that no angel of God could ever do! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, there is no shield for a guilty soul like the blood-red shield of the Atonement! Stand beneath the purple canopy of Sacrifice and the great hailstones of wrath can never fall upon you! You must be safe if Christ’s Atonement interposes between you and God. So you see the sprinkled blood is a very significant token.

As I went, a few days ago, through a piece of forest much overgrown with undergrowth and saplings, I noticed certain straight young trees distinguished by a red mark, and I discovered that the woodmen were about to cut down all the undergrowth and clear the ground for the better growth of the timber. Those marked trees were to be spared to become large oaks. I can see the red marks and the small trees in my mind’s eye at this moment—and there come the woodmen chopping down everything with their axes and billhooks! Down goes all the brushwood and many a pole falls, too, but they stop at the marked trees—these must not be touched—the red mark saves them!

So is it with you and with me if we have known the sprinkling of the blood! The Lord will not only say, “Let them alone this year, also,” but He will say to the destroyers, “Come not near unto those upon whom is the mark.” By this token you may know that you shall live and not die! Like Rahab, we hang this scarlet line in our window, and when all Jericho goes down with terrible destruction, our house must stand, for the red line secures it evermore!

IV. The fourth point is that THE BLOOD IS A LOVE-TOKEN. The blood is a token of ancient love, for it was shed more than 1800 years ago. Oh my Soul, the Lord has given you an ancient token which sets forth His great love with which He loved you, even when you were dead in trespasses and sins! Before you were born, the blood was poured forth which is today the ensign and pledge of everlasting love! It is a token of intense love, for it is a pledge taken from the heart of Christ and it denotes not the love of the lips, not love which begins and ends with outward deeds of mercy, but a love which wells up from the Essence of the Redeemer’s being—from His inmost heart which was reached by the cruel spear.

What a token is this, a token taken not from the lilies of my Lord’s garden, nor from the jewels of His crown, nor even from the hair of His head, but drawn from the inner sanctuary of His soul—from that Holy of Holies—the heart of Emanuel, God With Us! Oh Believer, since you have such a token as this, you should be ready to die sooner than doubt the love of the Lord! It is a token, too, of mighty love, for it testifies that He who gave it possessed a conquering flame of love which many waters could not quench nor Death, itself, destroy. See, He gives you the blood which is the token of death, His death for you, and thus shows that He went to the grave for your sake, “and Death, by dying, slew”!

Wear this token near your heart, I pray you, for it is the richest that was ever given by the hands of Love to the choicest object of affection. O You who are our Well-Beloved, You have loved us even to the end, for You have loved us to the death! It is a token, too, of a wise all-seeing love, for it shows that our Lord knows our sin and has known it all. When He gives us the blood, He does as much as declare, “My child, I am aware of the evil which is in you, for I have suffered its penalty. I know your sin, but you shall know it no more, for I have carried it away and cast it into the depths of the sea.” By this token Believers know that their sin is covered, and that in the sight of the Lord they are “all fair,” for He has cleansed them from every stain.

The day is come when if their sins were searched for, they would not be found. No, they shall not so much as exist, for the blood has washed them white! And it is the token of a love unlimited which will deny nothing to its object. “He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” If you have received the blood of His dear Son, what will the Lord refuse you? Do you think your God will deny you Providential mercies when He has already given the bleeding heart of Jesus to redeem you? Do you imagine that He will leave you without bread and water, or garments to cover your backs when He has yielded up the Jewel of His soul, the Delight of His heart, to you?

Prize the token of His love, and look at it till your soul weeps for very joy! Blessed is that man to whom the Lord has said, “The blood shall be to you for a token.”

V. Lastly, it is A RECOGNITION TOKEN. The man who has this token is known to the angels as one of the heirs of salvation to whom they minister. As soon as they see the blood applied to the soul by faith, there is joy among them, for this is a sure sign of repentance. All God’s children have this family mark at their birth and there is no mistaking it, so that at the sight of it, the angelic guardians commence their tender care and begin to bear up the newly begotten one in their hands lest at any time he dash his foot against a stone.

The devil also knows that mark and, as soon as he sees it, he begins to assail the man who bears it, seeking in all sorts of ways to destroy him. If the Believer is not destroyed, it will not be for lack of enmity or industry on Satan’s part. He knows the mark of the “seed of the woman,” and he roars and rages, but at the same time he trembles, for well he knows that he cannot prevail. At the sight of the sacrificial token the great enemy stands confounded—like a raging lion he would gladly devour the sheep of the Lord, but the mark of the blood upon them saves them from his teeth.

And, Brothers and Sisters, this blood-mark is known among the saints, themselves, and has a wonderful power for creating and fostering mutual love. I have often noticed that as soon as we begin to discourse upon the atoning death of our Divine Lord, we are at home with one another. There may be Brethren present from various Churches and they may not be well at ease when we handle other subjects, but when we come to the precious blood we come to the heart of the matter and are all as one! This is one of the secret signs of our spiritual freemasonry! I have had my heart warmed and cheered against my own will, sometimes, by devout writers whose doctrinal theories I do not believe, and whose Churches I could not join, and yet when they write about my Lord, they win my heart!

“ Aliquid Christi,” as one old Divine used to say—the something of Christ in them awakens our affections and draws us near. Even books which are corrupt with Sacramentarianism have, occasionally, such a sweet savor of Christ in them that we cannot utterly cast them away. Sometimes we feel bound to very carefully pare the apple and cut out the rotten places, and remove the objectionable core for the sake of the sweet morsels flavored with the love of Christ. As the sweet honey-bearing flowers attract the bees, so does the name of Jesus draw all His saints to Him, and so to each other. Give me your hand, my Brother, for if you know my Lord, we belong to the same family—the Infallible mark of the redeemed is upon us both!

Best of all, the Lord knows this token! When we go to the Mercy Seat, if we would prosper, we must produce the sacred passport of the precious blood. With this it is impossible to fail. The Primitive Methodist Brother, when he was in a meeting where a friend could not pray, cried out, “Plead the blood, Brother!” and the advice was wise. Yes, plead that, and say, “For Jesus’ sake—by His agony and bloody sweat—by His Cross and passion.” What mighty blows are given to the gate of Heaven by that battering ram! These are arguments to which Heaven always yields. Our God recognizes the blood-mark in the hour of death and attends His people through the solemn article.

Death’s terrors are gone to him who has the blood for a token. Lay me down on my bed! There let me endure the allotted pain and weakness till the clammy sweat stands on my brow and needs to be constantly wiped away! Lay me down, I say, and I will calmly fall asleep like a child tired with a day’s play, if I have but the token! Distresses and poverty and anguish of body may molest me, yet shall I be perfectly at ease and ask for no exchange. Why is this, you ask? Many a man possessed of health and wealth is not one-half so blessed as the poor saint upon his death pallet! From where does this blessedness come?

Here is the secret. The Lord has passed by and given a token! “A token,” you say, “what is it? Is it some line extracted from the golden book of God’s election? Is it a gem taken from the diadem which is prepared for him in Heaven?” No, no, it is not this. “Has he, in his sleep, beheld a vision and seen the shining ones walking the golden streets, or has he heard an audible celestial Voice saying to him, ‘You are mine’?” No, he has none of these! He has neither dream nor vision nor anything that men call superhuman. He is resting in the precious blood—and this blood is the token of friendship between God and his soul! By this he knows the love of God and by this, God communes with him. They meet at the blood!

God delights in the sacrifice of Christ and the believing soul delights in it, too. They have, thus, a common love and a common joy—and this has bound the two together by a bond which never can be broken! This is it which makes some of us sing—

“ **And when I’m to die,  
Receive me, I’ll cry,  
For Jesus has loved me,  
I cannot tell why.  
But this thing I find,  
We two are so joined,  
He won’t be in Heaven  
And leave me behind.”**

Oh what a blessing to feel that the blood of Jesus has united us to Him eternally!

Suffer this last word. Some of you, perhaps, have said, “Oh, I wish I had the blood of Jesus Christ for a token.” Then let me tell you, first, that you have not to provide a sacrifice, for that is done! The Lamb is slain, the blood of the Everlasting Covenant is ever before the Presence of God. What have you to do? You have nothing to do but to have the blood sprinkled upon you. You know how they sprinkled it—it was with a bunch of hyssop. Hyssop is a common herb to be found everywhere in and around eastern cities, growing even on walls where but little soil is found. It was a plant with a great many stalks, so that it would hold the blood and act

as a sort of brush. Indeed, its only excellence was its power to hold the blood.

Now, faith is a very simple thing, and it is the act not of refined and educated minds, only, but of the poorest and simplest. The efficacy of the hyssop did not lie in what the hyssop was, but in its being put into the basin to drink up the blood. My poor faith is just as common as a bit of hyssop pulled up from the wall, but then I lay it to soak in the Atonement, while I muse upon who Jesus was, and what He suffered, and for what purpose, till it is wet, saturated, and all crimsoned with the vital blood.

The hyssop was an insignificant item in the whole business, it is only mentioned once, the second time the sprinkling is commanded it is not mentioned at all. And, so, after all, faith is but the humble instrument of salvation—the blood is the main matter—it is the life, the shelter, the token, the everything! Let your trembling faith lay to soak in the precious blood and then say, “I believe You, Jesus, and I tell the world I believe You. Sinner as I am, Your precious blood was shed for me and I trust in You alone.”

Thus you crimson the lintel and the door posts! Let all men know that whatever you may have been, and whatever you are now, you do now believe in the substitutionary death of Jesus, oppose who you may. Witness, you men and angels and devils, that Jesus’ blood is our sole hope! He who thus believes is saved. Brother, go your way, and leap for joy! No man ever perished who from his heart rested in the atoning blood. God bless you. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Exodus 12:1-15; 21-30.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—152, 280, 404.  
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THE BLOOD  
NO. 228

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 12, 1858, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” Exodus 12:13.**

GOD’S people are always safe. “All the saints are in His hand.” And the hand of God is a place of safety, as well as a place of honor. Nothing can hurt the man who has made his refuge God. “You have given commandment to save me,” said David. And every believing child of God may say the same. Plague, famine, war, tempest—all these have received commandment of God to save His people. Though the earth should rock beneath the feet of man, yet the Christian may stand fast and though the heavens should be rolled up and the firmament should pass away like a scroll that is burned by fervent heat, yet need not a Christian fear. God’s people shall be saved—if they cannot be saved under the heavens, they shall be saved in the heavens. If there is no safety for them in the time of trouble upon this solid earth, they shall be “caught up together with the Lord in the air and so shall they be ever with the Lord,” and ever safe.

Now, at the time of which this Book of Exodus speaks, Egypt was exposed to a terrible peril. Jehovah Himself was about to march through the streets of all the cities of Egypt. It was not merely a destroying angel, but Jehovah Himself. For thus it is written, “I will pass through the land of Egypt this night and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast.” No one less than I AM, the great God, had vowed to “cut Rahab” with the sword of vengeance. Tremble, you inhabitants of the earth, for God has come down among you, provoked, incensed and at last awakened from His seeming sleep of patience. He has girded on His terrible sword and He has come to smite you. Quake for fear, all you that have sin within you, for when God walks through the streets, sword in hand, will He not smite you all?

But hark! The voice of Covenant mercy speaks. God’s children are safe, even though an angry God is in the streets. As they are safe from the rod of the wicked, so are they safe from the sword of justice—always and ever safe. For there was not a hair of the head of an Israelite that was so much as touched—Jehovah kept them safe beneath His wings. While He did rend His enemies like a lion, yet did He protect His children, every one of them. But, Beloved, while this is always true, that God’s people are safe, there is another fact that is equally true, namely, that God’s people are only safe through the blood. The reason why God spares His people in the

time of calamity is because He sees the mark of blood on their brow.

What is the basis of that great Truth of God, that all things work together for good to them that love God? What is the cause that all things so produce good to them but this—that they are bought with the precious blood of Christ? Therefore it is that nothing can hurt them, because the blood is upon them and every evil thing must pass them by. It was so that night in Egypt. God Himself was abroad with His sword. But He spared them, because He saw the mark of blood on the lintel and on the two sideposts. And so it is with us. In the day when God in His fierce anger shall come forth from His dwelling place, to frighten the earth with terrors and to condemn the wicked, we shall be secure. If covered with the Savior’s righteousness and sprinkled with His blood, we are found in Him.

Do I hear someone say that I am now coming to an old subject? This thought struck me when I was preparing for preaching, that I should have to tell you an old story over again. And just as I was thinking of that, happening to turn over a book, I met with an anecdote of Judson the missionary to Burma. He had passed through unheard-of hardships and had performed dangerous exploits for his Master. He returned, after thirty years’ absence, to America. Announced to address an assembly in a provincial town and a vast concourse having gathered from great distances to hear him, he rose at the close of the usual service and, as all eyes were fixed and every ear attentive, he spoke for about fifteen minutes, with much pathos, of the precious Savior, of what He had done for us and of what we owed to Him. And he sat down, visibly affected.

“The people are very much disappointed,” said a friend to him on their way home—“they wonder you did not talk of something else.” “Why what did they want?” he replied, “I presented, to the best of my ability, the most interesting subject in the world.” “But they wanted something different—a story.” “Well, I am sure I gave them a story—the most thrilling one that can be conceived of.” “But they had heard it before. They wanted something new of a man who had just come from the antipodes.” “Then I am glad they have it to say, that a man coming from the antipodes had nothing better to tell than the wondrous story of the dying love of Jesus. My business is to preach the Gospel of Christ. And when I can speak at all, I dare not trifle with my commission. When I looked upon those people today and remembering where I should next meet them, how could I stand up and furnish food to vain curiosity—tickle their fancy with amusing stories, however decently strung together on a thread of religion? That is not what Christ meant by preaching the Gospel. And then how could I hereafter meet the fearful charge, ‘I gave you one opportunity to tell them of ME. You spent it in describing your own adventures!’ ”

So I thought, Well, if Judson told the old story after he had been thirty years away and could not find anything better, I will just go back to this old subject, which is always new and always fresh to us—the precious blood of Christ, by which we are saved. First, then, the blood. Secondly, its efficacy. Thirdly, the one condition appended to it—“When I see the blood.” And fourthly, the practical lesson.

I. First, then, THE BLOOD ITSELF. In the case of the Israelites it was the blood of the Paschal Lamb. In our case, Beloved, it is the blood of the Lamb of God, which takes away the sins of the world.

1. The blood of which I have solemnly to speak this morning, is, first of all, the blood of a Divinely appointed Victim. Jesus Christ did not come into this world unappointed. He was sent here by His Father. This, indeed, is one of the underlying groundworks of the Christian’s hope. We can rely upon Jesus Christ’s acceptance by His Father because His father ordained Him to be our Savior from before the foundation of the world. Sinner, when I preach to you the blood of Christ this morning, I am preaching something that is well-pleasing to God. For God Himself did choose Christ to be the Redeemer. He Himself set Him apart from before the foundation of the world and He Himself, even Jehovah the Father, did lay upon Him the iniquity of us all. The sacrifice of Christ is not brought to you without warrant. It is not something which Christ did surreptitiously and in secret. It was written in the great decree from all eternity, that He was the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. As He Himself said, “Lo, I come. In the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will O God.” It is God’s will that the blood of Jesus should be shed. Jesus is God’s chosen Savior for men. And here, when addressing the ungodly, here, I say, is one potent argument with them. Sinner! You may trust in Christ, that He is able to save you from the wrath of God, for God Himself has appointed Him to save.

2. Christ Jesus, too, like the lamb, was not only a Divinely appointed Victim, but he was spotless. Had there been one sin in Christ, He had not been capable of being our Savior. But He was without spot or blemish— without original sin, without any practical transgression. In Him was no sin, though He was “tempted in all points like as we are.” Here, again, is the reason why the blood is able to save, because it is the blood of an innocent Victim, a Victim only because His death lay in us and not in Himself. When the poor innocent lamb was put to death, by the head of the household of Egypt, I can imagine that thoughts like these ran through his mind. “Ah,” he would say, as he struck the knife into the lamb, “This poor creature dies, not for any guilt that it has ever had, but to show me that I am guilty and that I deserved to die like this.” Turn, then, your eye to the Cross and see Jesus bleeding there and dying for you. Remember—

*“For sins not His own, He died to atone.”*

Sin had no foothold in Him, never troubled Him. The prince of this world came and looked, but he said, “I have nothing in Christ. There is no room for me to plant my foot—no piece of corrupt ground, which I may call my own.” O Sinner, the blood of Jesus is able to save you because He

was perfectly innocent Himself and, “He died, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.”

But some will say, “Why has the blood of Christ such power to save?” My reply is not only because God appointed that blood and because it was the blood of an innocent and spotless being, but because Christ Himself was God. If Christ were a mere man, my Hearers, you could not be exhorted to trust Him. Were He ever so spotless and holy, there would be no efficacy in His blood to save. But Christ was “very God of very God.” The blood that Jesus shed was God-like blood. It was the blood of man, for He was Man like ourselves. But the Divinity was so allied with the manhood, that the blood derived efficacy from it.

Can you imagine what must be the value of the blood of God’s own dear Son? No, you cannot put an estimate upon it that should so much as reach to a millionth part of its preciousness. I know you esteem that blood as beyond all price if you have been washed in it. But I know also that you do not esteem it enough. It was the wonder of angels that God should condescend to die. It will be the wonder of all wonders, the unceasing wonder of eternity, that God should become Man to die. Oh, when we think that Christ was Creator of the world and that on His all-sustaining shoulders did hang the universe, we cannot wonder that His death is mighty to redeem and that His blood should cleanse from sin.

Come here, Saints and Sinners. Gather in and crowd around the Cross and see this Man, overcome with weakness, fainting, groaning, bleeding and dying. This Man is also “God over all, blessed forever,” Is there not power to save? Is there not efficacy in blood like that? Can you imagine any stretch of sin which shall prove greater than the power of Divinity— any height of iniquity that shall overtop the topless steeps of the Divine? Can I conceive a depth of sin that shall be deeper than the Infinite? A breadth of iniquity that shall be broader than the Godhead? Because He is Divine, He is “able to save to the uttermost, them that come unto God by Him.” Divinity appointed, spotless and Divine—His blood is the blood whereby you may escape the anger and the wrath of God.

4. Once more—the blood of which we speak today is blood once shed for many for the remission of sin. The paschal lamb was killed every year, but now Christ has appeared to take away sin by the offering up of Himself and there is now no more mention of sin, for Christ once and for all has put away sin by the offering of Himself. The Jew sacrificed the lamb every morning and every evening, for there was a continual mention of sin. The blood of the lamb could not take it away. The lamb availed for today, but there was the sin of tomorrow—what was to be done with that? Why, a fresh victim must bleed.

But oh, my Hearer, our greatest joy is that the blood of Jesus has been once shed and He has said, “It is finished.” There is no more need of the blood of bulls or of goats, or of any other sacrifice. That one sacrifice has “perfected forever them that are sanctified.” Trembling Sinner! Come to the Cross again. Your sins are heavy and many but the atonement for them is completed by the death of Christ. Look, then, to Jesus and remember that Christ needs nothing to supplement His blood! The road between God and man is finished and open—the robe to cover your nakedness is complete—without a rag of yours. The bath in which you are to be washed is full, full to the brim and needs nothing to be added thereunto. “It is finished!” Let that ring in your ears. There is nothing now that can hinder your being saved, if God has made you willing now to believe in Jesus Christ. He is a complete Savior, full of Grace for an empty sinner.

5. And yet I must add one more thought and then leave this point. The blood of Jesus Christ is blood that has been accepted. Christ died—He was buried. But neither Heaven nor earth could tell whether God had accepted the ransom. There was wanted God’s seal upon the great Magna Charta of man’s salvation and that seal was put, my Hearer, in that hour when God summoned the angel and bade Him descend from Heaven and roll away the stone. Christ was put in vile confinement in the prison of the grave, as a hostage for His people. Until God had signed the warrant for acquittal of all His people, Christ must abide in the bonds of death. He did not attempt to break out of His prison. He did not come out illegally, by wrenching down the bars of His dungeon, He waited—He wrapped up the napkin, folding it by itself—He laid the grave clothes in a separate place.

He waited, waited patiently. And at last down from the skies, like the flash of a meteor, the angel descended, touched the stone and rolled it away. And when Christ came out, rising from the dead in the glory of His Father’s power, then was the seal put upon the great charts of our redemption. The blood was accepted and sin was forgiven. And now, Soul, it is not possible for God to reject you, if you come this day to Him, pleading the blood of Christ. God cannot—and here we speak with reverence, too— the everlasting God cannot reject a sinner who pleads the blood of Christ—for if He did, it were to deny Himself. And to contradict all His former acts. He has accepted blood and He will accept it. He never can revoke that Divine acceptance of the resurrection. And if you go to God, my Hearer, pleading simply and only the blood of Him that hung upon the tree, God must un-God Himself before He can reject you, or reject that blood.

And yet I fear that I have not been able to make you think of the blood of Christ. I beseech you, then, just for a moment, try to picture to yourself Christ on the Cross. Let your imagination figure the motley crew assembled round about that little hill of Calvary. Lift now your eyes and see the three crosses put upon that rising knoll. See in the center the thorncrowned brow of Christ. Do you see the hands that have always been full of blessing, nailed fast to the accursed wood? Look at His dear face, more marred than that of any other man? Do you see it now, as His head bows

upon His bosom in the extreme agonies of death? He was a real Man, remember. It was a real Cross. Do not think of these things as figments and fancies and romances There was such a Being and He died as I describe it. Let your imagination picture Him and then sit still a moment and think over this thought—“The blood of that man, whom now I behold dying in agony, must be my redemption. And if I would be saved, I must put my only trust in what He suffered for me, when He Himself did ‘bear our sins in His own body on the tree.’ ” If God the Holy Spirit should help you, you will then be in a right state to proceed to the second point.

II. THE EFFICACY OF THIS BLOOD. “When I see the blood I will pass over you.”  
1. The blood of Christ has such a Divine power to save that nothing but it can ever save the soul. If some foolish Israelite had despised the command of God and had said, “I will sprinkle something else upon the doorposts,” or, “I will adorn the lintel with jewels of gold and silver,” he would have perished. Nothing could save his household but the sprinkled blood. And now let us all remember, that “other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Jesus Christ,” for “there is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved.” My works, my prayers, my tears, cannot save me. The blood, the blood alone, has power to redeem. Sacraments, however well they may be attended to, cannot save me. Nothing but Your blood, O Jesus, can redeem me from the guilt of sin.  
Though I should give rivers of oil and ten thousand of the fat of fed beasts. Yes, though I should give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul—all would be useless. Nothing but the blood of Jesus has in it the slightest saving power. Oh, you that are trusting in your infant Baptism, your Confirmation and your Lord’s Supper, you are trusting in a lie! Nothing but the blood of Jesus can save. I care not how right the ordinance, how true the form, how Scriptural the practice, it is all a vanity to you if you rely in it. God forbid I should say a word against ordinances, or against holy things, but keep them in their places. If you make them the basis of your soul’s salvation, they are lighter than a shadow and when you need them most you shall find them fail you.  
There is not, I repeat it again, the slightest atom of saving power anywhere but in the blood of Jesus. That blood has the only power to save and anything else that you rely upon shall be a refuge of lies. This is the rock and this is the work that is perfect. But all other things are day dreams. They must be swept away in the day when God shall come to try our work of what sort it is. THE BLOOD stands out in solitary majesty, the only rock of our salvation.  
2. This blood is not simply the only thing that can save, but it must save alone. Put anything with the blood of Christ and you are lost. Trust to anything else with this and you perish. “It is true,” says one, “that the Sacrament cannot save me, but I will trust in that, and in Christ, too.” You are a lost man, then. So jealous is Christ of His honor, that anything you put with Him, however good it is, becomes, from the fact of your putting it with Him, an accursed thing. And what is it that you would put with Christ? Your good works? What? Will you yoke a reptile with an angel—yoke yourself to the chariot of salvation with Christ? What are your good works? Your righteousnesses are “as filthy rags.” And shall filthy rags be joined to the spotless celestial righteousness of Christ? It must not and it shall not be.  
Rely on Jesus only and you cannot perish. But rely on anything with Him and you are as surely damned as if you should rely upon your sins. Jesus only—Jesus only—Jesus only! This is the Rock of our salvation. And here let me stop and combat a few forms and shapes which our selfrighteousness always takes. “Oh,” says one, “I could trust in Christ if I felt my sins more.” Sir, that is a damning error. Is your repentance, your sense of sin, to be a part-Savior? Sinner! The blood is to save you, not your tears—Christ’s death, not your repentance! You are bid this day to trust in Christ. Not in your feelings, not in your pangs on account of sin. Many a man has been brought into great soul distress, because he has looked more at his repentance than at the obedience of Christ— *“Could your tears forever flow,  
Could your zeal no respite know—  
All for sin could not atone,  
Christ must save and Christ alone.”*  
“No, says another, “but I feel that I do not value the blood of Christ as I ought and therefore I am afraid to believe.” My Friend, that is another insidious form of the same error. God does not say, “When I see your estimate of the blood of Christ, I will pass over you. No, but when I see the blood.” It is not your estimate of that blood, it is the blood that saves you. As I said before, that magnificent, solitary blood, must be alone. “No,” says another, “but if I had more faith then I should have hope.” That, too, is a very deadly shape of the same evil. You are not to be saved by the efficacy of your faith, but by the efficacy of the blood of Christ. It is not your believing, it is Christ’s dying. I bid you believe, but I bid you not to look to your believing as salvation. No man will go to Heaven if he trusts to his own faith. You may as well trust to your own good works as trust to your faith. Your faith must deal with Christ not with itself.  
The world hangs on nothing—but faith cannot hang upon itself—it must hang on Christ. Sometimes, when my faith is vigorous, I catch myself doing this. There is joy flowing into my heart and after awhile I begin to find that my joy suddenly departs. I ask the causes and I find that the joy came because I was thinking of Christ. But when I begin to think about my joy, then my joy fled. You must not think of your faith but of Christ. Faith comes from meditation upon Christ. Turn, then, your eye, not upon faith but upon Jesus. It is not your hold of Christ that saves you, it is His hold of you. It is not the efficacy of your believing in Him. It is the efficacy of His blood applied to you through the Spirit.  
I do not know how sufficiently to follow Satan in all his windings into the human heart but this. I know he is always trying to keep back this great Truth of God—the blood, and the blood alone, has power to save. “Oh,” says another, “if I had such-and-such an experience then I could trust.” Friend, it is not your experience, it is the BLOOD. God did not say, “When I see your experience,” but, “When I see the blood of Christ.” “No,” says one, “but if I had such-and-such graces, I could hope.” No, but He did not say, “When I see your graces,” but, “When I see the blood.” Get grace, get as much as you can of faith and love and hope, but oh, do not put them where Christ’s blood ought to be. The only pillar of your hope must be the Cross and anything else that you put to buttress up the Cross of Christ is obnoxious to God and ceases to have any virtue in it, because it is an anti-Christ. The blood of Christ, then, ALONE, saves. But anything with it and it does not save.  
3. Yet again we may say of the blood of Christ, it is all-sufficient. There is no case which the blood of Christ cannot meet. There is no sin which it cannot wash away. There is no multiplicity of sin which it cannot cleanse, no aggravation of guilt which it cannot remove. You may be double-dyed like scarlet. You may have lain in the lye of your sins these seventy years, but the blood of Christ can take out the stain. You may have blasphemed Him almost as many times as you have breathed, you may have rejected Him as often as you have heard His name. You may have broken His Sabbath, you may have denied His existence, you may have doubted His Godhead, you may have persecuted His servants, you may have trampled on His blood, but all this the blood can wash away. You may have committed whoredom without number—no, murder itself may have defiled your hands—but this fountain filled with blood can wash all the stains away.  
The blood of Jesus Christ cleans us from all sin. There is no sort of a man, there is no abortion of mankind, no demon in human shape that this blood cannot wash. Hell may have sought to make a paragon of iniquity, it may have strived to put sin and sin and sin together, till it has made a monster in the shape of man, a monster abhorred of mankind— but the blood of Christ can transform that monster. Magdalene’s seven devils it can cast out. It can ease the deep-seated leprosy, it can cure the wound of the maimed, yes, the lost limb it can restore. There is no spiritual disease which the great Physician cannot heal. This is the great panacea, the medicine for all diseases. No case can exceed its virtue, be it ever so black or vile. All-sufficient, all-sufficient blood.  
4. But go further. The blood of Christ saves surely. Many people say, “Well, I hope I shall be saved through the blood of Christ.” And perhaps, says one here, who is believing in Christ, “Well, I hope it will save.” My dear Friend, that is a slur upon the honor of God. If any man gives you a promise and you say, “Well, I hope he will fulfill it”—is it not implied that you have at least some small doubt as to whether he will or not? Now, I do not hope that the blood of Christ will wash away my sin. I know it is washed away by His blood and that is true faith which does not hope about Christ’s blood, but says, “I know it is so. That blood does cleanse. The moment it was applied to my conscience it did cleanse and it does cleanse still.”  
The Israelite, if he were true to his faith, did not go inside and say, “I hope the destroying angel will pass by me.” But he said, “I know he will. I know God cannot smite me. I know He will not. There is the mark of blood there, I am secure beyond a doubt, there is not the shadow of a risk of my perishing. I am, I must be saved.” And so I preach a sure Gospel this morning—“Whosoever believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall not perish but have everlasting life.” “I give unto My sheep eternal life,” said He, “and they shall not perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.” O, Sinner, I have not the shadow of a doubt as to whether Christ will save you if you trust in His blood. O no, I know He will. I am certain His blood can save. And I beg you, in Christ’s name, believe the same. Believe that that blood is sure to cleanse, not only that it may cleanse, but that it must cleanse, “whereby we must be saved,” says the Scripture. If we have that blood upon us we must be saved, or else we are to suppose a God unfaithful and a God unkind. In fact, a God transformed from everything that is God-like into everything that is base.  
5. And yet again—he that has this blood sprinkled upon him is saved completely. Not the hair of the head of an Israelite was disturbed by the destroying angel. They were completely saved—so he that believes in the blood is saved from all things. I like the old translation of the chapter in the Romans. There was a martyr once summoned before Bonner. And after he had expressed his faith in Christ, Bonner said, “You are a heretic and will be damned.” “No” said he, quoting the old version, “There is therefore now no damnation to them that believe in Christ Jesus.” And that brings a sweet thought before us. There is no damnation to the man who has the blood of Christ upon him—he cannot be condemned of God. It is impossible. There is no such a thing, there can be no such thing. There is no damnation. He cannot be damned. For there is no damnation to him that is in Christ Jesus. Let the blood be applied to the lintel and to the doorpost—there is no destruction.  
There is a destroying angel for Egypt, but there is none for Israel. There is a Hell for the wicked, but none for the righteous. And if there is none, they cannot be put there. If there is no damnation they cannot suffer it. Christ saves completely—every sin is washed, every blessing ensured— perfection is provided and glory everlasting is the sure result. I think then, I have dwelt sufficiently long upon the efficacy of His blood. But no tongue of seraph can ever speak its worth. I must go home to my chamber and weep because I am powerless to tell this story and yet I have labored to tell it simply, so that all can understand. And I pray, therefore, that God the Spirit may lead some of you to put your trust simply, wholly and entirely, on the blood of Jesus Christ.  
III. This brings us to the third point, upon which I must be very brief and the third point is—THE ONE CONDITION. “What?” says one, “Do you preach a conditional salvation?” Yes I do, there is the one condition— “Where I see the blood I will pass over you.” What a blessed condition! God does not say, when you see the blood but when I see it. Your eye of faith may be so dim that you cannot see the blood of Christ. Yes, but God’s eyes are not dim—He can see it—yes, He must see it. For Christ in Heaven is always presenting His blood before His Father’s face. The Israelite could not see the blood—he was inside the house. He could not see what was on the lintel and the doorpost—but God could see it. And this is the only condition of the sinner’s salvation—God’s seeing the blood. Not your seeing it.  
O how safe, then, is everyone that trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not his faith that is the condition of his assurance. It is the simple fact that Calvary is set perpetually before the eyes of God in a risen and ascended Savior. “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” Fall on your knees, then, in prayer, you doubting souls and let this be your plea— “Lord, have mercy upon me for the blood’s sake. I cannot see it as I could desire, but Lord, You see it and You have said, ‘When I see it, I will pass over you.’ Lord, you see it this day, pass over my sin and forgive me for its dear sake alone.”  
IV. And now, lastly, WHAT IS THE LESSON? The lesson of the text is this to the Christian. Christian, take care that you do always remember that nothing but the blood of Christ can save you. I preach to myself today what I preach to you. I often find myself like this—I have been praying that the Holy Spirit might rest in my heart and cleanse out an evil passion and presently I find myself full of doubts and fears and when I ask the reason, I find it is this—I have been looking to the Spirit’s work until I put the Spirit’s work where Christ’s work ought to be. Now, it is a sin to put your own works where Christ’s should be, but it is just as much a sin to put the Holy Spirit’s work there. You must never make the Spirit of God an anti-Christ and you virtually do that when you put the Spirit’s work as the groundwork of your faith.  
Do you not often hear Christian men say, “I cannot believe in Christ today as I could yesterday, for yesterday I felt such sweet and blessed enjoyments.” Now, what is that but putting your frames and feelings where Christ ought to be? Remember, Christ’s blood is able to save you in a good frame or in a bad frame. Christ’s blood must be your trust, as much when you are full of joy as when you are full of doubt. And here it is that your happiness will be in danger, by beginning to put your good frames and good feelings in the place of the blood of Christ. O, Brethren, if we could always live with a single eye fixed on the Cross, we should always be happy. But when we get a little peace and a little joy, we begin to prize the joy and peace so much, that we forget the source from where they come. As Mr. Brooks says, “A husband that loves his wife will, perhaps, often give her jewels and rings—but suppose she should sit down and begin to think of her jewels and rings so much that she should forget her husband? It would be a kind husband’s business to take them away from her so that she might fix her affections entirely on him.”  
And it is so with us. Jesus gives us jewels of faith and love and we get trusting to them and He takes them away in order that we may come again as guilty, helpless sinners and put our trust in Christ. To quote a verse I often repeat—I believe the spirit of a Christian should be, from his first hour to his last, the spirit of these two lines—  
*“Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Your Cross I cling.”*  
That is the lesson to the saint.  
But another minute, there is a lesson here to the sinner. Poor, trembling, guilty self-condemned Sinner, I have a word from the Lord for you. “The blood of Jesus Christ cleans us,” that is, you and me, “cleans us from all sin.” That “us” includes you, if now you are feeling your need of a Savior. Now that blood is able to save you and you are bid simply to trust that blood and you shall be saved. But I hear you say, “Sir,” you said, “If I feel my need. Now I feel that I do not feel, I only wish I did feel my need enough.” Well do not bring your feelings then, but trust only in the blood. If you can rely simply on the blood of Christ, whatever your feelings may be, or may not be, that blood is able to save.  
But you are saying, “How am I to be saved? What must I do?” Well there is nothing that you can do. You must leave off doing altogether, in order to be saved. There must be a denial of all your doings. You must get Christ first and then you may do as much as you like. But you must not trust in your doings. Your business is now to lift up your heart in prayer like this—“Lord, You have shown me something of myself, show me something of my Savior.” See the Savior hanging on the Cross, turn your eye to Him and say, “Lord, I trust You, I have nothing else to trust to, but I rely on You. Sink or swim, my Savior, I trust You.”  
And as surely, Sinner, as you can put your trust in Christ, you are as safe as an Apostle or Prophet. Not death nor Hell can slay that man whose firm reliance is at the foot of the Cross. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damned.” He that believes shall be saved, be his sins ever so many. He that believes not shall be damned, be his sins ever so few and be his virtues ever so many. Trust in Jesus NOW! Sinner, trust in Jesus ONLY.  
*“Not all the blood of beasts  
On Jewish altars slain  
Could give the guilty conscience peace, Or wash away the stain.  
But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,  
Takes all our sins away—  
A sacrifice of nobler name  
And richer blood than they.”*

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THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING AND THE CHILDREN  
NO. 1988

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 23, 1887, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb. And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians, and when He sees the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. And you shall observe this thing for an ordinance to you and to your sons forever. And it shall come to pass, when you come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as He has promised, that you shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? that you shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses.”  
Exodus 12:21-27.**

I WANTED, dear Friends, earnestly wanted, to continue the subject of last Lord’s-Day morning, for I felt it important that we should bear again and again our witness to the doctrine of the vicarious Sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Lord. But, at the same time, I promised that I would endeavor to keep “the feast of the children” and have a sermon which should be specially addressed to Sunday school teachers. I could not preach a school sermon at the appointed time, so as to open your children’s week, but thought a discourse might come in, none the less suitably, if I brought up the rear by closing your meetings. How am I to fulfill both my purposes? I think the subject before us will enable me to do so. We shall preach of the sprinkled blood and of Jesus, the great Sacrifice for sin— and then we shall press upon all who know the value of the great Redemption that they teach the young in their earliest days what is meant by the death of Jesus and salvation through His blood.

The Paschal lamb was a special type of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are not left to gather this from the general fact that all the ancient sacrifices were shadows of the one true and real Substance—we are assured in the New Testament that “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor 5:7). As the Paschal lamb must be without blemish, so was our Lord, and its killing and roasting with fire were typical of His death and sufferings. Even as to time our Lord fulfilled the type, for the time of His Crucifixion was the Passover. As the impression answers to the seal, so does the Sacrifice of our Lord correspond with all the items of the ceremonial Passover. We see Him “drawn out” from among men and led as a lamb to the slaughter. We see His blood shed and sprinkled. We see Him roasted in the fire of anguish. By faith we eat of Him and flavor the feast with the bitter herbs of penitence. We see Jesus and salvation where the carnal eye sees only a slaughtered lamb and a people saved from death.

The Spirit of God in the ceremonial Passover lays special emphasis upon the sprinkling of the blood. That which men so greatly oppose, He as diligently sets forth as the head and front of Revelation. The blood of the chosen lamb was caught in a basin and not spilled upon the ground in wastefulness, for the blood of Christ is most precious. Into this bowl of blood a bunch of hyssop was dipped. The sprays of that little shrub would hold the crimson drops, so that they could be easily sprinkled. Then the father of the family went outside and struck with this hyssop the lintel and the two side posts of the door—and so the house was marked with three crimson streaks. No blood was put upon the threshold. Woe unto the man that tramples upon the blood of Christ and treats it as an unholy thing! Alas, I fear that many are doing so at this hour, not only among the outside world, but among those who profess and call themselves Christians.

I shall endeavor to bring forward two things. First, the importance attached to the sprinkled blood and, secondly, the institution connected with it, namely, that the children should be instructed in the meaning of sacrifice, so that they also may teach their children and keep afire the memory of the Lord’s great deliverance.

I. First—THE IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO THE BLOOD OF SACRIFICE is here made very plain. Pains are taken to make the sacrifice observable, yes, to force it upon the notice of all the people!

I note, first, that it became and remained the national mark. If you had traversed the streets of Memphis or Rameses on the night of the Passover, you could have told who were Israelites and who were Egyptians by one conspicuous token. There was no need to listen under the window to hear the speech of the people within the house, nor to wait till any came into the street so that you could observe their attire. This one thing, alone, would be a sufficient guide—the Israelite had the blood mark upon his doorway—the Egyptian had it not. Mark you, this is still the great point of difference between the children of God and the children of the Wicked One. There are, in truth, but two denominations upon this earth—the Church and the world—those who are justified in Christ Jesus and those who are condemned in their sins. This shall stand for a never-failing sign of the “Israelite, indeed.” He has come to the blood of sprinkling, which speaks better things than that of Abel. He that believes in the Son of God as the one accepted Sacrifice for sin, has salvation and he that believes not in Him will die in his sins.

The true Israel are trusting in the Sacrifice once offered for sin—it is their rest, their comfort, their hope. As for those who are not trusting in the atoning Sacrifice, they have rejected the counsel of God against themselves, and thus have declared their true character and condition. Jesus said, “You believe not because you are not of My sheep, as I said unto you”—and lack of faith in that shedding of blood, without which there is no remission of sin—is the damning mark of one who is a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel. Let us make no question about it—“Whoever goes onward and abides not in the teaching of Christ, has not God.” (See 2 John 9 in the Revised Version). He that will not accept the Propitiation which God has set forth must bear his own iniquity! Nothing more just and yet nothing more terrible can happen to such a man than that his iniquity should not be purged by sacrifice nor offering forever. I care not what your supposed righteousness may be, nor how you think to commend yourselves to God—if you reject His Son, He will reject you! If you come before God without the atoning blood, you have neither part nor lot in the matter of the Covenant inheritance and you are not numbered among the people of God! The Sacrifice is the national mark of the spiritual Israel and he that has it not is an alien—he shall have no inheritance among them that are sanctified—neither shall he behold the Lord in Glory.

Secondly, as this was the national mark, it was also the saving token. That night the Angel of Death spread His wings on the blast and as He flew down the streets of Egypt He smote high and low, the first-born of princes and the first-born of beasts, so that in every house and in every stall there was one dead. Where He saw the blood-mark He entered not to smite, but everywhere else the vengeance of the Lord fell on the rebellious. The words are very remarkable—“The Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.” What holds back the sword? Nothing but the bloodstain on the door! The lamb has been slain and they have sprinkled their houses with the blood and, therefore, they are secure. The sons of Jacob were not richer, nor wiser, nor stronger, nor more skilled than the sons of Ham—but they were redeemed by the blood and, therefore, they lived, while those who knew not the redeeming token died. When Jericho fell down, the one house that stood was that which had the scarlet line in the window—and when the Lord visits for sin—the man that shall escape is he who knows Jesus, “in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sin according to the riches of His Grace.”

I call your very special attention, however, to the words that are used in the 23rd verse—“The Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door.” What an instructive expression! “When He sees the blood.” It is a very comforting thing for you and for me to behold the Atonement, for thus we gain peace and enter into rest. But, after all, the grand reason of our salvation is that the Lord Himself looks upon the Atonement and is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake. In the 13th verse we hear the Lord, Himself, say—“When I see the blood I will pass over you.” Think of the holy eyes of God being turned to Him that takes away the sin of the world—and so fixed on Him that He passes over us! He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, but He looks upon the face of His Anointed and forgives the sin. He accepts us with our Sacrifice. Well does our hymn-writer pray—

*“Him and then the sinner see;  
Look through Jesus’ wounds on me.”*

It is not our sight of the sprinkled blood which is the basis of salvation, but God’s sight of it! God’s acceptance of Christ is the sure guarantee of the salvation of those who accept His Sacrifice. Beloved, when your eyes of faith are dim; when your eyeballs swim in a flood of tears; when the darkness of sorrow hides much from your vision, then Jehovah sees the blood of His Son and spares you! In the thick darkness, when you cannot see at all, the Lord God never fails to see in Jesus that with which He is well pleased and with which His Law is honored. He will not suffer the destroyer to come near you to harm you, because He sees in Christ that which vindicates His justice and establishes the necessary rule of Law. The blood is the saving mark! At this moment this is the pressing question for each one in the company gathered in this house—Do you trust the Divine Propitiation or do you not? Bring to me what you will to prove your own personal excellence. I believe in no virtue which insults the Savior’s blood which alone cleanses us from all sin! Rather, confess your multiplied transgressions and shortcomings—and then take heart and hope— for there is forgiveness large and free for the very chief of sinners through Him who has made peace by the blood of His Cross!

O my Hearer, guilty and self-condemned, if you will now come and trust in Jesus Christ, your sins, which are many, shall be all forgiven you and you shall love so much in return that the whole bent and bias of your mind shall be turned from sin to gracious obedience! The Atonement applied to the conscience saves from despair and then, acting upon the heart, it saves from the love of evil. But the Atonement is the saving sign! The blood on the lintel and on the two side posts secured the house of the poorest Israelite. But the proudest Egyptian, yes, even Pharaoh on the throne, could not escape the destroyer’s sword. Believe and live! Reject the Atonement and perish!

Note, next, that the mark of the blood was rendered as conspicuous as possible. The Israelites, though they ate the Paschal lamb in the quiet of their own families, yet made no secret of the sacrifice. They did not make the distinctive mark upon the wall of some inner chamber, or in some place where they could cover it with hangings, that no man might perceive it. No, they smote the upper part of the doorway and the two side posts of the door so that all who passed by the house must see that it was marked in a peculiar manner—and marked with blood! The Lord’s people were not ashamed to have the blood thus put in the forefront of every dwelling— and those that are saved by the great Sacrifice are not to treat the doctrine of Substitution as a hole-and-corner creed, to be secretly held, but not openly avowed. The death of Jesus in our place is not a redemption of which we are ashamed to speak in any place! Call it old-fashioned and out of date—our critics may—but we are not ashamed to publish it to the four winds of Heaven and to avow our confidence in it! He that is ashamed of Christ in this generation, of him will Christ be ashamed when He comes in the Glory of His Father and all His holy angels with Him!

There is a theology abroad in the world which admits the death of Christ to a certain indefinable place in its system, but that place is very much in the rear. I claim for the Atonement the front and the center—the Lamb must be in the midst of the throne! Atonement is not a mystery to be scarcely spoken of, or if spoken of at all, to be whispered. No, no, it is a sublime simplicity, a fact for a child to know, a truth for the common people to rejoice in! We must preach Christ Crucified whatever else we do not preach! Brothers and Sisters, I do not think you ought to hear a minister preach three sermons without learning the doctrine of Atonement! I give wide latitude when I say this, for I would desire never to preach at all without setting forth salvation by faith in the blood of Jesus! Across my pulpit and my tabernacle shall be the mark of the blood—it will disgust the enemy—but it will delight the faithful! Substitution seems to me to be the soul of the Gospel, the life of the Gospel, the essence of the Gospel! Therefore must it be always in the front.

Jesus, as the Lamb of God, is the Alpha, and we must keep Him first and before all others. I charge you, Christian people, do not make this a secondary doctrine! Keep your perspective right and have this always in the foreground. Other Truths of God are valuable and may most worthily be placed in the distance, but this is always to be in the foreground. The center of Christianity is the Cross and the meaning of the Cross is Substi

tution — *“We may not know, we cannot tell,  
What pains our Jesus bore,  
But we believe it was for us  
He hung and suffered there.”*

The great Sacrifice is the place of gathering for the chosen seed— we meet at the Cross, even as every family in Israel met around the table whereon was placed the lamb—and met within a house which was marked with blood. Instead of looking upon the vicarious Sacrifice as placed somewhere in the remote distance, we find in it the center of the Church. No, more—it is the vital, all-essential center, that to remove it is to tear out the heart of the Church! A congregation which has rejected the Sacrifice of Christ is not a church, but an assembly of unbelievers! Of the Church I may truly say, “The blood is the life thereof.” Like the doctrine of Justification by Faith, the doctrine of a vicarious Sacrifice is the article of standing or falling to each Church—Atonement by the substitutionary Sacrifice of Christ means spiritual life—and the rejection of it is the reverse. Therefore we must never be ashamed of this all-important Truth of God, but make it as conspicuous as possible. “For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”

Further, the sprinkled blood was not only most conspicuous, but it was made very dear to the people, themselves, by the fact that they trusted in it in the most implicit manner. After the doorposts had been smeared, the people went inside their houses and shut the door, never to open it again till the morning. They were busy inside—there was the roasting of the lamb, the preparing of the bitter herbs, the girding of their loins, the getting ready for their march and so forth—but this was done without fear of danger, though they knew that the destroyer was abroad. The command of the Lord was, “None of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.” What is going on in the street? You must not go to see. The midnight hour has come. Did you not hear it? Hark, that dreadful cry! Again a piercing shriek! What is it? The anxious mother asks, “What can it be?” “There was a great cry in Egypt.” The Israelites must not heed that cry so as to break the Divine Word which shut them in for a little moment till the tempest was passed.

Perhaps persons of doubtful mind, during that dread night, may have said, “Something awful is happening. Hear those cries! Listen to the tramping of the people in the streets, as they hurry to and fro! It may be there is a conspiracy to slay us in the dead of night.” “None of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning” was sufficient for all who truly believed! They were safe and they knew it, and so, like the chicks beneath the wings of the hen, they rested in safety. Beloved, let us do the same! Let us honor the precious blood of Christ not only by speaking of it boldly to others, but by a calm and happy trust in it for ourselves. In full assurance let us rest. Do you believe that Jesus died for you? Then be at peace! Let no man’s heart fail him, now that he knows that Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures. Let the Cross be the pillar of our confidence, unmoved and immovable. Do not be agitated about what has been or what is to be—we are housed in safety in Christ Jesus both from the sins of the past and the dangers of the future! All is well, since love’s atoning work is done! In holy peacefulness let us proceed with our household work, purging out the old leaven and keeping the feast. And let no fear or doubt disturb us for an instant.

We pity those who die without Christ, but we cannot quit our Lord under the pretence of saving them—that would be folly. I know there are terrible cries outside in the streets—who has not heard them? Oh, that the people would but shelter beneath the blood-mark! It pierces our heart to think of the doom of the ungodly when they perish in their sins. But, as Noah did not quit the ark, nor Israel leave her abode, so our hope is not larger than the Cross will warrant. All who shelter beneath the blood of the Atonement are secure! But as for those who reject this great salvation, how shall they escape? There are great and sad mysteries in this long night, but in the morning we shall know as much of God’s dealings with men as it will be good for us to know. Meanwhile, let us labor to bring our fellows within the pale of safety, but yet let us be, ourselves, peaceful, composed, restful and joyful. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” “And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the Atonement.”

Possess your souls in patience. Oh, rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him! Feed upon the Lamb, for His flesh is meat, indeed. That same Jesus who has preserved your life from destruction will be the sustenance of that life evermore. Be happy beneath the saving blood-mark! Make a feast of your Passover. Though there is death outside, let your joy within be undisturbed.

I cannot stay long on any one point and, therefore, notice, next, that the Paschal blood shedding was to be had in perpetual remembrance. “You shall observe this thing for an ordinance to you and to your sons forever.” As long as Israel remained a people, they were to keep the Passover—as long as there is a Christian upon earth, the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus must be kept in memory! No progress of years or advance of thought could take away the memory of the Paschal sacrifice from Israel. Truly it was a night to be remembered when the Lord brought out His people from under the iron yoke of Egypt. It was such a wonderful deliverance, as to the plagues which preceded it and the miracle at the Red Sea which followed it, that no event could possibly excel it in interest and glory! It was such a triumph of God’s power over the pride of Pharaoh and such a manifestation of God’s love to His own people, that they were not merely to be glad for one night, nor for one year, nor even for a century— they were to remember it forever!

Might there not come a time when Israel would have achieved further history? Might not some grander event eclipse the glory of Egypt’s overthrow? Never! The death of Egypt’s first-born and the song of Moses at the Red Sea must remain forever woven into the tapestry of Hebrew history. Evermore did Jehovah say, “I am the Lord your God, which have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” Beloved, the death of our Lord Jesus Christ is to be declared and showed by us until He comes. No Truth of God can ever be discovered which can put His sacrificial death into the shade. Whatever shall occur, even though He comes in the clouds of Heaven, yet our song shall be forever, “Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”

Amid the splendor of His endless reign He shall be “the Lamb in the midst of the Throne.” Christ, as the Sacrifice for sin, shall always be the subject of our hallelujahs—“For You were slain.” Certain vainglorious minds are advancing—advancing from the Rock to the abyss! They are making progress from truth to lies. They are thinking, but their thoughts are not God’s thoughts, neither are their ways His ways. They are leaving the Gospel! They are going away from Christ and they know not where. In denying the substitutionary Sacrifice, they are denying the only hope of man! As for us, we hear the Lord saying to us, “You shall observe this thing for an ordinance to you and to your sons forever”—and so we will! “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever,” is our boast and Glory! Let others wander where they will, we abide with Him who bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

Notice next, dear Friends, that when the people came into the land where no Egyptian ever entered, they were still to remember the Passover. “It shall come to pass, when you have come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as He has promised, that you shall keep this service.” In the land that flowed with milk and honey there was still to be the memorial of the sprinkled blood! Our Lord Jesus is not for the first day of our repentance, only, but for all the days of our lives—we remember Him as well at our highest spiritual joys as in our deepest spiritual griefs. The Paschal lamb is for Canaan, as well as for Egypt, and the Sacrifice for sin is for our full assurance as well as for our trembling hope. You and I will never attain to such a state of Grace that we can do without the blood which cleanses from sin! If we should ever reach perfection, then would Christ be even more precious than He is today, or, if we did not find Him so, we might be sure that our pretended attainment was a wretched delusion! If we walk in the Light as God is in the Light, and have constant fellowship with Him, yet still the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin!

Moreover, Brothers and Sisters, I want you to notice carefully that this sprinkling of the blood was to be an all-pervading memory. Catch this thought—the children of Israel could not go out of their houses—and they could not come in, without the remembrance of the sprinkled blood. It was over their heads—they must come under it. It was on the right hand and on the left—they must be surrounded by it. They might almost say of it, “Where shall we go from Your Presence?” Whether they looked on their own doors, or on those of their neighbors, there was the same threefold streak, and it was there both by day and by night. Nor was this all. When two of Israel married and the foundation of a family was laid, there was another memorial. The young husband and wife had the joy of looking upon their first-born child and then they called to mind that the Lord had said, “Sanctify to Me all the first-born.” As an Israelite, he explained this to his son and said, “By strength of hand, the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage. And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the Lord slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both the first-born of man and the first-born of beast! Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that opens the matrix, being males, but all the first-born of my children I redeem.”

The commencement of every family that made up the Israelite nation was thus a time of special remembrance of the sprinkling of the blood, for then the redemption money must be paid, and thus an acknowledgment made that they were the Lord’s, having been bought with a price. In many ways and everywhere present, the people were reminded of the need of sacrifice! To the thoughtful, every going down of the sun reminded them of the night to be remembered, while the beginning of each year in the month Abib brought home to them the fact that the beginning of their nation dated from the time of the killing of the lamb. The Lord took means to keep this matter before the people, for they were wayward and seemed bent upon forgetting—even like this present age.

In the 13th chapter, in verse 9, we read, “It shall be for a sign unto you upon your hand, and for a memorial between your eyes.” And again, in verse 16, we read, “And it shall be for a token upon your hand, and for frontlets between your eyes: for by strength of hand the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt.” By this is meant that they were, from then on, to do everything with regard to redemption—and they were from then on to see everything in connection with redemption. Redemption by blood was to consecrate each man’s hand so that he could not use it for evil, but must employ it for the Lord. He could not take his food, or his tools in his hand, without remembrance of the sprinkled blood which had made his food and his labor a blessing. All his acts were to be under the influence of atoning blood! Oh, what service you and I would render if it were always redeemed labor that we gave! If we went to our Sunday school class, for instance, feeling, “I am bought with a price,” and if we preached with redeemed lips the Gospel of our own salvation, how livingly and lovingly we would speak! What an effect this would have on our lives!

You would not dare, some of you, to do what you now do if you remembered that Jesus died for you! Many a thing which you have left undone would at once be minded if you had a clearer consciousness of redeeming love. The Jews became superstitious and were content with the letter of their law—and so they wrote out certain verses upon little strips of parchment called “tephillin,” which they enclosed in a box—and then strapped upon their wrists. The true meaning of the passage did not lie in any such childish action—it taught them that they were to labor and to act with holy hands, as men under overwhelming obligations to the Lord’s redeeming Grace. Redemption is to be our impulse for holy service, our check when we are tempted to sin. They were also to wear the memory of the Passover as frontlets between their eyes, and you know how certain Jews actually wore phylacteries upon their foreheads! That could be no more than the mere shell of the thing! The essence of the command was that they were to look on everything in reference to redemption by blood!

Brothers and Sisters, we should view everything in this world by the light of redemption—and then we shall view it aright. It makes a wonderful change whether you view Providence from the standpoint of human merit or from the foot of the Cross. We see nothing truly till Jesus is our light! Everything is seen in its reality when you look through the glass, the ruby glass of the atoning Sacrifice. Use this telescope of the Cross and you shall see far and clear. Look at sinners through the Cross! Look at saints through the Cross! Look at sin through the Cross! Look at the world’s joys and sorrows through the Cross! Look at Heaven and Hell through the Cross! See how conspicuous the blood of the Passover was meant to be and then learn from all this to make much of the Sacrifice of Jesus, yes, to make everything of it, for Christ is All.

One thing more—we read in Deuteronomy, in the 6th chapter, and the 8th verse, concerning the Commandments of the Lord, as follows—“And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the posts of your house, and on your gates.” See, then, that the Law of God is to be written hard by the memorials of the blood. In Switzerland, in the Protestant villages, you have seen texts of Scripture upon the doorposts. I half wish we had that custom in England. How much of Gospel might be preached to wayfarers if texts of Scripture were over Christian people’s doors! It might be ridiculed as Pharisaical, but we could get over that. Few are liable to that charge in these days through being too religious. I like to see texts of Scripture in our houses, in all the rooms, on the cornices and on the walls. But outside on the door—what a capital advertisement the Gospel might get at a cheap rate! But note that when the Jew wrote upon His doorposts a promise, or a precept, or a doctrine, he had to write upon a surface stained with blood! And when the next year’s Passover came round he had to sprinkle the blood with the hyssop right over the writing.

It seems to me so delightful to think of the Law of God in connection with that atoning Sacrifice which has magnified it and made it honorable. God’s commands come to me as a redeemed man. His promises are to me as a blood-bought man. His teaching instructs me as one for whom Atonement has been made. The Law in the hand of Christ is not a sword to slay us, but a jewel to enrich us! All the Truths of God taken in connection with the Cross are greatly enhanced in value! Holy Scripture, itself, becomes dearer to a sevenfold degree when we see that it comes to us as the redeemed of the Lord—and bears upon its every page marks of those dear hands which were nailed to the tree for us.

Beloved, you now see how everything was done that could well be thought of to bring the blood of the Paschal lamb into a high position in the esteem of the people whom the Lord brought out of Egypt. And you and I must do everything we can think of to bring forward and keep before men forever the precious doctrine of the atoning Sacrifice of Christ! He was made sin for us though He knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

II. And now I will spend a short time in reminding you of THE INSTITUTION THAT WAS CONNECTED WITH THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE PASSOVER. “It shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? that you shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s Passover.”

Inquiry should be excited in the minds of our children. Oh, that we could get them to ask questions about the things of God! Some of them enquire very early, but others of them seem diseased with much the same indifference as older folks. With both orders of mind we have to deal. It is well to explain to children the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper, for this shows forth the death of Christ in symbol. I regret that children do not more often see this ordinance. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper should both be placed in view of the rising generation, that they may then ask us, “What mean you by this?”

Now, the Lord’s Supper is a perennial Gospel sermon and it turns mainly upon the Sacrifice for sin. You may banish the doctrine of the Atonement from the pulpit, but it will always live in the Church through the Lord’s Supper. You cannot explain that broken bread and that cup filled with the fruit of the vine without reference to our Lord’s atoning death! You cannot explain “the communion of the body of Christ” without bringing in, in some form or other, the death of Jesus in our place! Let your little ones, then, see the Lord’s Supper, and let them be told most clearly what it sets forth. And if not the Lord’s Supper—for that is not the thing, itself, but only the shadow of the glorious fact—dwell much and often in their presence upon the sufferings and death of our Redeemer. Let them think of Gethsemane, Gabbatha and Golgotha—and let them learn to sing in plaintive tones of Him who laid down His life for us. Tell them who it was that suffered, and why. Yes, though the hymn is hardly to my taste in some of its expressions, I would have the children sing—

*“There is a green hill far away,  
Without a city wall.”*

And I would have them learn such lines as these—  
*“He knew how wicked we had been,  
And knew that God must punish sin—  
So out of pity Jesus said,  
He’d bear the punishment instead.”*

And when attention is excited upon the best of themes, let us be ready to explain the great transaction by which God is just and yet sinners are justified. Children can well understand the doctrine of the expiatory Sacrifice—it was meant to be a Gospel for the youngest. The Gospel of Substitution is a simplicity, though it is a mystery. We ought not to be content until our little ones know and trust in their finished Sacrifice. This is essential knowledge and the key to all other spiritual teaching. May our dear children know the Cross and they will have begun well. With all their getting may they get an understanding of this and they will have the foundation rightly laid.

This will necessitate your teaching the child his need of a Savior. You must not hold back from this necessary task. Do not flatter the child with delusive rubbish about his nature being good and needing to be developed. Tell him he must be born again! Don’t bolster him up with the fancy of his own innocence, but show him his sin! Mention the childish sins to which he is prone and pray the Holy Spirit to work conviction in his heart and conscience. Deal with the young in much the same way as you would with the old. Be thorough and honest with them. Flimsy religion is neither good for young nor old. These boys and girls need pardon through the precious blood as surely as any of us. Do not hesitate to tell the child his ruin—otherwise he will not desire the remedy. Tell him, also, of the punishment for sin and warn him of its terror. Be tender, but be true. Do not hide from the youthful sinner the Truth of God, however terrible it may be! Now that he has come to years of responsibility, if he believes not in Christ, it will go ill with him at the Last Great Day. Set before him the Judgment Seat and remind him that he will have to give an account of things done in the body. Labor to awake the conscience and pray God the Holy Spirit to work by you till the heart becomes tender and the mind perceives the need of the great salvation.

Children need to learn the doctrine of the Cross that they may find immediate salvation. I thank God that in our Sunday school we believe in the salvation of children as children! How very many has it been my joy to see of boys and girls who have come forward to confess their faith in Christ! And I again wish to say that the best converts, the clearest converts, the most intelligent converts we have ever had have been the young ones! And, instead of there being any deficiency in their knowledge of the Word of God and the Doctrines of Grace, we have usually found them to have a very delightful acquaintance with the great cardinal Truths of Christ. Many of these dear children have been able to speak of the things of God with great pleasure of heart and force of understanding. Go on, dear teachers, and believe that God will save your children! Be not content to sow principles in their minds which may possibly develop in later years, but be working for immediate conversion! Expect fruit in your children while they are children! Pray for them that they may not run into the world and fall into the evils of outward sin—and then come back with broken bones to the Good Shepherd. Pray that they may, by God’s rich Grace, be kept from the paths of the Wicked One and grow up in the fold of Christ—first as lambs of His flock—and then as sheep of His hand.

One thing I am sure of, and that is that if we teach the children the Doctrine of the Atonement in the most unmistakable terms, we shall be doing ourselves good. I sometimes hope that God will revive His Church and restore her to her ancient faith by a gracious work among children. If He would bring into our Churches a large influx of young people, how it would tend to quicken the sluggish blood of the supine and sleepy! Child Christians tend to keep the house alive. Oh, for more of them! If the Lord will but help us to teach the children, we shall be teaching ourselves. There is no way of learning like teaching—and you do not know a thing till you can teach it to another. You do not thoroughly know any Truth of God till you can put it before a child so that he can see it. In trying to make a little child understand the Doctrine of the Atonement you will get clearer views of it yourselves and, therefore, I commend the holy exercise to you.

What a mercy it will be if our children are thoroughly grounded in the doctrine of redemption by Christ! If they are warned against the false gospels of this evil age, and if they are taught to rest on the eternal Rock of Christ’s finished work, we may hope to have a generation following us which will maintain the faith and will be better than their fathers! Your Sunday schools are admirable, but what is their purpose if you do not teach the Gospel in them? You get children together and keep them quiet for an hour-and-a-half, and then send them home—but what is the good of it? It may bring some quiet to their fathers and mothers and that is, perhaps, why they send them to the school. But all the real good lies in what is taught the children! The most fundamental Truth of God should be made most prominent—and what is this but the Cross? Some talk to children about being good boys and girls and so on. That is to say, they preach the Law to the children, though they would preach the Gospel to grown-up people!

Is this honest? Is this wise? Children need the Gospel, the whole Gospel, the unadulterated Gospel! They ought to have it and, if they are taught of the Spirit of God, they are as capable of receiving it as persons of ripe years. Teach the little ones that Jesus died, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God! Very, very confidently do I leave this work in the hands of the teachers of this school. I never knew a nobler body of Christian men and women, for they are as earnest in their attachment to the old Gospel as they are eager for the winning of souls. Be encouraged, my Brothers and Sisters—the God who has saved so many of your children is going to save many, many more of them! And we shall have great joy in this Tabernacle as we see hundreds brought to Christ. God grant it, for His name’s sake! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Exodus 12:21-36; 13:1-10; 14-16.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—414, 370, 281.

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Sermon #2268 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A QUESTION FOR COMMUNICANTS  
NO. 2268

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY AUGUST 7, 1892. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JUNE 1, 1890.

**What do you mean by this service?”  
Exodus 12:26.**

IN a spiritual religion everything must be understood. That which is not spiritual, but ritualistic, contents itself with the outward form. Under the Jewish dispensation there was a very strong tendency in that direction, but it was kept in check to some extent. Under the Christian faith this tendency must not be tolerated at all. We must know the meaning of what we do, otherwise we are not profited. We do not believe in the faith of the man who was asked what he believed and replied that he believed what the church believed. “But what does the church believe?” “The church believes what I believe.” “Well, but what do you and the church believe?” “We both believe the same thing.” He would not explain himself any further. We look upon such expressions as the talk of ignorance and not the language of faith. Faith knows what she believes and can give a reason for the hope that is in her meekness and fear.

Concerning the Passover, the young people among the Jews were encouraged to ask their parents this question, “What do you mean by this service?” Children should be encouraged to ask such gracious questions now. I am afraid they are not prompted to do so as they used to be in Puritan times. After the sermon always came the catechizing of the children when they were at home—and every father was bound to be attentive to the sermon—because he had to ask the boys and girls in the evening what they had heard. The children were more attentive, then, than now, because they had to be prepared to answer any questions of their parents. Cultivate in your children a desire to understand everything connected with our holy faith!

In this chapter, from which I culled my text, the parents are taught how to answer their children. If the parent is ignorant, a question from his child is inconvenient. He finds his ignorance exposed and he, perhaps, is vexed with the child who has been the innocent means of unveiling him to himself. Be ready to tell your children what the ordinances of the Gospel mean. Explain Baptism to them, explain the Lord’s Supper to them and above all, explain the Gospel—and let them know, as far as words can make it plain, what is that great mystery whereby we are saved, whereby sin is forgiven, and we are made the children of God.  
I thought it would be profitable, if God gave me strength for the exercise, very briefly to answer the question supposed to be put by an intelligent youth, “What do you mean by this service?”—this service that is called, by some people, “Holy Communion.” Which is sometimes called the “Eucharist.” And among us is called, “the Lord’s Supper,” or, “the breaking of bread.” What does it mean?

It means many things, but chiefly five, of which I will now speak. I. This supper is, first of all, A MEMORIAL.  
If you want to keep something in mind from generation to generation,

you may attempt it in many ways. You may erect a bronze column, or you may engrave a record of it upon brass in the church. Eventually the column will get sold for old bronze and somebody will steal the brass plates from the church—and the memorial will disappear. You may write it upon marble if you please, but in our climate, at any rate, the inscription is very apt to be obliterated and the old stones, though they last long, may, after a time, be as dumb as the treasures of Nineveh and Egypt were for centuries. These monuments did preserve the records, but they were hidden under the sand, or buried beneath the ruins of cities. And though they now have a tongue and are speaking forcibly, yet whatever had been entrusted to them would have been forgotten while they were lying under the sand of the desert, or in the debris of the palaces of Koyunjik. There are other ways of preserving memorials, such as writing in books, but books can be lost. Many valuable works of the ancients have entirely ceased and no copies of them can be found. Some of the books mentioned in the Old Testament which were not inspired books, but still were books which we should greatly value, have quite passed out of existence.

It is found that upon the whole, one of the best ways of remembering a fact is to have some ceremony connected with it which shall be frequently performed so as to keep the fact in memory. I suppose that Absalom will never be forgotten. He built himself a pillar in the king’s dale—he knew his own infamous history and he thought it might be forgotten. No one would care to remember it, so he built himself a monument. And there it stands—or what is reputed to be that monument, to this day—and every Arab who passes by the spot throws a stone at it. Absalom will better be remembered by the ceremony of throwing stones at his tomb than by any record in marble!

To turn your thoughts to something infinitely higher, I cannot conceive of a surer and better method of keeping the death of Christ in mind than of meeting together, as we shall do tonight, for the breaking of bread and the pouring out of the juice of the vine in memory of His death. Other facts may be forgotten—this one can never be. Tonight and every first day of the week, in 10,000 places of worship, Believers meet together for the breaking of bread in remembrance of Christ’s Cross and passion, His precious death and burial. Those great facts can never pass out of mind. Jesus said to His disciples, “This do in remembrance of Me.” In obeying His command, you are doing what is most effectual in keeping your Lord in remembrance. As I preach, tonight, having no sort of reliance upon my own words, I want you to practice them as I go along. Then you will be like the woman who said that when she heard a sermon about light weights and short measures, though she forgot what the preacher said, when she got home, she remembered to burn her bushel, which was short. So, if you can just practice the sermon as you hear it, it will be well.

Remember, then, that you come to this Table tonight to remember an absent Friend. Jesus has gone away. He who loved us better than any other ever loved us, has left us for a while. We sometimes take little parting gifts from friends, and they say to us—

*“When this you see  
Remember me.”*

Probably, almost everybody here has, at some time or other, had certain tokens of remembrance by which they might be reminded of some dear one who is far away across the seas—out of sight—but not out of mind. You come to the Communion Table, then, to remember your absent Friend.

You come, also, chiefly to remember His great deed of love. This supper is a memorial of what Jesus did for you when He was on the earth. “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” He laid down His life for you—remember that tonight. “He loved me, and gave Himself for me”—dwell on that fact. Let these words wake the echoes in your hearts, “Gethsemane!” “Gabbatha!” “Golgotha!” Can you forget all that Jesus suffered there on your behalf? If you have let these things slip in any degree from your heart’s affections, come and write them down again! Come to the Table and there celebrate the memorial of His love, wounds, agonies and death for you—

*“In memory of the Savior’s love,  
We keep the sacred feast,  
Where every humble contrite heart  
Is made a welcome guest.  
By faith we take the bread of life,  
With which our souls are fed.  
And cup, in token of His blood  
That was for sinners shed.”*

You are also called upon to remember a dear Friend who, although He has gone away, has gone about your business. It was expedient for you that He should go away. He is doing you more good where He has gone than He could have done if He stayed here. He is interceding for you tonight. Your business would miscarry were it not for Him—within the veil that hides Him from you, He is pleading for you. His power, His dignity, His merit are all freely being employed for you. He is pleading the causes of your soul. Can you, will you, forget Him? Will you not now forget everything else and indulge the sweet memory of your faithful Lover, your dear Husband who is married to you in ties of everlasting wedlock? Come, I pray you, keep the memorial of this dear Friend!

And you have to remember a Friend who will return very soon. He only tells you to do this till He comes. He is coming back to us. His own words are, “Behold, I come quickly!” That is not quite the meaning of what He said—it was, “Behold, I am coming quickly!” He is on His way! His chariot is hurrying towards us. The axles of the wheels are hot with speed. He is coming as fast as He can. The long-suffering of God delays Him till sinners are brought in—till the full number of His elect shall be accomplished—but He is not delaying! He is not lingering! He is not slack, as some men count slackness. He is coming quickly. Will you not remember Him? Soon will His hand be on the door. Soon for you, at any rate, He may cry, “Arise, My love, My dove, My fair one, and come away.” And soon He may be here among us and then we shall reign with Him forever and ever.

I charge my own heart to remember my dear Lord, tonight, and I pray you, Brothers and Sisters, let not the feebleness of my reminder deprive you, now, of the happiness of thinking much of Christ your Lord! Sit still and let all other thoughts be gone—think only of Him who loved you and died for you. Let your thoughts go back to Calvary, as you sing, in mournful accents—

*“O sacred head once wounded,  
With grief and pain weighed down,  
How scornfully surrounded  
With thorns, Your only crown!  
How pale are You with anguish,  
With sore abuse and scorn!  
How does that Visage languish,  
Which once was bright as morn!”*

Oh, eyes full of tears! Oh, shoulders once beaten with the gory lash! Oh, hands once nailed to the cruel Cross! Oh, feet once fastened to the bitter tree! Soon shall we behold the Christ who loved us and died for us. Therefore let us observe this sacred feast in remembrance of Him.

II. But I must be more brief on my second point. The second meaning of the Lord’s Supper is that it is AN EXHIBITION. “As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you show the Lord’s death till He comes.” We are helped to remember it by the type, the emblem, the metaphor which is supplied to us by this supper. How is that? Is there any likeness to the death of Christ in this supper? I answer, there is a great likeness.

There is His broken body, represented by the bread which is broken and intended for use. His dear body was broken, marred, sadly marred, given over to the hands of death, laid in the sepulcher, wrapped about with fine linen, left there, as His enemies thought, never to rise again. In that broken bread, broken that even believing children may eat their morsel, you see Christ’s body given up for His people’s sake. But there stands a cup. It is full of the red juice of the grape. What does it mean? He, Himself, shall explain it—“This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you.” Now, the shedding of blood is the great token of death. One would not long talk of killing without speaking of shedding blood. In fact, bloodshed usually means dying by a violent death, and so did Jesus die. They pierced His hands and His feet. A soldier thrust his lance into His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. That stream of blood was the token that He really was dead. He has poured out from His veins His precious life to purchase His redeemed! The broken bread, the cluster pressed into the cup and leaving nothing but its blood-red juice—these two things symbolize Christ’s death.

But, most of all, this is an exhibition of the two things separate—the bread and the cup. We have heard of some mixing the bread with the wine—that is not the Lord’s Supper! We have heard of others partaking of the wafer, as they call it, and leaving the cup—this is not taking the Lord’s Supper! They must be both there—the bread here, the wine cup there— because the separation of the blood from the flesh is the surest token of death! “The blood is the life thereof” and if the blood is drained away, there is death. Therefore the blood is represented by the cup—and the flesh is represented by the bread. These two, separated, are the great token and emblem of Christ’s death.

We show, display, exhibit, symbolize the death of our Lord at this Table in this fashion—we partake of both symbols—eating of the bread, drinking of the cup, the whole ministering to the support of our life. At this Table we say to all of you who do not know Christ—Christ’s death is our life—and the remembrance of Christ’s death is the food of our life! If any of you are spectators of the ordinance, this is the meaning of our little acted sermon—Christ has died. Christ’s death is the support of our faith, the food of our souls, in token whereof we take this bread and this cup, and eat and drink. So this supper is a showing forth of Christ’s death. How many here can say that Christ’s death is their life? How many of you can say that you feed upon Him? Dear Friends, you must not come to the Table unless you can say it. But if you can, come and welcome! But if you cannot, oh, may the Lord teach you the lesson that is so necessary, the lesson that is so blessed, when it is once learned—that Christ on the Cross is the one hope of eternal glory!

You have thus had two meanings of the Lord’s Supper. First—it is a memorial. And next—it is an exhibition.  
III. The Lord’s Supper is, next, A COMMUNION. We must have this brought out prominently, or we shall miss a great deal. We are at the Lord’s Table—we eat of His bread, we drink out of His cup. This betokens friendship. When, in the East, a man has eaten of an Arab’s salt, he is from that time under his protecting care. And he who has spiritually eaten of Christ’s bread has come under Christ’s protection—Christ will take care of Him. All feuds are ended. An eternal peace is established between the two. It was a tender parable in which Nathan spoke of a man who had a little ewe lamb which did eat of his own meat and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom. This is your privilege—to lie in Christ’s bosom, to drink out of His cup and to eat of His bread! This is a very sweet fellowship! Enjoy it tonight to the fullest.  
We go further than that, for we not only eat of His bread, but symbolically we feast upon Him. His flesh is meat, indeed, and His blood is drink, indeed! Can I really feed upon Christ? Really, yes! Carnally, no! There is no such thing as the carnal eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood— that were a horrible thing! That were to make a man a cannibal! But the spiritual feeding upon the Incarnate God—this is what we mean. He gives us His flesh to eat and we thus enter into a fellowship of the most intense and mysterious kind—not merely eating with Him, but eating Him—not merely receiving from Him, but receiving Him, Himself, to be the life of our hearts! May you get to that point tonight! I believe in the real Presence of Christ, but I do not believe in the carnal presence of the Roman Catholic. I believe in the real presence of the Believer, but that reality is none the less real because it is spiritual—and only spiritual men can discern it!  
Now, Beloved, if we really come in the right spirit to this Table, when we have eaten the bread, it becomes part of us. When the wine is sipped, the juice of the grape enters into our constitution—we cannot separate it from ourselves. Such is our fellowship with Christ. He is one with us and we are one with Him. “Quis separabit?” “Who shall separate us from the love of God?” We are one with Christ, partners with Him. All that He has is ours—all that we have is His. He gives Himself to us—we yield ourselves to Him. It is Christ and Co., only the little, “Co.,” drops its name to be swallowed up in Him who is All in All! That is the meaning of the bread and the cup. We take Christ into ourselves, as He has taken us up into His greater Self.  
But communion also means that we are one with each other. I wish that you would catch that thought. I am afraid there are some members of the Church, here, who have never realized their union with all the rest of the members. “We, being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone, members, one of another.” One is our Master, even Christ, and all we are Brethren. There should be an intimate feeling of fellowship, a readiness to help and love one another. Rejoice with them that rejoice and weep with them that weep!  
I cannot shake off from myself the idea that this makes up a large part of the meaning of the Lord’s Supper, the communion of saints with each other as well as the communion of the saints with Christ. May we enjoy it tonight! For my part, I like to feel, when I come to the Table, that I am going to have communion, not only with this Church, large as it is, not merely with the members of one denomination, (I wish there were no denominations), not merely with the company of one body of Christians— would to God, there were but one body of Christians throughout the world!—but freely inviting all who belong to any part of the visible Church! I delight to think that at this Table, tonight, I shall have fellowship with the Brothers and Sisters in the Unites States, of all names, and sorts, and ages, and ranks. There cannot be two churches of Christ. There is but one Church, one Head and one body. Though there are some very naughty children in the Lord’s family, they must not be kept without their supper—there is some other way of chastening them! And as long as there is true living communion between one Christian and another, where God has given the thing signified, I dare not keep back the sign. If He gives them to have fellowship with Christ, who am I that shall say, “You shall have not fellowship with Him”? I dare not say it!  
The meaning of this Supper, then, is communion.  
IV. But a fourth meaning of the Lord’s Supper is A COVENANTING. Our Lord said to His disciples, “This cup is the new testament, or Covenant, in My blood.” We do well to sing—  
*“Your body broken for my sake,  
My bread from Heaven shall be;  
Your testamental cup I take,  
And thus remember Thee.”*  
When we come to the Lord’s Table, we must be careful that we there take Christ to be our God in Covenant. We take the one living God forever and ever. He gives Himself to us and we take Him, and we declare, “This God is our God forever and ever. He shall be our Guide even unto death.” Do you understand that Covenant relationship, everyone of you? Do you know what you are doing when you take the piece of bread and eat it— and take the cup and drink of it? If you are truly a Believer in Christ, God is in Covenant with you through the body and the blood of Christ—and you recognize that blessed Truth of God—and take Him to be your God.  
Now, the Covenant runs thus, “They shall be My people, and I will be their God.” When, therefore, we come to this covenanting Table, we agree that we will be the Lord’s people—therefore, not the devil’s, not the world’s, not our own—but the Lord’s. When the Lord’s people are chastened, we expect to be chastened with them. When the Lord’s people are persecuted, we expect to be persecuted with them. We must take them for better or for worse, to have and to hold, and death, itself, must not part us from the Lord’s people. That is the meaning of coming to this Table— recognizing that between you and God there is an agreement made that must not be broken, a Covenant ordered in all things and sure by which God becomes yours and you become His—so that you are forever to be one of those that belong wholly to Him.  
Here, at the Communion Table, God, the Covenant God, seals His love to us. “Come here, My child,” says the Lord, “I love you and I gave Myself for you, in token, whereof, put this bread into your mouth, to remind you of how I gave Myself for you. I love you so that you are Mine. I have called you by My name, in token, whereof, I remind you that I bought you with My precious blood. Therefore, let that sip of the juice of the vine go into your body to remind you that by My precious blood, which was shed for many, I have redeemed you from going down into the Pit.” There are seals at that Table, new seals of the Covenant, new tokens, new love gifts from the Lord, to remind you of what He has done for you!  
And you are to come here, tonight, to testify anew your love to God. Here you say, “My Master, let me eat with You.” If any of you have lost your first love and have grown spiritually cold, the Savior stands at the door and knocks—and He says, “Open to Me”—and He also says that if we open to Him, He will come in and sup with us, and we with Him. He said that to the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans, the Church which was neither cold nor hot, which He threatened to spew out of His mouth. If you are only fit to make Christ sick, yet if you will open the door to Him, He will come and feast with you tonight—and all shall be well with you! He testifies His love to you. Come and testify yours to Him tonight. That is the meaning of this bread and this cup. Your covenant with death is broken, your agreement with Hell is annulled! And now you are in Covenant with God and He is in Covenant with you—even in an everlasting Covenant which shall never be broken!  
V. Lastly, and very briefly, this supper signifies A THANKSGIVING. It is often called, by friends who love hard words, the “Eucharist.” We have some friends who always carry a gold pencil, on purpose, to put down every word that nobody understands, that they may use it next Sunday in their sermon. Such people call the Lord’s Supper the “Eucharist,” which signifies “the giving of thanks.” This is the thanksgiving service of the Church of God. It ought to be celebrated every Lord’s Day. Every Sabbath should be a thanksgiving Sunday, for Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week and we ought to give thanks every time we celebrate His Resurrection. Certainly we should do so when we celebrate His death! What are we going to do tonight by way of thanksgiving?  
Well, we are coming to a festival, not a funeral! The choice festival of the Jewish faith was the Passover. The Lord’s Supper takes its place with higher joys! We come to this feast to testify our joy in Christ. There is bread, but there is also wine upon the table. This is to show that it is a festival for joy and delight. And you cannot praise Christ better and give thanks to Him better than by rejoicing in Him! Praise Him by your grateful joy! I think that we should always come to the Lord’s Table with a feeling of deep reverence, but that reverence should never tend to bondage. We want you not to come here quivering and shaking, as if you were slaves that came to eat a morsel of your master’s bread, under fear of the lash. No, no! Come, children! Come, beloved ones of the Lord! Come, table companions of Christ, and sit at the festival He has prepared and let your joy be full of thanksgiving!  
We come to the Table, next, actually to praise the Lord for giving Christ to us. When our Lord broke the bread, He gave thanks. So shall we tonight. Come, Beloved, to thankfully praise the Father for the gift of Christ. And as you take the bread into your mouth, say in your heart, “Bless the Lord!” And as you drink of the cup, say in your spirit, “Blessed be His holy name! Blessed be the Father for His eternal love to us! Blessed be Jesus for His love which has saved us to know all these precious things!”  
One way in which we show our thanks to Christ is that we receive with gratitude the emblems of His death. Each one who communes with us will receive the bread and eat it, and take the cup and drink it. We do not hold it up and look at it. We do not kneel down and pay it homage—we receive it. We have done so now these many years. How long is it since we began this holy feast? Well, with some of us, it is over 40 years since our first communion, and we do not need any better food. We desire to keep in memory the same Christ, to feed upon the same doctrine of the Incarnation and atoning Sacrifice. And if we should be spared, Beloved, another 40 years, which is far from likely, we shall have a sweeter tooth for Christ even than we have now! He will be more dear to us, more precious, more delightsome, even, than He is to-night! So we come to the Table to show our gratitude by receiving and receiving again.  
Let me whisper in your ears, when this communion is over and you shall leave this Table, “Pray, Beloved, that you may go away in the same spirit as your Lord and Master did when, after rising from supper, He went out to the Garden, not there to have a sweet hour of lonely communion with God, but there to sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground! He went there to be arrested, to be hurried off to the bar of Annas, and Caiaphas, and Pilate, and Herod, and the rest of them. He went there, in fact to die! But He went away singing.” So I want you to go away from this communion singing praises to God!  
As my dear Brother said in prayer, you must have your Gethsemanes, your Golgothas—but I want you to go away from this Table singing! Whatever comes, high or low, bright or dark, Heaven or another age in this dark wilderness, Brothers and Sisters, let us sing! We often say, “Let us pray,” but tonight, at the Table, I say, “Let us sing!” Let us sing unto the Lord because of His great gift to us, which we, tonight, remember, and set forth, and commune with, and Covenant with! Let us sing unto the Lord as long as we live, for we can never sufficiently praise Him for all that He has done for us—  
*“We’ll praise our risen Lord,  
While at His feet we sit!  
His griefs a hallowed theme afford  
For sweetest music fit.”*  
Thus I have explained all about the Lord’s Supper. Do you know anything about it? Some of you are going away. You are going away! Yes, and the day shall come when you will not have anywhere to go! When the great marriage supper is spread and the feast of the gracious shall be held, and the whole universe shall be gathered, oh, where will you go? You will not be allowed to linger at the door, neither will you go home to wait till others shall return from the festival. You must be driven from God’s Presence if you come not by faith in Christ to that great feast! The fiery swords of the angel guards shall be unsheathed and they shall pursue you through the blackness of eternal darkness, down to infinite despair! The Lord have mercy upon you, tonight, that He may have mercy upon you in that day, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON **MATTHEW 26:26-30 and 1 CORINTHIANS 11:20-34.**We will read, first, Matthew’s account of the institution of the Lord’s Supper.

Matthew 26:26. And as they were eating. In the middle of the Paschal Feast our Lord instituted the sacred festival which was always afterwards to be known as, “the Lord’s Supper.” The one ordinance was made to melt gradually into the other—“as they were eating.”

26. Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take eat; this is My body. “This represents My body.” He could not possibly have meant that the bread was His body, for there was His body sitting at the table, whole and entire! They would have been astonished beyond measure if they had understood Him literally! But they did not do so any more than when Christ said, “I am the door,” or, “I am the Goof Shepherd.”

27. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink you all of it. “Everyone of you.” Was this the Lord’s Supper? Yes. What say the Romanists about it? Why, that the people may not drink the cup! Yet our Savior said to His disciples, “Drink you all of it.”

28. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Now they were to have a perpetual pledge of the pardon of sin, in the cup, which was the emblem of Christ’s blood, “shed for many for the remission of sins.”

29. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s Kingdom. Jesus took the Nazarite vow to drink no more, to partake no more of the fruit of the vine, till He should meet us again in His Father’s Kingdom. He has pledged us once and for all in that cup, and now He abstains until He meets us again. Thus He looks forward to a glorious meeting, but He bids us take the cup and thus remember Him until He comes.

30. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives. To His last great battle the Champion goes singing, attended by feeble followers who could not protect Him, but who could sing with Him! I think He must have led the tune—His disciples were too sorrowful to sing until His clear voice started the Hallelujah Psalms—but they joined Him in the holy exercise, for, “they,” as well as their Lord sang the hymn. When you are about to face a trial, offer a prayer. But, if you can, also sing a hymn! It will show great faith if, before you enter into the burning fiery furnace, you can sing Psalms unto the Lord who redeems His people!

Now let us read Paul’s version of this same matter.  
1 Corinthians 11:20, 21. When you come together, therefore, into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s Supper. For in eating everyone takes before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunk. These Corinthians had fallen into a very strange state. I do not think that any Baptist Church that I have ever known of has acted in this fashion, but when churches have no ministers—when there is an open ministry where everybody talks and nobody listens—they fall into a strange condition, especially into divisions and heart-breaking strifes. It was so in the case of this Church at Corinth. Here everybody brought his own provision and some ate to the full, while others had not enough—and they thought that they were observing “the Lord’s Supper!”  
22. What? Have you not houses to eat and to drink in? There is your proper place if you need a meal. Go home and eat and drink! Do not come to the sanctuary for such a purpose—“Have you not houses to eat and to drink in?”  
22, 23. Or despise you the Church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not! For I have received of the Lord that which I delivered unto you. He had received it by a special Revelation. Poor Paul was brought in late and he was like one born out of due time. He had not been present in the upper room with Christ at the first famous breaking of bread, so the Lord came and gave Him a special Revelation concerning this sacred feast, so that, whenever he spoke or wrote to any of the Churches about the Lord’s Supper, he could say, “I have received of the Lord that which I delivered unto you.”  
23, 24. That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me.

The Lord’s Supper is a simple service of remembrance. Nothing is said about an altar, or a priest, or a sacrifice! Our Lord took bread, gave thanks for it, broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, “Take, eat: this is My body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me.” Mark that, “this do”—it will not be right to do something else instead of this— and we must not do this for any other purpose than the one He mentions, “This do in remembrance of Me.” This command raises a previous question, “Do we know Him?” We cannot remember Christ if we do not know Him.

25, 26. After the same manner, also, He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood: this do you, as oft as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death till He comes—

*“By Christ redeemed, in Christ restored,  
We keep the memory adored,  
And show the death of our dear Lord,  
Until He comes!  
And thus that dark betrayal night,  
With the last advent we unite,  
By one blest chain of loving rite  
Until He comes!”*

27. Therefore, whoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. If such a man has treated “this bread” and “this cup” with contempt, He has treated “the body and blood of the Lord” with contempt! It shall be so reckoned to him. Many have been troubled by this verse. They have said, “We are unworthy.” You are, this is quite true, but the text does not say anything about your being unworthy. Paul uses an adverb, not an adjective! His words are, “Whoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily”— that is, in an unfit way—to gain something by it, as men used to take what they called, “the sacrament,” to get into certain offices, or as some come to the communion table for the sake of the charitable gifts that are for the poor of the Church. This is to eat and drink “unworthily.” To come carelessly, to come contemptuously, to say, “I do not care whether I am a Christian or not, but I shall come to the communion”—this is to eat and drink “unworthily.” Notice the LY— we are all unworthy of this sacred feast—and if unworthiness could shut us out, who would dare to be here?

28. But let a man examine himself. Let a man look himself up and down, as a lawyer cross-questions a witness, as a man examines money to see whether it has the true ring of gold about it or not—“Let a man examine himself.”

28. And so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. Let him come as a true Believer, as sincere, if not perfect, yet true! If not all he ought to be, yet in Christ! If not all he wants to be, yet still on the way to it, by being in Christ, who is “the way, the truth and the life.”

29. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. He does not see the meaning of the emblem of Christ’s death. He degrades the symbol by making it take the place of the thing signified. He sees the bread, but not the body—and he damns himself, condemns himself, by such eating. He is a loser rather than a gainer by eating and drinking unworthily.

30. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. Persons coming to the Lord’s Table in an improper spirit are very apt to come under God’s discipline. Some will be taken ill and some will die. This discipline is being carried on in every true Church of God. God’s Providence will work in this way if many treat the Table of the Lord as the Corinthians did—acting as if it were a common place for eating and drinking! Many of them were weak and sickly, and many died.

31. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. If we are God’s people, we shall be judged by Him here for our wrongdoing. We shall not be like the world that is left to the Day of Judgment, but we shall be judged now. God will visit with temporal judgments those of His children who sin against Him.

32. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. You know that a man will see a great deal that is wrong in children in the street and say nothing about it But if it is his own who is up to mischief, he will give him a sweet taste of the rod. So, if you belong to God, you cannot sin deeply without having a present judgment, a present discipline—but you ought to be thankful for it, painful though it may seem to be for the time, for—“when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.”

33. Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. How gently Paul talks to these Corinthians! They deserve to be scolded, but he is very tender with them. He says, “If you must come together in this way, at least have the good manners to wait for one another. And if you do come to the communion of the Lord, treat it with that respect and reverence which it deserves.

34. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that you come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come. May we, tonight, keep this feast in due order under the power of the Holy Spirit! And may we find a blessing in it to God’s praise! Amen.

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TOO LITTLE FOR THE LAMB  
NO. 2937

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 25, 1905.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 8, 1875.

**“They shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their father, a lamb for an house: and if the household is too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house**

**take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.” Exodus 12:3, 4.**

THE paschal lamb was not killed in order to be looked at only, but to be eaten. And our Lord Jesus Christ has not been slain merely that we may hear about Him and talk about Him, and think about Him, but that we may feed upon Him. Everything that has to do with Christ’s work is of real, practical, vital consequence to Believers. He is to be the food for our souls. Faith is to receive Him. Love is to embrace Him. Hope is to rejoice in Him!

The lamb of the Passover was not to be eaten in part, some of it to be left and some of it to be divided at the feast—the whole lamb was to be eaten. And, in like manner, the whole of Christ is to be spiritually received by us, whether He is made of God unto us wisdom, or righteous, or sanctification, or redemption. All that He is and all that He does should be received by us with an open and grateful heart. There must not be any picking and choosing among the good things of Christ but all must be accepted alike. We are all sinners and we all need a Savior—and we need the whole of that Savior.

So, too, as the whole of the paschal lamb was to be eaten, I think I may say that all the power to save which is in Christ is meant be exercised. He is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him—and that uttermost power of His was not intended to lie idle. He is able to save those who are at the very ends of the earth—and that power to save the outcasts and the offscourings was not intended to be left unused. It is our business to stir up the Divine strength and to pray the Lord to come and save even the vilest of the vile—and great multitudes of them!

Further, the whole of the lamb was meant to be eaten at once. None of it was to be kept till morning. As with the manna, there was to be no laying of it up in store for future use. They were to eat it then and there and it will be well if the members of Christ’s Church will always look to the present using of Christ and of all that is in Him. I think we may lawfully delight ourselves in the anticipation of those happier days of His Millennial Glory which are yet to dawn upon this sin-cursed earth, but, as a matter of fact, we had better concern ourselves principally with the needs of the present age—with the soul-hunger of those among whom we live—the dire necessities of those who are perishing for lack of the knowledge of Christ. Christ is meant for present use. Whatever He may do a thousand years hence, it is of more concern to us to see what He can do today. The principal business of the Christian is to proclaim Christ today—with this as part of the proclamation—“Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” Even now He is mighty to save, mighty by His blood to deliver His people now from the avenging angel and, by His flesh, to be the continual food of their souls. And we are to see to it that we do not so project ourselves into a future age as to be negligent of the present use of the ever-present Savior who is with us always, even to the end of the age!

The paschal lamb was meant to be eaten, to be all eaten and to be all eaten then and there—and Christ is meant to be used, meant to be altogether used and to be used now. May each Believer here be impressed with these thoughts!

I. Now, coming to our text, it appears to me that IT REMINDS US OF A PRIMARY PRIVILEGE. The third verse speaks of that privilege in so many words—“They shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house.”

The place for all true religion to begin is at home. Wherever charity ought or ought not to begin, certainly true religion must begin at home. It should be a cause of great joy to us if we have Jesus Christ as our own, according to the paschal ordinance. “They shall take to them every man a lamb.” Are you, dear Friend, searching your heart to know whether you have to do with Christ, personally, in your own individuality? It will be a fatal delusion if you fancy that you will get into Heaven as people sometimes get into this Tabernacle—by being carried along by the force of the numbers who are pressing to get in! You must come to Christ personally, by personal repentance and personal faith, and there must be a personal feeding upon Him if He is to be of any service to you. It is idle to talk about the neighbor who is next to you until, first of all, you have seen to it that you, yourself, are a partaker of the Lord Jesus Christ. I put the question now from the depths of my soul to my own heart, “Preacher, have you the blood sprinkled on the lintel and on the side posts of your house? Have you fed upon Christ?” And when I have answered that question for myself, I would beseech each one of you to answer it, too. I am not asking about your parentage, or about your church membership, or about the pious relations whom you have in your house, but about yourself! How is it with you, Brothers and Sisters? Even old professors have need to ask the question, for an old imposture may long be kept up—I fear it may be preserved throughout life—and perhaps nothing will pull the mask off some men’s eyes until the skeleton hand of death reveals the terrible truth to them! It is an unspeakable mercy that the Lamb of God is provided for our Passover and that for the very worst of us—for those of us who are most conscious that we deserve to perish—there is still the precious Gospel message, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” May it be a fact, known to us beyond all question by the witness of the Holy Spirit within us that Jesus Christ has been slain for us and fed upon by us!

Then, the next part of this primary privilege is that we should have Christ for our whole family. There was to be a paschal lamb for all the members of the Israelite family—“a lamb for an house.” They were all to share in the blessings which that lamb brought. Oh, privileged beyond compare is that man who has a partner in life who, with himself, rejoices in Christ and who sees all his children following in his steps, equally rejoicing in the Lord Jesus Christ! And happier still is he if all his servants are in the same blessed condition. How is it with you, Brothers and Sisters? Have you this blessing? I know that some of you have. Your house ought to be a little Heaven, for you have a church in your house! Keep the bells always ringing, “Holiness unto the Lord,” and let your hearts be so many harps from which there shall constantly pour forth floods of music to the praise of Him who has so highly favored you!

Perhaps your children are as yet only little ones and you are looking forward with the hope that the Lamb of God may yet be available for your whole household. In what way can you promote this? There are rules given you in Scripture. You cannot convert your children—to regenerate them is altogether beyond your power. It is a Divine work and must be done by the Holy Spirit. But you have that ancient exhortation, “Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” For the most part, the training of children does affect their manhood and womanhood. There are some who seem as if we could not train them—they are like wild vines that will not be trained and their later life reveals the force of the willfulness which resisted the training which parents would gladly have given them. Unhappy are we if we have such children and how sincerely we ought to sympathize with any who are in such a sad case. But how happy ought we to be if our children take kindly to the training which, by the Grace of God, we seek to give them, so that they are like vines fastened up upon the walls of our houses and do not to tear themselves away from the fastenings which are for their support and safety. May they bring forth fruit to God’s Glory and to our own comfort in years to come!

We must, however, add something to our training to make it effectual. There must be constant prayer where training appears to fail, for we can pray even for those of our children who are past the age in which we can exercise the influence of training upon them. I do not think that we shall long plead for our sons and daughters without seeing a prayer-hearing God stretching out His hand to save them. Or if we do, we must look upon the delay as a further trial of our faith and we must intensify our prayer until it becomes an agony—and in that agony we lay hold upon the Covenant Angel and cry, “I will not let You go unless You bless me and my seed also.” So choice a gift as this may be reserved for something more earnest than the prayer to which we have yet attained. And when the Lord shall have flung us upon our faces—shall have brought us to despair—shall have made us see, in the rebellious character of our children, a picture of our own rebelliousness—and made us see, in our own agony, a reflection of the agony of the heart of Jesus over our wanderings, then, perhaps He will speedily listen to us, and our children shall, with us, be sheltered beneath the blood of the Lamb!

With both the training and the prayer we should take care that we mingle much gracious teaching. Our children should not be left ignorant concerning the things that make for their peace. I have been surprised to find how many young people appear to know little or nothing about Holy Scripture—yet most, if not all of them, had been to a Sunday school. It is singular how quickly children will forget what they learn! And that which is merely learned by rote and has not been taught affectionately is very readily brushed off from the memory. I think that a boy very seldom forgets the teaching which has been moistened with a mother’s tears. There is, somehow, a wonderful power about a mother’s voice when she talks to her children about Jesus and His love which stamps itself upon the heart—and the heart it a far better place for the custody of the Truth of God than ever the brain can become! We may forget what we only learn with the head, but we shall not forget what we learn with the heart. Therefore, Christian parents, teach your children thus—let them, from their youth, know the Holy Scriptures which are able to make them wise unto salvation—let them be early acquainted with the precious things of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

But, above all things, my Brothers and Sisters, if we would have our household feeding upon Christ we must set them a godly example. I have known families—I think I know some now—where the training is certainly severe enough, perhaps too much so, and where the teaching is as clear as it is cold—but where the example set before the children is not good. Now, if you pray in one way with your lips and in another way with your lives, your lives will win the day and your children will rather be like what you are than what you ask them to be. It is a great pity when men who seem good at the Prayer Meeting are really bad at home— when those who show much kindness to their Christian friends seem to have given away all their honey to comparative strangers outside the walls of their own house—and have no sweetness left for their own children! Let us, dear Friends, endeavor always to set such an example as it will be safe for our sons and daughters to follow. And then I think there will very rarely be found any instance where training, teaching, prayer and a good example have gone together, where the blessing of God has failed to come! God grant to you, Brothers and Sisters, at any rate, the Grace to attend carefully to all these matters. And then if, perhaps, you should prove to be the father of an Ishmael, or the mother of an Ishmael, you will not have to say, “I kept the vineyards of others, but my own vineyard have I not kept.” And then you will feel that you did use such means as were within your reach, even though the blessing of God did not come to your children. I pray, Beloved, that it may the privilege of every one of you to have the Lamb of God for your whole household and that each member of your family, from the youngest to the oldest, may joyfully partake of all the benefits of the common Sacrifice which is provided for all the chosen.

That will suffice for our first point which is that the text reminds us of a primary privilege.  
II. Now, secondly, THE TEXT IS SILENT ABOUT A CERTAIN CONTINGENCY WHICH WOULD SEEM TO HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE.  
You observe that it speaks about what was to be done when the household was not large enough to eat the lamb, but it says nothing about what was to occur if the lamb was not sufficiently large to feed the household. We can often learn much from the silence of Scripture. We know that it is so in the case of Melchizedek. Since his parentage is not mentioned, the silence is significant. And so here, the silence concerning such a contingency as the insufficiency of the paschal lamb for the household is, I think, meant to teach us an important lesson. It is probable that the lamb was, literally speaking, never too little for the household for this reason—the Jews say that the Passover was not intended to be eaten with a view to feasting, but that frequently only a small portion was eaten. There were, doubtless, large families, but there was enough for each one to have a small portion of the lamb—just as we do not come to the Lord’s Supper merely to eat and drink, but we come there for a religious observance—and a single portion of bread and a sip of wine suffice us. There may have been as many as 20 persons in one house who would partake of the lamb and, in our Lord’s case, we know that at the Last Supper, He sat down to the Passover with the twelve, making 13 with Himself. But the contingency is not supposed that there should be an insufficient provision in the lamb for the proper observance of the feast.  
And now, using the type spiritually, let us rest assured that it never can happen that there should not be enough of Jesus Christ to feed all our families. “Well,” says one father, “we are a very numerous household. Our children need a very large table and when they all sit down together they make a tribe equal to that of good old Jacob.” Yes, and no doubt some of those Jewish families were as large as that, yet they all fed upon the paschal lamb. And there is enough in Christ for all your family—and there would be enough even if it consisted of 25 persons—of even twentyfive thousand! If any of them perished, it would not be because Christ was not sufficient for them, but because they had not received Him, had not believed on Him. Do not let the number in your household restrain your praying or working for them—and rest not until, by God’s good Grace, the whole of them shall know and trust in Jesus!  
“But,” says another, “our family is more peculiar than that, for we are a family of sinners.” It happens, sometimes, that a man who in former times, was a very great offender, is converted, but he is like a speckled bird to all the rest of his family. His brother is a drunk, his sister is godless, his father and mother despise religion and as he looks round upon them, he can only wonder how it was that Sovereign Grace should ever have selected one out of such a family as his. He does not remember any of his relations who ever made a profession of religion. They have been “the devil’s own” as far back as he can trace. Well, beloved Friends, if it is so with any of your families, do not hesitate for a single moment in your prayers or in your efforts for them under such a wicked, dishonoring notion as, perhaps, your family is too bad for Christ to save, their sins too many for His blood to wash away and their necessities too great for Him to relieve! That cannot be! You have an All-Sufficient Savior to talk of, to rely upon and to bring before them! Go to Him in prayer for all your family, beseeching that all the members of your ungodly family may yet participate in the blessings procured by the Lamb of God! I do not know anything in the Bible that ought to check our prayers for our whole households. The Doctrine of Election may suggest to some ignorant persons the idea that they cannot pray for all, but let us always remember that the Doctrine of Election which is a most blessed Truth of God—is never used in Scripture as a damper to our prayers!  
The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, “I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men,” meaning all ranks and conditions of men and all sorts of men! We are not told concerning anybody that we may not pray for them—with the one exception that if we knew a man to have committed the unpardonable sin—which we do not and cannot know—it is written, “I do not say that he shall pray for it.” But, in any other case we may pray hopefully and I know of nothing in the Scriptures that should hinder earnest effort for the salvation of our whole households. Never ought we to look any child of ours in the face and feel, “Well, I never will speak to that child about Christ, it would be useless—he cannot be saved.” It would be antagonistic to the whole current of Sacred Scripture for us to imbibe any such notion as that, so may we never imbibe it! Neither do I know of anything in Scripture that should lead us to give up hope concerning any who belong to a household in which some have already been saved. If Christ has saved me, I gather from that fact, this inference, that He can save anybody! I have never doubted the possibility of the salvation of anybody since Jesus Christ saved me, for I feel that He went about as far as He could go then, and all other sinners must come within the reach of His merciful power!  
So plead on, work on, train on, teach on and do not relax your efforts, or allow your hopes to be dampened till the whole household shall have been brought to feed upon Jesus Christ, for, rest assured that at the King’s banquet of mercy there was never a failure of food yet! Behold how the tables groan with the weight of the oxen and the fatlings for the great Gospel Supper—and the wine and milk are poured out with unstinted hand! There shall be enough to satisfy the hunger and thirst of all who shall ever come to that Table as long as time shall last! And if, as indeed it shall yet be, thousands and tens of thousands and millions should come flocking to the house of bread, there will always be found enough and to spare for all who come!  
III. But now, thirdly, I come to the very heart of the text where it mentions, in so many words, A PROBABILITY FOR WHICH IT PROVIDES—“If the household is too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls.”  
Brethren, that which was a possibility in Egypt is not only common but universal with us. My household and my father’s household—we can rejoice to know that they feed upon the Lamb of God, but our households alone are much too little for the Lamb. If I know that I and my sons are saved, I cannot feel that we alone would be sufficient to reward our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the travail of His soul. You, my Friend, said that you had a large family, but you could not call your sons and daughters together and say, “My dear children, now that I see you saved, I feel that Christ is quite sufficiently rewarded for all that He has done.” Oh, no! It is a very great proof of His Grace and mercy that He has saved your children, yet you look upon it almost as a little thing in comparison with what His Infinite Sacrifice must have bought and His work and death must deserve as their crown!  
Our household is also too little to sing the praises of Jesus, the Lamb of God. Suppose that in us and in our children all the attributes of Jesus Christ should be revealed in a very remarkable degree. That will be something for which to praise Him throughout eternity, but, dear Friends, merely to have those attributes revealed in father, mother and five or six children or grandchildren will not suffice—we want Christ to be revealed in thousands, and tens of thousands, and unnumbered millions of saved souls! Our household is, indeed, too little to sing the praises of this blessed Lamb and we do well often to cry—  
*“Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing  
My great Redeemer’s praise!”*  
We long to hear ten thousand times ten thousand tongues singing— *“Worthy the Lamb.”*  
Our household is also too little to do all the work that is to be done for Jesus in proclaiming Him as the Lamb of God. It would be a great mercy if God gave us the privilege of having many sons who all preached the Gospel and many daughters who were all eminent in the Church as teachers, deaconesses, missionaries and the like. It would be a great privilege to have a whole family all diligently employed in the service of the Savior. But if a man had 20 sons and they were all preachers, would he say, “There are now quite enough to do Christ’s work”? Oh, dear no! Our household is too little for the Lamb in all the senses that I have mentioned—we need more to feed upon Jesus, more to praise Jesus and more to proclaim Jesus!  
There are some Brothers and Sisters who meet in a little building in an out-of-the-way street who seem to feel that their household is quite big enough. The new Jerusalem, according to them, was intended to comprise some little miserable hamlet, bounded on the North and East by a ditch of strict communion and on the South and West by a rampart of Hyper-Calvinistic Doctrine. But I like to think of Jesus Christ’s Kingdom as very widely extended, His Throne as high and lifted up and the loyal subjects over whom He reigns as an enormous multitude whom no man can number, who shall be given to Him as the reward of the travail of His soul! This Tabernacle Church, numbering five thousand souls, is much too little for the Lamb! If we could have the Agricultural Hall crowded and all there should say that they were converted—and if they all were really converted—it would still be too little for the Lamb! And if we had the Agricultural Hall multiplied 20 times over and all of them full of saved souls, it would still be too little for the Lamb! And if all in England, Scotland, America and France—and in every country where Christ is preached, were converted—it would still be too little for the Lamb! And if we were to have all the inhabitants of Europe and Asia brought to Jesus, I would still say that it was too little for the Lamb—and if we could add all in Africa and Australasia, as long as there was an island of the sea in which the people were not converted to Christ, our hearts would still cry, “The household is too little for the Lamb!”— *“Ah, reign wherever man is found,  
Our Spouse, Beloved and Divine!  
Then are we rich, and we abound,  
When every human heart is Thine!”*  
But not till then—till over the whole earth the knowledge of the Lord shall be spread as the waters cover the sea! Until then, we shall still feel that the household is too little for the Lamb.  
What was the Israelite to do to meet the contingency of the household being too little for the lamb? The provision was, “Let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls.” And the Christian whose household is certainly too little for the Lamb of God is to call in his neighbor to share the blessing with him! Brother, if you and all your household are saved, call your neighbor to the great Gospel feast! I do not mean merely the person who lives next door to you, for, in London it often happens that there is nobody further off than the person who lives next door to us. But your neighbor may be the person sitting next to you in the pew, or the man who

works at the next bench to yours in the shop, or someone with whom you meet in trade or in the order of God’s Providence. Any one of those people may be the neighbor to join with you in feeding upon the lamb! God has put him in your way for some reason or other and, certainly, not that you may be an injury to him! It must be, at least, that you may endeavor to be of service to him. We are all more or less dependent upon one another. One of the obligations of near neighborhood should be that we should seek our neighbor’s good, even as the Commandment says, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” And although that relates to all mankind, it must refer in a very eminent and emphatic sense to the man who is literally our neighbor.  
Look, then, after the man who is near to you. And if you do this, you will not have so far to go as if you looked after anybody else. God is a God of economy, so He did not say to the Israelite, “You are to bring into your house, to make up your company at the Passover, the man who lives at the furthermost end of Goshen.” He saved His people as much trouble as possible by saying that the man “and his neighbor next unto his house” were to unite in the celebration. You who live in the South of London are not commanded to go and tramp six or seven miles in order to find someone in the North of London to whom you may be useful. You are first to look after those who live in the street in which you live, or with whom you come into contact in your daily life. There is a very good regulation concerning the clearance of snow—that each householder shall clear the pavement in front of his own house—if that rule could always be carried out, London would be cleaner than it is now after a fall of snow! Let us all try to act like that with regard to the moral and spiritual snow that lies on the pavement opposite to us. All who live in London will soon be evangelized if each Christian seeks to win for Christ, “his neighbor next unto his house.” And then if that neighbor seeks to win his next door neighbor, and that one his neighbor and so on. It will not only be a saving of effort, but it will be an orderly regulation by which it will be guaranteed that the Truth of God shall be brought to the notice of all who need it.  
Besides, your neighbor is the person who is most likely to be influenced by you. A total stranger would need more time to introduce himself, but your neighbor already knows something of you. And if he sees that you are a consistent Christian, that will materially assist you in delivering your message to him. If you are living as you ought to live, your neighbor knows something about the effect which the Gospel has had upon your life. For you to speak to him, therefore, will be most fitting, for you are the man who can give the living example as well as the spoken Word!  
Above all, he is the person whom you are especially bid to seek. We are to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature—but there is a special obligation upon us to preach that Gospel to the one who is nearest to us. Dear Brothers and Sisters, do you always attend to this matter? Do you talk of Jesus Christ to those who live near you, or with whom you are brought into contact? Some Sundays ago, at the East London Tabernacle, Mr. Archibald Brown spoke to his people about this duty and then he stopped and said, “Now we will put into practice what I have been urging upon you—will every Christian in the Tabernacle speak to the person who is next to him?” And everybody in the building was spoken to, then and there, about Christ! It was a good plan and it resulted in the conversion of a great number of persons, while there were many others who were brought under conviction of sin and who will, it is hoped, be led to the Savior through that striking personal appeal.  
I will not stop my sermon and ask you to do that, but I will ask you to do it every time you come together into this place and as often as you have a proper opportunity of doing it in your daily calling. Be wise and prudent as to the time when you make your appeal. Religion is not to be rammed down people’s throats, but watch for a suitable opportunity of speaking for Christ and that opportunity will come to you sooner or later. You may do harm if you do not take care to speak at the right time. The wise man tells us that “to everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the Heaven,” so watch for the occasion of bearing testimony to Christ and then, feeling that your household is too little for the Lamb of God, try to introduce Him to others.  
I fancy I hear somebody say, “Ah, but they only brought in Israelites to feed on the paschal lamb. They did not call in the Egyptians.” Quite so, nor will you, so you need not be frightened about that matter. None but God’s elect ones will spiritually feed upon Christ. Some people seem to be afraid lest we should be the means of saving some of the non-elect—but that is a fear which never troubles either my head or my heart, for I know that with all the effort and preaching in the world, we shall never bring more to Christ than Christ has had given to Him by His Father! You will never fall into that trouble. Our Savior has bid us preach the Gospel to every creature. He has not said, “Preach it only to the elect.” And though that might seem to be the most logical thing for us to do, yet, since He has not been pleased to stamp the elect on their foreheads, or to put any distinctive mark upon them, it would be an impossible task for us to perform! Therefore when we preach the Gospel to every creature, the Gospel makes its own division and Christ’s sheep hear His voice and follow Him. It is unnecessary to stop the ears of other sheep, or to try to prevent your voice from travelling where other sheep are found—only the true sheep of Christ will recognize His voice in the Gospel message, or be obedient to it. Therefore, let not your zeal be repressed by any doctrinal views, however sound, for, depend upon it, sound Doctrine is never inconsistent with obedience to the command to preach the Gospel to every creature. Sound precept and sound Doctrine must agree!  
IV. The last thing upon which I have to speak is not in my text, yet THE WHOLE SUBJECT SUGGESTS THOUGHTS UPON NEIGHBORLY FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL.  
Here is a man whose household is too little for the lamb and he has called in his next door neighbor to share the feast with him. “Come in, Friend,” he says, “I have a wife and two children, and our household is too little for the lamb. You have a wife and one child—come in and we will keep the Passover together.”  
I know what the result of that invitation would be. First, there would be sweet fellowship. They would feed upon the same lamb and, in doing so, they would come to know each other as they had never done before. They would talk together most gratefully concerning the Divine plan of sacrifice by which they were being saved while Egypt was being destroyed. They would talk to each other about that remarkable day when there was darkness over all the land of Egypt except in the houses of the Israelites, for they had light in their dwellings. They would talk about those flies and frogs that came up in swarms over the land and how the mighty arm of Jehovah had been outstretched on their behalf. I think that the members of both families would be all the happier after meeting under one roof and feeding together upon the paschal lamb. It would be a pleasant time for all of them and I can assure you that if you are the means of bringing any souls to Jesus Christ, you will find that those whom you bring to Him, by the power of the Holy Spirit, are the very best companions you have ever had! You will talk together very sweetly of all that the Lord has done for you and you will thus warm each other’s hearts. Like two firebrands that might only have smoldered alone, you will burn and blaze when you are put together!  
Then, after the feast was over, there would be pleasant relations established between those two families. Surely after they had been together that night, sheltering under the same sprinkled blood, feasting on the same paschal lamb, partaking of the same bitter herbs and each one standing with his loins girt and with his staff in his hand, the members of those families would never be at enmity against one another. They must always have felt that they were very near akin to one another and it is a still more blessed kinship that is established and cemented at the Cross of Christ! Where we love each other for Christ’s sake and love Christ as we see Him revealed in one another, such love as that will outlast our earthly life and will reach on into eternity—and be sweet even in Heaven!  
I should say, dear Friends, that both those families would have very pleasant memories of that Passover and out of those memories would grow future communion. The master of one household, when he met the other, years afterwards in the wilderness, would say to him, “Do you remember, Jacob, coming to my house on the Passover night” “Yes, Ephraim,” the other would reply, “I remember it well. Your family was too little for the lamb, so we joined together for the feast.” One would ask, “Will you ever forget that night?” “No,” the other would say, “it was very solemn, but it was very sweet and I think I liked it all the better because it was in your house.” And the first one would say, “And I am sure that I enjoyed it all the more because I had you to come in and share it with me.”  
So those memories, you see, would beget new communion and they would be ready to help each other and to cheer each other in the future. They would often make interchanges of experience—and interchange of experience is like profitable bracing—it enriches all concerned. They that fear the Lord, when they speak often, one to another concerning Him, are sure to be mutually helpful to one another! And I think that this bringing in of others to increase the family for the observance of the Passover would be certain to lay the foundation of much mutual communion and much mutual benefit in the future. And, surely, Brothers and Sisters, in proportion as, by the Grace of God, we labor successfully to bring others to Christ and so Christ’s family is increased, we shall be anticipating the joy of Heaven! It will never be said in Heaven that the household is too little for the Lamb. When Christ comes in all His Glory and all His redeemed ones come with Him—when He gathers all who have been redeemed with His precious blood about Him at the marriage supper of the Lamb—and He Himself drinks the new wine in the Kingdom of His Father, it will not be said, then, that the household is too little for the Lamb, for the whole spiritual household of Israel shall then be gathered together! The complete company redeemed by blood shall muster at that one “general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in Heaven,” and Christ shall then “see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.” Until that glorious gathering shall take place, Brothers and Sisters, keep on inviting others to the Lamb of God!  
And as for you who have never yet trusted in the blood of Jesus, or tasted of His Grace, may the Lord, in His Infinite Mercy, bring you to Him this very hour! And then this shall be the beginning of months for you— you will reckon your true life as dating from this hour! The Lord grant it, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #55 New Park Street Pulpit 1

THE EXODUS  
NO. 55

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 9, 1855 BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

**“And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.”  
Exodus 12:41.**

IT is our firm conviction and increasing belief that the historical books of Scripture were intended to teach us by types and figures, spiritual things. We believe that every portion of Scripture history is not only a faithful transcript of what did actually happen, but also a shadow of what happens spiritually in the dealings of God with His people, or in the dispensations of His Grace towards the world at large. We do not look upon the historical books of Scripture as being mere rolls of history, such as profane authors might have written. We regard them as being most true and Infallible records of the past and also most bright and glorious foreshadowing of the future, as well as most wondrous metaphors and marvelous illustrations of things which are verily received among us and most truly felt in the Christian heart. We may be wrong, but we believe we are not. At any rate, the very error has given us instruction and our mistake has afforded us comfort. We look upon the Book of Exodus as being a book of types of the deliverances which God will give to His elect people—not only as a history of what He has done in bringing them out of Egypt by smiting the first-born, leading them through the Red Sea and guiding them through the wilderness, but also as a picture of His faithful dealings with all His people, whom by the blood of Christ He separates from the Egyptians and by His strong and mighty hand takes out of the house of their bondage and out of the land of their slavery!

Last Sabbath evening we had the type of the Passover—the Paschal  
Lamb. [See Sermon #54, Volume 2—CHRIST OUR PASSOVER—Read/download the entire sermon,

free of charge, at www.spurgeongems.org.] And we showed you, then, how the sprinkled blood and the eaten lamb were types of the blood applied for our justification and of the flesh received by inward communion with Jesus, the soul living and feeding upon Him. We now take the Exodus, or the going out of Egypt of the children of Israel as being a type and picture of the going out of all the vessels of mercy from the house of their bondage—and as the deliverance of all the lawful captives from the chains of their cruel taskmasters—by Sovereign and Omnipotent Grace, through the Passover of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The land of Egypt is a picture of the house of bondage into which all God’s Covenant people will, sooner or later, be brought, on account of their sin. All those whom God means to give an inheritance in Canaan, He will first take down into Egypt. Even Jesus Christ, Himself, went into Egypt before He appeared publicly as a Teacher before the world, that in His instance, as well as in that of every Christian, the prophecy might be fulfilled—“Out of Egypt have I called My Son.” Everyone who enjoys the liberty wherewith Christ does make us free, must first feel the galling bondage of sin! Our wrists must be made to smart by the fetters of our iniquity and our backs must be made to bleed by the lash of the Law— the taskmaster which drives us to Jesus Christ! There is no true liberty which is not preceded by true bondage. There is no true deliverance from sin unless we have, first of all, groaned and cried unto God, as did the people of Israel when in bondage in Egypt. We must all serve in the brick kiln. We must all be wearied with toiling among the pots, or otherwise we could never realize that glorious verse—“Though you have lain among the pots, yet shall you be as the wings of a dove covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold.” We must have bondage before liberty! Before resurrection there must come death! Before life there must come corruption! Before we are brought out of the horrible pit and the miry clay, we must be made to exclaim, “I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing.” And before, like Jonah, we can be fetched out of the whale’s belly and delivered from our sin, we must have been taken down to the bottoms of the mountains, with the weeds wrapped about our heads, shuddering under a deep sense of our own nothingness and fearing that the earth, with her bars, might be about us forever! Taking this as a key, you will see that the deliverance out of Egypt is a beautiful picture of the deliverance of all God’s people from the bondage of the Law and the slavery of their sins.

I. First, consider THE MODE OF THEIR GOING OUT. When the children of Israel went out of Egypt it is a remarkable thing that they were forced out by the Egyptians. Those Egyptians who had enriched themselves with their slavery, said, “Get you hence, for we are all dead men.” They begged and entreated them to go. Yes, they hurried them forth, gave them jewels that they might depart and made them quit the land. And it is a striking thing that the very sins which oppress the child of God in Egypt are the very things that drive him to Jesus! Our sins make slaves of us while we are in Egypt and when God, the Holy Spirit, stirs them up against us, how they beat us with cruel lashes till our soul is worn with extreme bondage! And those very sins, by God’s Grace, are made the means of driving us to the Savior! The dove flees not to its cote unless the eagle pursues it—so sins, like eagles, pursue the timid soul—making it fly into the clefts of the Rock, Christ Jesus, to hide itself. Once, Beloved, our sins kept us from Christ. But now every sin drives us to Him for pardon! I had not known Christ if I had not known sin. I had not known a Deliverer if I had not smarted under the Egyptians. The Holy Spirit drives us to Christ just as the Egyptians drove the people out of Egypt!

Again—the children of Israel went out of Egypt covered with jewels and arrayed in their best garments. The Jews have always, on their feast days, been desirous of wearing jewels and all kinds of goodly apparel. And when they were too poor to possess them, they would borrow jewels for the purpose. So it was at this remarkable Passover. They had been so oppressed that they had kept no festival for many a year. Now they all arrayed themselves in their best garments and at the command of God did borrow from the Egyptians jewels of silver, gold and raiment—“and the Lord gave them favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required—and they spoiled the Egyptians.” Let none say that this was robbery. It would have been, had it not been commanded of God, but as a king can set aside his own laws, so God is above His Laws and whatever He orders is right. Abraham would have been guilty of murder in taking up his knife to slay his son had not God commanded him to do so. But the fact of God having commanded the action made it justifiable and right. But, moreover, the word, “borrowed,” here is by the best translators said to mean nothing more than that the children of Israel asked them for their jewels and had no intention whatever of returning them and entered into no agreement to do so. And it was most just that they should do this, because they had toiled for the Egyptians for years, without having had any remuneration. Sometimes necessity has no law—how much more shall that God who is above all necessities be the master of His own Laws? The great Potentate, the only wise God, the King of kings has a right to make what laws He pleases—and let not vain man dare to question his Maker, when his Maker gives him a command! But the fact is very significant. The children of Israel did not go out of Egypt poorly clad. They went out with their best clothing on and, moreover, they had borrowed jewels of gold and jewels of silver and raiment—they went gladly out of the land!

Ah, Beloved, that is just how a child of God comes out of Egypt! He does not come out of his bondage with his old garments of selfrighteousness on—no, as long as he wears those, he will always be in Egypt! But he marches out with the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ upon him and adorned with the goodly Graces of the Holy Spirit. Oh, Beloved, if you could see a child of Israel coming out of the bondage of sin, you would say, “Who is this that comes up from the wilderness? Is this the poor slave who was making bricks without straw? Is this the wretch who had nothing but rags and tatters on him? “Is this the poor creature whose whole person was soiled with the mud of Egypt’s river and who labored in Goshen’s land without wage or pay?” Yes, it is he! And now he is arrayed like a king and appareled as a prince! Lo, each of these men of labor comes like a bridegroom decked for his wedding and their wives seem like royal brides clad in their bridal robes! Every child of God, when he comes out of Egypt, is arrayed in goodly apparel—

*“Strangely, my soul, are you arrayed  
By the great sacred Three.  
In sweetest harmony of praise.  
Let all your powers agree.”*

Note, moreover, that these people obtained their jewels from the Egyptians. God’s people never lose anything by going to the house of bondage. They win their choicest jewels from the Egyptians. “Strangely true it is, sins do me good,” said an old writer, “because they drive me to the Savior. And so I get good by them.” Ask the humble Christian where he got his humility and ten to one he will say that he got it in the furnace of deep sorrow on account of sin! See another who is tender in conscience— where did he get that jewel from? I’m sure it came from Egypt! We get more by being in bondage, under conviction of sin, than we often do by liberty. That bondage state, under which you are now laboring, you poor way-worn child of sorrow, shall be good for you! For when you come out of Egypt, you will steal jewels from the Egyptians. You will have won pearls from your very convictions. “Oh,” some say, “I have been for months and years toiling under a sense of sin and cannot get deliverance.” Well, I hope you will get it soon. But if you do not, you will have gained all the more jewels by stopping there—and when you come out, you will very likely make the best of Christians! What more noble preacher to sinners than John Bunyan? And who suffered more than he did? For years he was doubting and hesitating, sometimes thinking that Christ would save him, at other times thinking that he was never one of the elect and continually bemoaning himself. But he got jewels while he was in bondage that he would never have obtained anywhere else! Who could have made a large collection of jewels like Pilgrim’s Progress if he had not lived in Egypt? It was because he tarried so long in Egypt that he gathered so many jewels. And oh, Beloved, let us be content to stop a little while in distress, for the jewels that we shall win there will adorn us all our lives long and we shall one night come out of Egypt, not with weeping, but with songs and crowns of rejoicing! We shall have “the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” The sackcloth shall be removed from our loins and the ashes from our head—and we shall march forth decked with jewels, glittering with gold and silver!

But there is one more thought concerning the way of their coming out and that is, they came out in haste. I think a child of God, whenever he has the opportunity of coming out of bondage, will quickly avail himself of it. When a man comes to me and says, “I am under deep conviction of sin,” and so on, and seems to be very well content talking about tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow saying, “I can repent when I please and I can believe when I please,” and always procrastinating! Ah, I think to myself, that is not the Lord’s deliverance, for when His people go forth out of Egypt, they are always in a hurry to get out! I never met with a poor sinner under a sense of sin, who was not in haste to get his burden off his back! No man has a broken heart unless he wants to have it bound up, directly. “Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart,” says the Holy Spirit. He never says tomorrow—TODAY is His continual cry and every true-born Israelite will pant to get out of Egypt whenever he has the opportunity! He will not stop to knead his dough and make his bread to carry with him. He will carry the unleavened bread on his shoulders. He will be in a great hurry to get away. He who hates the noisomeness of the dungeon, longs to hear the wards of the lock creak, that he may find liberty! He who has been long in the pit hastens to escape! He who has suffered the task master’s whip, flees like a dove unto his window, that he may find peace and deliverance in Christ Jesus!

II. But having noticed three points of similarity in the emigration of the Israelites and the deliverance of God’s people, we would lead your attention, secondly, to a remark concerning THE MAGNITUDE OF THIS DELIVERANCE. Did it ever strike you what a wonderful exodus of the people of Israel this was? Do you know how many people went out? According to the very lowest calculations, there must have been two and a half million, all assembled together in one place and all coming out of the country at one time! And then, besides these, there went out with them an exceeding great company—a mixed multitude. The number must have been so large that it is impossible to imagine it. Suppose the people of London should all go out at once to march through a wilderness? It would be a marvelous thing in history, such as we can hardly conceive! But here were, to say the least, two million people, all at one time coming out from the midst of Egypt and going forth from the country. “They journeyed,” it is said, “from Rameses to Succoth.” Rameses was where they were employed in building a city for the king. They stayed in Succoth, or Booths, because such an immense multitude could not find houses—they therefore made booths. And hence the children of Israel ever afterwards kept “the feast of tabernacles,” to commemorate their building of the booths at Succoth, when they first came out of Egypt. What a mind Moses must have had, to direct so great an army! Rather, what a Spirit must that have been who rested on him, so that he could lead them all to one place and then guide them all through the wilderness. If you bear in mind this mighty number, you will be astonished to think what a quantity of manna it must have required to feed them—and what a stream of water that must have been which followed them!

Talk of the armies of Xerxes, or the host of the Persians! Speak of the mighty armies that kings and potentates have assembled! Here was an army that outdid them all! But oh, Beloved, how much grandeur is there in the thought of the multitudes Christ redeems with His blood! Christ did not die to save a few—“He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be abundantly satisfied.” “By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many.” “A multitude which no man can number” shall stand before the Throne of God and of the Lamb! Oh, wondrous emigration—the emigration of myriads of souls! Let us compare them neither with the stars of Heaven, nor the dust of the earth, nor the sand of the sea. But let us remember that God has promised to Abraham—“As the sand upon the seashore, even so shall your seed be.” “Who can count the dust of Jacob and the number of the fourth part of Israel?” They lick up the earth like water and the land is utterly devoured before them. Oh, mighty God! How great is that deliverance which brings out a host of Your elect more countless than the stars and as innumerable as the sands upon a thousand shores! All hail to Your power that does all this!

You will have another idea of the greatness of this work when you think of the different stations which the children of Israel must have occupied. I suppose they were not all equally destitute. They were not all toiling in the same brick kilns, but some of them would be in one place, some in another. Some working in the king’s court, some for the meaner Egyptians—dispersed everywhere. But wherever they might be, they all came forward. If Pharaoh had slaves in his halls, they marched out the same day from his golden-gated palace, at Memphis or at Thebes. They all came forth that same day from their different situations and, guided by God, they all came to one spot, where they built their booths and called it Succoth. As when the autumn declines and the winter approaches, we have seen the chattering swallows gather upon the housetop, prepared for distant flights beyond the purple sea, where they might find another summer in another land—so did these Israelites from all their countries thus assemble! And they stood together, about to take their flight across a trackless wilderness to that land of which God had told them saying, “Behold, I will bring you into a land that flows with milk and honey.” Oh, great and glorious works of God! “Great are Your works, O Lord, and marvelous are Your doings. And that my soul knows right well.”

I would have you, Beloved, particularly remember one thing. And that is, that great as this emigration was and enormous as were the multitudes that left Egypt, it was only one Passover that set them all free. They did not need two celebrations of the supper. They did not need two angels to fly through Egypt. It was not necessary to have two deliverances— but all in one night, all by the Paschal Lamb, all by the Passover supper—they were saved! Look at yonder host above! See you the bloodwashed throng of souls, chosen of God and precious? Can you tell their number? Can you count the small dust of the beatified ones before the Throne? Ah, no. But here is a thought for you—they did not need two Christs to save them—they did not require two Holy Spirits to deliver them. Nor did it need two Sacrifices to bring them there—

*“Ask them from where their victory came— They with united breath  
Ascribe their victory to the Lamb,  
Their triumph in His death!”*

One agonizing Sacrifice, one death on Calvary, one bloody sweat on Gethsemane, one shriek of, “It is finished,” consummated all the work of Redemption! Oh, The precious blood of Christ! I love it when I think it saves one sinner. But oh, to think of the multitude of sinners that it saves! Beloved, we do not think enough of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have not half such an estimation of His precious Person as we ought to have. We do not value His blood at the right price. Why, poor Sinner, you are saying this morning, “This blood cannot save me.” What? Not save you? When it is engaged to save thousands upon thousands and myriads of myriads? Shall the Shepherd who gathers the whole flock together and leads them unto the pastures lose a single lamb? You say, perhaps, “I am so little.” For that very reason, then, you do not need so much of His power to take care of you. “But,” says one, “I am so great a sinner.” Yes, then, so much the better, for He “came to save sinners, of whom I am chief,” said Paul. And He came to save you. Ah, Do not fear, you sons of God! He who brought the Israelites all out in one night can bring you all out, though you are in the strongest bondage. Perhaps there is one of you who not only has to make bricks without straw, but has to make twice as many bricks as anyone else. And your taskmaster has a whip which goes right round you and cuts the flesh off you every time. You have worse bondage than anyone—your slavery is more intense, your oven hotter, your pots harder to make. Very well, I am glad of it—how sweet liberty will be to you! And I will tell you, you shall not be left in Egypt, for if you were, what would old Pharaoh say? “He said he would bring them all out, but he has not. There is one left!” And he would parade that poor Israelite through the streets—he would take him through Memphis and Thebes and say, “Here is one that God would not deliver! Here is one I had so tight in my grasp that He could not get him out!” Ah, master devil! You shall not say that of one of the Lord’s people. They shall all be there, the great and the small! This unworthy hand shall take the hand of the blessed St. Paul. They shall all be in Heaven, shall all be redeemed, shall all be saved. But all, mark you, through one Sacrifice, one Covenant, one blood, one Passover!

III. This brings us to speak more fully of THE COMPLETENESS OF THEIR DELIVERANCE. Our text says—“It came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.” Our dear Arminian friends think that some of the Lord’s people will not come out of Egypt, but will be lost at last. Ah, well, as good Hart says—

*“If one poor saint may fall away,*

*It follows so may all,”*  
and none of us are safe and secure! Therefore, we do not give way to that. But all the hosts came out of Egypt, every one of them. Not a soul was left behind. There is a poor man who was lame. Ah, you see him throw away his crutches! There is a poor woman, sick. Yes, but she suddenly rises from her bed! There is another palsied, who can by no means lift himself up, but his frame, in a moment, becomes firm, “for there was not one feeble person in all their tribes”—Psalm 105:37. There is a poor little babe who knows nothing about it. But still it leaves Egypt, carried by its mother. The old gray-headed sire tottered not on his staff. Though 80 years of age, yet he was a son of Israel, and out he came! There was a youth who had just begun to have his shoulders galled, but though he was young, the time was come for him and out he came! They all came out, every one of them—there was not one left behind. I do not suppose they had any hospitals there. But if they had, I am sure they did not leave any of them in the hospital, but all were healed in an instant! There was one Israelite who had rebelled against the government of Moses and said, “Who made you a judge and a divider over us?” But they did not leave him behind! Even he came out. All of them came out. Nor do we find that there was some poor shriveled creature whose arms and legs were almost useless and who was half an idiot, whose brain was nearly gone, left behind. So, Beloved, if you are “the meanest lamb in Jesus’ fold,” you are, “now one in Jesus.” Though you have very little learning and very little common sense, you will come out of Egypt! If the Lord has put you there in bondage and you have been made to groan there, He will make you sing, by-and-by, when you are redeemed from it. There is no fear of your being left behind, for if you were, Pharaoh would say, “He delivered the strong ones but He was not able to fetch out the weak,” and then there would be laughter in Hell against the might and Omnipotence of God. They all came out.

But not only so. They all had their cattle with them. As Moses said, “Not a hoof shall be left behind.” They were to have all their goods, as well as their persons. What does this teach us? Why, not only that all God’s people shall be saved, but that all that God’s people ever had shall be restored! All that Jacob ever took down to Egypt shall be brought out again. Have I lost a perfect righteousness in Adam? I shall have a perfect righteousness in Christ! Have I lost happiness on earth in Adam? God will give me much happiness, here below, in Christ! Have I lost Heaven in Adam? I shall have Heaven in Christ! For Christ came not only to seek and to save the people that were lost, but that which was lost. That is, all the inheritance, as well as the people, all their property! Not merely the sheep, but the good pasture that the sheep had lost—not only the prodigal son, but all the prodigal son’s estates. Everything was brought out of Egypt. Not even Joseph’s bones were left behind! The Egyptians could not say that they had a scrap of the Israelites’ property—not even one of their kneading troughs, or one of their old garments. And when Christ shall have conquered all things to Himself, the Christian shall not have lost one atom by the toils of Egypt, but shall be able to say, “O death where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?” O Hell, where is your triumph? You have not a flag nor a banner to show of your victory. There is not a helmet left upon the battlefield! There is not a single trophy which you may raise up in Hell in scorn of Christ. He has not only delivered His people, but they have gone out with flying colors, taking their shields with them. Stand and admire and love the Lord, who thus delivers all His people!

IV. This brings us to notice, in the fourth place, THE TIME WHEN THE ISRAELITES CAME OUT OF EGYPT. “It came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years, even the same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.” God had promised to Abraham that his people should be in bondage four hundred and thirty years—and they were not in bondage one day more. As soon as God’s bond became due, though it had been drawn four hundred and thirty years before, He paid the bill! He required no more time to do it in, but He did it at once. Christopher Ness says they had to tarry for the fulfillment of the promise till the night came. For though He fulfilled it the same day, He made them stay to the end of it, to prove their faith. He was wrong, there, because Scripture days begin at night. “The evening and the morning were the second day.” So God did not make them wait, but paid them at once! As soon as the day came, beginning with our night, as the Jewish day does now and the scriptural day always did—as soon as the clock struck—God paid His bond. We have heard of some landlords who come for their rent at twelve o’clock precisely. Well, we admire a man’s honesty if he pays him exactly at that minute. But God is never behind hand in fulfilling His promises, not by the ticking of a clock. Though His promise seems to tarry, wait for it. You may be mistaken as to the date. If He has promised anything on a certain day, He will not keep you waiting till the morrow. The same day that the Lord had promised, the Israelites came out! And so all the Lord’s people shall come out of bondage at the predestined moment—and they cannot possibly come out of bondage before the appointed time. O you poor distressed heir of Heaven, groaning under sin and seeking rest but finding none—believe that it is the Lord’s will that you should be a little longer where there is a smoking furnace. Wait a little. He is doing you good. Like Jesus of old, He is speaking harshly to you, to try your faith! He is telling you, now, that you are a dog, because He wants to hear you say, “Truth, Lord, but the dogs eat of the crumbs.” He would not keep you waiting if your eagerness did not, thereby, get fresh vigor. He would not keep you crying if He did not mean to make it a sign of better Grace to you for the future! Therefore wait. For you shall come out of Egypt and have a joyous rescue in that day when they shall come with singing unto Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads!

But now, Beloved, we must finish up in a very solemn manner by reminding you of the companions that came out of Egypt with the children of Israel. When the children of Israel came out of Egypt, there were certain persons in Egypt, dissatisfied with the king—very likely culprits, condemned persons, debtors, bankrupts and such like persons who were tired of their country and who, as is wittily said of those who are transported, “left their country for their country’s good.” But though these people went with the children of Israel, mark you, they were not of them! They escaped, but the door was not opened to let them out. It was only opened to let out the children of Israel. These runaways were always a trouble to the children of Israel. It is said that the mixed multitude fell a lusting. It was the mixed multitude that taught them to worship the golden calf. It was the mixed multitude that always led them astray. And that mixed multitude have their representatives now! There are many men that came out of the land of Egypt who never were Israelites. And there are many that join with us in Church fellowship and eat that spiritual bread and drink of that spiritual rock that followed them. And yet with many of them, God is not well-pleased, just as there were many of old with whom He was not well-pleased and who were overthrown in the wilderness. “Ah,” says one, “but I thought if they had been in Egypt, certainly if they came out, they must have been Christians! For you have used the metaphors.” Yes, but mark how these people were in Egypt. This mixed multitude was never in bondage in Egypt. It was Israel that had to feel the task-master’s whip and to make the bricks without straw. But these fellows had nothing to do. They were Egyptians, themselves— true-born Egyptians—“heirs of sin and children of wrath.” They never had any real bondage and, therefore, they could not rejoice as the true Israelite did when they were set free from the yoke of Pharaoh.

These people are represented among us by certain persons who will tell us, “Ah, I know I have been a sinner.” That is as much as to say you have been an Egyptian and that is all—“but I cannot say I have felt my sin and utterly abhorred it and wept over it.” They come and say, “I am a sinner,” hear something about Jesus Christ, catch at it with a fancied faith—not with the faith that unites with the Lamb and brings us true salvation, but with a notional, pretended faith—and they think they get deliverance! And some of these people are marvelously happy. They do not have doubts and fears. They are at ease, like Moab. They have not been emptied from vessel to vessel. They can tell us about Egypt, of course—they know as much about it as the child of God. If the child of God describes the brick kiln and how they made bricks without straw, he has seen it, though he has not felt it. And he can talk about it, perhaps, better than the poor Israelite! For the poor Israelite has sometimes been smitten on the mouth, it may be, so that he stammers and cannot speak as well as the other, who never had a blow. He knows all about the bondage—perhaps he has invented some of it—in order to try the poor Israelite. And he can describe very accurately the going out of Egypt and the journey through the wilderness. But here is the difference, mark you, between the Israelites and the Egyptians. The Egyptians did not sprinkle the blood on the doorposts. And we do not read of the mixed multitude eating the Paschal lamb, for it is written, “No stranger shall eat thereof.” Some persons are continually saying, “I believe I am going to Heaven.” But they have never sprinkled the blood, never eaten the Paschal Lamb, never had fellowship with Christ and never had vital union with Him.

O you members of Christian Churches! There are many of you who have a fictitious experience and a made-up religion! How many there are of you who have merely the externals of godliness! You are white-washed sepulchers, outwardly fair and beautiful, like the garnished gardens of a cemetery! But inwardly you are full of dead men’s bones and rottenness! Be persuaded, I beseech you, to get no deliverance any way except by the blood of the Lamb and by really feasting on Christ. Many a man gets a deliverance by stifling his conscience. “Ah,” says one of these mixed multitude, “here am I in the prison. And this is the night when the children of Israel go out of Egypt. Oh, If I might go out!” What does he do? Why, the keeper is frightened. He has lost his eldest son and the prisoner says, “Let me out!” and he bribes the keeper to let him go. And there is many a man that gets out of Egypt by bribing his conscience. “There, master conscience,” he says, “I will never get drunk again. I will always go to church. There is my shop that is always open on Sunday—I will put two shutters up and that is almost as good as closing it entirely! And I will not do the business myself—I will get a servant to do it for me.” And out he comes! But he had better remain in Egypt than get out like that! There are some, again, that get out by main force. The keeper falls down dead and so they get out of prison. There are men who not only bribe, but kill their conscience. They go so far that their conscience is almost dead and when he is in a fit one day they rush forth and escape. And so they have “peace, peace, where there is no peace.” They wrap themselves up in the folds of their own delusions and invent for themselves refuges of lies where they place their trust. O you mixed multitude! You are the ruin of the churches! You set us a lusting! The pure Israelite’s blood is tainted by union with you. You sit as God’s people sit and yet you are not His people! You hear as God’s people hear and yet you are “in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity.” You take the sacrament as sweetly as others, while you are eating and drinking damnation to yourself. You come to the church meeting and you sit in the private assembly of the saints. But even when you are there, you are nothing but a wolf in sheep’s clothing, entering the flock when you ought not to be there!

My dear Hearers, do try yourselves to see whether you are real Israelites. Oh, could Christ say to you, “Behold an Israelite, indeed, in whom there is no guile”? Have you the blood on your doorpost? Have you eaten of Jesus? Do you live on Him? Do you have fellowship with Him? Has God the Holy Spirit brought you out of Egypt? Or have you come out yourself? Have you found refuge in His dear Cross and wounded side? If you have, rejoice, for Pharaoh, himself, cannot bring you back again! But if you have not, I pray my Master to dash your peace into atoms, fair and lovely as it may be! I beseech Him to send the winds of conviction and the floods of His wrath that your house may fall now, rather than it should stand to your death and then, in that last solemn hour, the edifice of your own hands should totter! Mixed multitude! Hear this! You assembled gatherings of professors—“Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith. Prove yourselves. Know you not yourselves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except if you are reprobates?” But if He is not in you, then are you still reprobates whom God abhors!

The Lord bring all His people out of Egypt and deliver all His children from the house of bondage!  
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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1092 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A HOLY CELEBRATION  
NO. 1092

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

**“It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord.” Exodus 12:42.**

OF course you will understand that our text relates to the Passover. This is its first meaning. The Israelites were enjoined never to forget that they were once slaves in Egypt and that God, with a strong hand, brought them forth. To help their memories an ordinance was instituted which was to be celebrated every year by every person in the nation. The young children were to be taught the meaning of that ordinance so that never in time should it be forgotten that God passed over His own people when He smote His enemies in the land of Egypt.

To this day the Israelites continue to hold this epoch in their national history among their most cherished traditions—and although the rites with which they observe the Passover are so distorted that we might well say they cannot sing the Lord’s song in a strange land—yet the Passover is still Israel’s celebration. And so long as there exists a Jew, there will not lack a man to tell how his fathers came out of Egypt in that night which is to be much observed.

But, dear Friends, the Passover was a type of our Lord’s passion. He is the Lamb of God’s Passover. It is by His blood that we are preserved. It is by virtue of His Sacrifice that God passes over us who, through faith, have received the sprinkling of that blood. Never let us forget that night which is to be much remembered—that night when the Lord was taken from prison and from judgment—when there was none to declare His generation. Let us not forget that night when, for the transgression of His people, He was smitten.

It was a dark night when He arose from the table where He had supped for the last time with His disciples, and went to Gethsemane, there to begin to suffer and in the very beginning to be sorrowful, even unto death. Then to be taken off to Pilate and to Herod, and to Caiaphas—to be condemned to die—to be lifted high upon the Cross, to bleed, to suffer physical pain, mental anguish and spiritual grief unknown—never to be estimated by us. It was a night to be remembered in all our generations. Let it never be forgotten. Whatever we do not know, my Brothers and Sisters, let us know the Cross. Whatever subject may have a second place in our estimation, always let the ransom paid on Calvary be first and foremost.

I would have you study much the four records of the Evangelists. Dwell upon them. Christians ought to be familiar with every little incident of their Savior’s death. There is teaching in every nail. The sponge, the vine

gar and the hyssop all have a meaning in them—and the spear that pierced His side is full of instruction. We ought to study them—study them again and again, and again. Here is the very essence of our confidence! This is the pillar upon which our souls lean! If there is any hope for sinners; if there is any consolation for sufferers; if there is any cleansing for the guilty; if there is any life for the dead, it is here. In Your words Emmanuel—it is here and only here. O, dwell at the Cross, then! Whatever your minds may forget to consider, let them never lose the savor of this, or leave the meditation of Christ Crucified!

Keep to this. Remember, that to help our frail memories, God has given us an ordinance. Even as He gave to Jews the Passover, He has given to us the Lord’s Supper. “This do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” It is important beyond everything that you should remember a bleeding Savior! Therefore He gives you the wine cup to symbolize His blood and that blood separated from the flesh—and, therefore, He gives you the bread as the emblem of flesh without the life-blood in it— that the two together might be the symbols to you of a violent death suffered by your Lord on your behalf!

Instructive are the symbols—do not miss the main intention of them, namely, to draw you with cords of love and bands of a man, to the Person of your vicarious Sacrifice—Jesus Christ bleeding for you! And while you harbor this much in your own thoughts, speak much of it to others. Let your testimony be full and frequent. If you are ministers, preach much about the “Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.” If you are teachers of others in the Sunday school, or anywhere else, make this the main head and front of your teaching—Christ in the sinner’s place; Christ bearing the sinner’s sin; Christ smitten with the sinner’s stripes—and by His stripes healing sinners and putting away their sin.

Insist upon this again and again, and again. Make it plain to all, so that if they reject it they may reject that which was evidently set forth before them. Unveil the mystery, the sacred mystery of the Incarnate God bleeding in the sinner’s place. Yes, should men upbraid you as foolish because you have nothing else to teach but this—keep on, and be thus foolish, still! Let them say that you have nothing but a monotony to repeat concerning the blood! Let them have that monotony again sounded in their ears! To that, to that, to that bend all your strength—to that direct all their attention, for, surely, the night of the passion—or call it day if you will, for though it was day, naturally, it was more nearly night in many senses—surely, that “is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.”

This, however, is not exactly the subject to which we propose to direct your meditation this evening. It is the night of our regeneration. It is the night of our conversion—(night or day, it matters not which)—the time in which we actually received salvation and were made partakers of this Passover that we would just now admonish you to remember. At that particular time important events transpired for us. The most important events, to us, that ever occurred in our history happened on that occasion! There was a point in our life up to which we were dead—then we were made alive! There was a point up to which we were condemned— then, in an instant, we were acquitted! There was a moment up to which we were enemies to God by wicked works—and at once, by an act of God’s Grace—we were reconciled and were made to be God’s children and were God’s enemies no more!

I want to look back upon that. Our first birth would have been a hurt to us if it had not been for this second birth. Our being in this world would be a calamity—it had been better for us that we had never been—if it had not been for this second creation, which gives us our well-being! O, it was a night to be observed before the Lord, in which we came out of Egypt, passed from death unto life and were saved! Now, what events transpired on that occasion? Well, the first was it pleased God, then, to show us the blood of Jesus and to apply it to our souls. Do you remember it? I remember well when this came to my heart. You had heard the doctrine of the Cross before, but you felt it, then. You knew that the blood could save, but at that moment you had faith in that blood and it did save you!

It was applied to you by the hyssop of faith, which sprinkled it upon the lintel and doorposts of your house and you were saved! Do you remember the place—the spot of ground? Some of us remember and never can forget it. O, happy day that brought us to the Savior’s feet, took all our guilt away and banished all our fears—removed the enmity and made us friends—prostrated, conquered and subdued us—then cheered, comforted, and blessed us! No man has anything in the incidents or the records of his life that can compare in importance with that moment in which the blood was applied to his guilty conscience!

“Well,” says one, “I think nothing of it.” No, because you never felt it. If you had ever felt it, you would. He that has ever felt the weight of the Law’s great whip upon his conscience—has ever had those lashes laid about him till he hated his very life and longed to die—he will know what it is to have that whip taken away, to have oil and wine poured into those wounds, to have them healed in a moment and to find himself ready to leap for very joy because of the wondrous things which God has done for him! They that know it not, ought not to say anything about it. They are strangers to it. I know some who are constantly prone to speak lightly of conversion. Why should they? If they do not know anything about it, let them hold their tongues until they do.

But those that have been converted—those that have been regenerated and know it—if they are honest men and I believe they are accepted as such in other matters—let them be believed here, also, when they declare that there is nothing like it under the sun for joy to a man’s soul! This application of the blood of sprinkling is the thing above all others to be remembered! Whatever else happened that night, let us remember this, that the old leaven was purged out of our hearts. At once, as soon as ever we believed in Jesus, we found ourselves hating the things we loved before. We did not hear the Law which said, “You shall not do this, and you shall do that”—but we felt our heart changed, so that we did not want to do the evil and we longed to do the right.

And now, though since then we have found another Law in our members warring against the law of our mind and causing a frequent conflict— yet the true man, the I, the real I—longs after holiness! And it is no sorrow, now, to be obedient. It is bliss to obey! And it is no joy now to be sinful, but it brings a thorn into the eyes, a palpitation to the heart and a trembling into the soul to stain the hands or defile the conscience with sin. That is a thing to be remembered! Where such a thing as that has happened, it never can be forgotten. And, thank God, this has not occurred merely to those who were amiable before and honest before, but it has occurred to some of the very worst of mankind. O, we could tell stories, tonight, which have come under our own observation, of some of the most abandoned transgressors who have become some of the purest characters, full of “sweetness and light,” from the very moment of their conversion!

The more they were formerly known to delight in sin, the more they have subsequently humbled themselves before God. And the more they had lent themselves to do iniquity, the more they have addicted themselves to works of righteousness, seeking to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. O Beloved, it is a night to be observed of the Lord in which the leaven is put away and we are made to keep the feast in godly sincerity! That night, too, or that day, whichever it may have been, we do remember that we enjoyed a feast upon our Savior. The blood was sprinkled and so we were saved, and then we sat down at the table and began at once to feast upon the precious things stored up in the Person of Christ.

I remembered one thing that troubled me. It was that it did seem too good to be true. That I was absolved forever from all my sins, I did believe, for God said it. “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” But this used to stagger me, “Am I really, now, in the condition of a child of God—as much a child of God as I am a child of my own father? And has He loved such an insignificant worm as I am? And will He surely bring me into the promised rest and give me a place and a name among His beloved, at His right hand?” O, how I revolted in such thoughts as that, when faith was strong, when first I knew the Lord!

Do you remember it, dear Brothers and Sisters? I want you to let your souls fly back to those early mornings with Christ, when the dew was upon your soul, when the birds began to sing in your hearts and their notes had not yet grown stale to you. O, the delicacies of the first days with Christ! O, the sweetness of the love of our espousals! Do you not remember how you fed upon Christ to the very full and did rejoice in Him? Well, look back and say it is a time to be observed before the Lord. And then it was that for the first time in your life, dear Friends, you felt that you were free! Israel in Egypt was free from that night. They were slaves and brick makers, but the moment that blood was over the door and God had sent forth the angel to smite the Egyptians, the Israelites were free.

They were even pressed to go away! O, do you remember how free you felt? You could sing with John Kent—  
*“Now freed from sin, I walk at large,  
The Savior’s blood’s my full discharge,  
At His dear feet my soul I lay,  
A sinner saved, and homage pay.”*

You remember how you rejoiced in the liberty in which Christ had made you free? You wanted to tell other people about it. You could not hold your tongue. You could have sung as we have been singing tonight—

*“Now, oh joy, my sins are pardoned,*

*Now I can, and do believe.”*  
You were free! But finding yourself so, you also discovered, for the first time, that you were a pilgrim, for the Israelites, as they ate that paschal supper, had to do so with their loins girt and staves in their hands—like men that were to leave that country. You found that now you were a stranger. If you had an unconverted parent, you could not talk to him or her about your soul. If you had old companions, you felt you must bid them farewell, for they would not understand you. If you did not know you were a pilgrim before, you found it out the very next day when you began to talk with them.

Your speech betrayed you and they began at once to scoff and jeer at you, as a Presbyterian or a Methodist, or by some other name they called you—thus you soon found that because you were not of the world, therefore the world would hate you. Perhaps you were surprised at it, but you plucked up courage and you took up Christ’s Cross, and you have carried it till now. At length you begin to love it, to esteem it an honor and to count it to be greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt which you left behind you.

O, it is a time to be remembered and I want you to remember it now— those blessed days when we began to live! I think we might date our existence from that time. When we count up our birthdays, we ought always to reckon that among them. To leave that out seems to be leaving out the one that makes all the others worth having! I remember a man’s tombstone on which was inscribed—“Here lies one who died a child three years old at the age of eighty.” You are only as old as the number of years you have lived unto God! All the rest you might wish to be wiped out—yes, and the blood of Christ has wiped them out and you are alive from the dead, new-born souls. O, let the time of your second birth be a season to be remembered before the Lord!  
Important results will flow to you from the preservation of this memorial. It will humble you and foster the Grace of humility. Have you become an old experienced Christian, my Brother? Go back to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. While I stand here, tonight, preaching to a great many of you, I feel brought down to my proper bearings when I remember how I sat, at about the age of 16, a poor trembling sinner under the galleries of a Primitive Methodist meeting house and heard Christ preached, and came to Him. O, that ever I should live to preach the Gospel to you! I feel humbled at the very thought of it. Get back, you great professors—get back to the Cross again! There is nothing about which to vaunt yourselves after all. Look to the hole of the pit from which you were dug—remember what you were when God met with you—and remember what you would have been if He had not met with you!

Israel would have died like the Egyptians if it had not been for the blood—and you might have been dead and damned at this hour, instead of sitting here to praise God—if it had not been for special Grace. It was no goodness of yours that made you God’s child. You know it, for when the Lord cast an eye of love on you, He could not see anything in you to love. You were all unholy and unclean. You were according to Isaiah’s description—“From the sole of the foot to the crown of your head you were all wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores”—and yet He looked upon you! Remember that, and be humbled within you.

Remember your conversion, also, and let your faith be refreshed. It does us good to remember—especially some of you, my dear Brothers and Sisters, that are now a long way on the road—it does you good to remember what peaceful hours you had at first. O, what lively joy you had then! Well, I daresay you have purer joy now, deeper peace, more unruffled calm. There was a good deal of flesh about you then. But still, for all that, as a man never will forget the honeymoon, so can we never forget that honeymoon with Christ. There was a certain exquisite sweetness in it that lingers on our souls still. We have the flavor of that honeycomb in our mouths up to this moment and we shall never get it out. Well, it will revive our faith to remember it and it will bring back our love, too.

We shall begin chiding ourselves and saying, “Why haven’t we done more for His dear name?” O, what we thought we should do when we first began to serve Jesus! We have not been true to those vows and promises, but yet what a mercy that, if we have not been true, He has! He has never failed us, but has kept every promise and never left us in any emergency. We have been held up till now and who could have held us up but our Lord? We have sometimes been in a very perilous condition—temptation has almost overcome us, but—

*“We know the arm on which we lean,*

*The name in which we trust,”*  
and we will bless that name! I am sure if we were to live in recollection of our conversion, we should have our zeal kindled for the conversion of others. Ah, you get altogether away from your first standing-point, some of you! You used to be willing to run anywhere to talk of Jesus and if you had half a hope of impressing anyone, you had no fear about speaking of Him.

Now, perhaps, you have become so familiar with the Gospel that, though it ought to have more charms, through the hardness of your heart it has fewer charms with you than it had. Oh, be ashamed and be confounded about it! And get back, get back, to your first love and you will feel the first zeal come again! I sometimes wonder what old churches would do if it were not for new converts. The new converts put fresh blood into the veins of the Church. The Church would die of sheer imbecility were it not that great sinners come in with their great love! They do what Simon would not do—they not only wash the Savior’s feet and perform the common acts of piety—but they begin to anoint His head with an extraordinary zeal. And they set the Church an example of doing great things— and in this way keep us somewhat alive.

But I would like to be a young convert always! I would like to be green in old age with young love to Jesus and would not you, too, Brothers and Sisters? Well, if you would have it so, go back to the night to be observed and remember it this evening with tears of gratitude. Cannot some of you picture that young man—(yes, you have got boys as old as you were then)—cannot you remember the young man that dropped into Park Street and heard the Word of God there? Don’t you remember your experience at that time, young woman? You do not call yourself a young woman now, but do you remember when you sat and wept and your heart broke—and when the very thing happened that we have been singing of in our hymn—that first look and that second look from Him that hung upon the Cross?

You have not forgotten that. Many days have passed over some of you and you are getting near to the end of life, but will you not remember and lift now a new song for the old mercies and magnify God whom you have tried and proved this score of years, and so tried Him that you can speak well of His name? Maybe there is a question which will naturally arise in some minds. Do not I hear someone say, “I trust I am a Christian. I believe I have experienced a great change of heart, but I do not remember the time”? Beloved Friend, there is an old legal maxim that, “possession is nine points of the Law,” and as long as you have Christ, I am not going to raise many questions about when you got Him.

Surely, if the hold you have is equivalent to nine points of the Law, it represents all the points of the Gospel! If you have Christ He will never be taken away from you. If you are resting upon His blood and righteousness, it is well enough. And, if you are producing the fruits of the Spirit and your life is what it should be, by your fruits you are to be known. We shall ask you no more questions. “But I should like to know exactly when I was converted,” says one. Well, I do not wonder that you should. But suppose you do not know and cannot ascertain, what then? Suppose there is a person here who does not exactly know his age and he wants to

find the register of his birth? And suppose he has tried and cannot find it?

Now, what is the inference that he draws from his not being able to tell the day of his birth? Well, I do not know what the inference may be, but I will tell you one inference he does not draw. He does not say, therefore, “I am not alive.” If he did he would be an idiot, for if the man is alive he is alive, whether he knows his birthday or not. And if the man really trusts in Jesus and is alive from the dead, he is a saved soul whether he knows exactly when and where he was saved or not. At the same time, do not let me be misunderstood. “You must be born-again.” There is, and must be, in every man that will enter Heaven, a time—a point and a place, too—in which he did pass out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God’s dear Son.

I believe that in many cases it is not easy to tell the precise point, for with them it is like the rising of the sun. Sometimes the sun is up before you know whether he has risen or not because a long morning twilight precedes his actual appearance above the horizon. So it may be that spiritual life begins by slow degrees before we quite perceive it there. But there is a time when it begins. There is a point—there is a place in which the unsaved become saved and the unregenerate become regenerate—and there is a broad line between the two characters. A great gulf, indeed, is fixed between them, which only the supernatural Grace of God can enable any one to cross. Do not doubt that! Do not imagine that I call it in question, for I would not deceive you.

I believe there are many people who think they have been converted, who are not—who have experienced a change, but not the change—who have made a change of life and a very good change, too, but still it is not being born-again. A man may change from a drunkard to a sober man and that is a noble thing—but that will not save him. He may change from being a thief to being honest and that is a grand thing—but that will not save him. He may change from being a habitual violator of the Sabbath to being a constant attendant upon the means of Grace—and that is a good thing—but that will not save him. It is not the washing of the stain—it is the washing of the soul that is effected in regeneration. The man’s love must be different. The man’s whole affections must run in another channel—in the direct opposite channel from that which they pursued before. In a word, “Except a man is born-again from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

There must be a time of your new birth, or else, as the Lord lives, you shall never see His face with joy. You must pass under the hand of the Holy Spirit and nothing short of that will enable you to enter Heaven. “It troubles me,” says one. Does it? I am glad of that. It is a great mercy when there is enough life to be troubled—a real blessing when that trouble leads to Christ, for if you have ever been to Christ, you have found the Savior and if you are now looking to Christ you are saved. Do you say, “But how about that great change?” I reply that every Believer must have experienced that change, for the greatest of all worlds is faith. What does Christ say?—“This is the work of God (or the God-like work), that you believe on Jesus Christ whom He has sent.” To believe in Jesus is the climax of virtue and the surest evidence of a new heart that can possibly be given.

Have you that evidence? If you have not, be troubled. The Lord trouble you more and more lest you be troubled in the world to come with a grievous trouble from which there is no relief! To full many here present the personal enquiries we suggest are momentous and urgent. You say that our preaching is inquisitorial. Be it so, but you, yourselves, are the sole inquisitors—each one of you into his own estate and his own pedigree. Murmur not, therefore, if I press you to be strict and rigid. Whatever verdict you pass, it will be referred to a higher court, there to be affirmed or annulled. I felt, before I came into this pulpit, that I might never speak to you again, or that at any rate, some of the hearers now present, would, before my return, be sure to be in another world.

We do not speak to a “perhaps,” because, from long familiarity with this great congregation, we note how regularly some die each week. Of our membership we lose so many in the year as to make a weekly item of names to be removed from the roll because they have joined the Church triumphant above, and, in the congregation, we know that it is a rare thing that ever there should pass a week without someone, who has been our hearer, being transferred to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. Now, if I never speak to you again, or you shall never hear this voice again, I would like to put it to you, my dear Friend—might not this night become to you a night to be observed unto the Lord for bringing you out of the land of Egypt? Might not this be a night much to be observed with you as long as ever you should live?

“Oh,” says one,” I do not know. I am hopeless about ever being saved.” Where does the hopelessness lie? It does not lie in your character, for have we not told you a thousand times over, that, “though your sins are as scarlet they shall be as wool,” if you will but believe in Jesus? I know that you are not tied up with the notion that you have got to do some works to save yourself. If so, I must have spoken very strangely, or you must have listened to me very oddly, for have we not every Sunday told you that it is, “not by works, lest any man should boast,” but by the Grace of God and the free favor of God towards the most undeserving of men?

God saves no man for his goodness! However bad you are, God is willing to forgive and to accept you and receive you as His child. “No,” you say, “it is not that, but still I despair of ever being saved. I cannot come up to the point.” Then whose fault is that, I want to know? Whose fault is that? I will ask you. You say, “I have tried to be saved and I am not.” Did you ever go to God in the silence of your chamber, alone, and confess to Him that you were guilty? Did you ever lie at the foot of His throne, and say, “O God, I deserve Your wrath. I have broken Your Law. I justly deserve Your anger”? Have you done that?

Now, He has said, “he that confesses his sin shall find mercy.” If you have not confessed your sins, whose fault is it that you have not got the mercy? Well, then, have you ever believed in Jesus?—that is, have you trusted in Him who, being God, became Man that He might suffer instead of you what was due from God on account of your sins? “Ah, that is the point. I break down there,” says one. “I cannot believe.” In what can you not believe? Cannot you believe what God tells you? Do you believe the Bible to be God’s Word? “Yes!” Then, I ask, how dare you say, “I cannot believe it”? In believing that Book to be true, you believe what it contains to be true! And God’s own testimony concerning His Son is this—that, “He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him,” and that whoever trusts in Him is saved, and his sins are forgiven him at once.

“Oh, but I do not feel that I am forgiven.” Who says you are to feel yourself forgiven? God says you are sinful and admonishes you to confess your sins—to renounce your sins, to supplicate pardon for your sins—to believe in the remission of your sins by the Atonement offered once. It is enough for you that the witness of God is what you are to believe. It is not your feeling that is to furnish the rule of your faith. You shall feel happy by-and-by. You shall feel a change of heart by-and-by. But the first thing is to believe God’s witness concerning His Son. “But oh, somehow or other I cannot attain to faith.” Say, have you ever tried? “Well, I have sat down and tried to believe.”

Now, be a reasonable man. Were I to tell you a something that had occurred to your immediate advantage, you would sit down and try to believe it, looking at the possibilities of its being true with many a wishful thought. Or suppose you were compelled to doubt it and thought that I was mistaken, yet if you had an interest, you would go and look at the papers—you would go and inquire at offices where there are telegrams of fresh news. You would ask persons who were likely to judge whether such an event was at all possible. And in that way you would never rest till you could satisfy yourself about the truth of the statement.

Did you ever search God’s Word in that way? Have you read the story of the four Evangelists, to see whether it is so? Have you gone to hear sermons with this in your mind—“I desire to hear in order that I may believe”? Have you been really anxious to try and believe it? I speak to you as a believer in the Bible— and to me it seems monstrous that I should believe what is in the Bible, and yet not trust in Jesus Christ! But have you ever sought to trust Him? “Well, I don’t know.” No, but I do know. You are not in earnest! That is the point. You are earnest sometimes, if you are stirred up. But you go to sleep again. The fact is, there is some private sin you don’t like to give up, or else there is some old companion that you like to keep on with—and you know you cannot go with him and enjoy his conversation—and yet be a Christian.

Ah, there is something that keeps you back, for when the Lord makes a man resolute to be saved, all the devils in Hell cannot daunt His resolution. When once the soul says, “I must be reconciled to God. I must have peace. I must have the Savior. I must be cleansed by the precious blood”— who is there to stop him? Will God stop him? He delights in mercy! Will Jesus stop him? His flowing wounds invite him! Will the Holy Spirit stop him? It were blasphemy to suppose it! Who is to stop him, then? “Why, Satan.” But is Satan by force or fraud to be a match for Christ? “Well, his own heart will stop him.” Yes, but God is greater than his heart and is able to withstand his temptations and to help his infirmities. I charge you, Soul, if you would be saved, get to your chamber and tell God so! Go and speak to Him in the simplest language—“My God, I have offended You. Have mercy upon me. I have followed my own will, but now I desire to be obedient to You. Change my heart. Give me Your Holy Spirit. I have no merits of my own, but You have given Jesus to die for sinners. Lord, I am a sinner. I put my child-like trust in You. Save me, Lord.”

Do you think you will ever be cast away? Why, you will be the first sinner that ever was, who sincerely came to Jesus that way. It cannot be! Do not be afraid, Soul. If you cast yourself on Christ, you can no more be sent to Hell than Christ can! If you have cast in your lot with Christ and have linked yourself to Him by faith, because He lives you shall live, also. Perhaps you know how Mr. Ryland put it? When his wife was dying and she was deeply desponding, though she had been for years a Christian, he said to her—“Well, where are you going, Betsy?” She had been saying to the nurse that she felt she was going to Hell and she said to her husband, “Oh, my Dear, I am going down to Hell.”

“Betsy,” he said, “what do you mean to do when you get there?” “Oh, John, don’t talk so,” she said. “But do you think you will pray, Betsy, when you get there?” “Pray? Yes,” she said, “I will never leave off praying.” “And do you think you will praise God when you get there?” “Ah, yes, I will never, never leave off praising God, whatever He does to me.” “Why,” he said, “they would say, ‘Here is praying Betty Ryland and she is beginning to praise God. Turn her out—we can’t bear to have her here.” Of course, if any soul were sent there that really believed in Jesus, it would make a revolution in Heaven and Hell. It cannot be! God must change before He will let a sinner perish who trusts in Christ!

O, it is wonderful what power faith has! I remember standing at the Mansion House one day waiting to cross over to the other side when the omnibuses were coming from all the corners of the compass and I was looking for an opportunity to run in and out between them. A blind man came up and said, “I am sure you will lead me across. I am sure you will lead me across.” I am sure I did not want the job, but I was quite sure that, if the blind man was sure I would do it, I could not decline to do it— and I did it accordingly. I did not like to have a blind man’s confidence thrown away. It seemed as if his confidence was my compulsion. And, oh, blind Sinner, lay hold upon the garment of Christ tonight and say, “Jesus, I believe You will lead me into Heaven. At any rate, I mean to trust You to do it. I have done with saving myself and I mean to rely on You, and You only.”

I tell you, your faith will compel Him—your trust shall hold Him fast. He will do anything for faith! Was He not overcome at the brook Jabbok by Jacob’s faith? Did not faith in the woman that touched the hem of His garment win a cure? And when He spoke to the Syro-Phoenician woman and called her a dog—did she not win healing for her daughter by the brave stand she made by her faith? The Lord waits to be gracious! Trust Him, Sinner! The Lord help you to do so and He shall have the glory, forever and ever!

And let me just add, here, that it is a night to be much observed among saints in their fellowship one with another. It does us good to listen as well as to talk when the mighty arm and the gracious hand of God, stretched forth on our behalf, furnishes the theme of conversation. There seems to me somehow or other to be a bias given to the whole life by the first call a man receives, as though it tinted the character with a purer hue than most of the subsequent incidents that belong to individual experience. Besides, dear Friends, in recalling the circumstances there will spring up a tender sympathy as well a devout gratitude, like that to which Paul bears witness—“and they glorified God in me.” What love feasts those are in which we commemorate the dawn of spiritual life! How free from conflicting opinions and turbulent passions!

As Cowper sings—  
*“Hearts may be found that harbor, at this hour, The love of Christ in all its quickening power And lips unstained by folly or by strife,  
Whose wisdom, drawn from the deep well of life Tastes of its healthful origin, and flows  
A Jordan for the ablution of our woes.  
O days of Heaven, and nights of equal praise, Serene and peaceful as those heavenly days When souls drawn upward in communion sweet, Enjoy the stillness of some close retreat;  
Discourse, as if released and safe at home, Of dangers past and wonders yet to come, And spread the sacred treasures of the breast Upon the lap of covenanted rest.”*

Amen.  
PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Exodus 12. Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.  
Sermon #2727 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

BITTER HERBS  
NO. 2727

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MAY 19, 1901.

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

**“With bitter herbs they shall eat it.”  
Exodus 12:8.**

PERHAPS, before I come to the consideration of this sentence, it may be profitable, especially to the younger folk among us, if we think of the many points in which the Passover was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul tells us that “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us” and, therefore, he informs us, by Inspiration—and therefore it is not a matter of conjecture or fancy—that the Passover was instituted to be a type of Jesus Christ who is the Lamb of God, the one appointed Sacrifice for the sins of all His people.

In our reading, we have already noticed that great care was to be taken in the selection of the paschal lamb. It was to be without blemish, even as Jesus Christ, our Savior, had no sin in Him. The prince of this world watched Him narrowly, but he found nothing of evil in Him. All His enemies, as well as His friends, agreed that He was without fault. The paschal lamb was to be in the fullness of its strength, “a male of the first year,” even as our Lord Jesus Christ was offered as a Sacrifice in the fullness of His manhood. He was perfect both as God and Man and, hence, was fit to become the Sacrifice for the sins of men. Admire and adore your perfect Savior, who, though He had no sin of His own, took upon Himself your sin, that you might be made the righteousness of God in Him!

The most important parts of the Passover celebration were the killing of the lamb and the sprinkling of the side posts of the door and the lintel with its blood. That was the ordained method by which the safety of those who dwelt within the house was secured. God looked with angry eyes on Egypt and bade His destroying angel avenge Him of His adversaries. “At midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon.” There was no exception—every house was filled with lamentation except where the blood-mark was over and beside the door. The angel passed over that house, smiting none there, and we are expressly told that it was God’s sight of the sprinkled blood by which the first-born in Israel were preserved from destruction. This is the main type of Christ’s Atonement. Christ Jesus died as the Substitute for all who believe in Him and, because He bore the punishment of sin for them, God righteously withholds it from them. How could He twice demand payment of sin’s debt, first at the bleeding Surety’s hand, and then again at the hand of those for whom He stood as Surety? Christ is the Substitute for all His elect. His elect are all those who believe in Him and by this sign you may know them—they are sheltering beneath His sprinkled blood—and when God sees the blood, He passes over them. So, let each one of us ask himself, “Am I hiding behind the blood of Jesus? Is my confidence entirely fixed in the great reconciliation and propitiation which Christ has made? If so, I shall live—no destroyer can ever smite me—God Himself must pass over me in the Day of Judgment and I shall be ‘accepted in the Beloved.’”

There was in Egypt, that night, a saved Israel—saved because of the blood sprinkled outside their houses—and I hope we have here many members of a saved nation—saved not because of anything they are or ever will be in themselves, but because Jesus has suffered in their place and His blood interposes between God and them.

After this followed the feeding upon the lamb. The lamb, which had been slain, was to be roasted and eaten. And you who are saved by Christ’s death must continue to live upon Christ, as He said to the Jews, “Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you.” This is, of course, a figure, meaning that Christ must be food to your minds and nutriment to your hearts. You must love Him, trust Him and endeavor to know more and more concerning Him. Your hearts must stay themselves upon Him as your Brother, having taken your nature, and as your Savior, having put away your sin.

This feeding upon the lamb was to be upon a roasted lamb—not raw, nor boiled, “but roasted with fire.” Christ is food for our hearts as having suffered for us—as having passed through the fire of God’s wrath against sin. I rejoice in Christ as He is now exalted at the right hand of the Father, but, first of all, I must know Him as despised and rejected of men. Christ’s Second Advent is proper and lawful ground for joy, but not until you understand His First Advent and see Him in His humiliation on Calvary. Christ on the Cross is to be the one object of your faith—you must look to Him there even as the Israelite was to look upon and feed upon the lamb roasted in the fire. Think what Christ has endured for you, Be

loved. I tried, this morning, [Sermon #1550, Volume 26, THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT— read/download the entire sermon free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org ] to speak

about His grief, but I know that I failed to set them adequately forth at all. Oh, what a fire was that through which our Lord Jesus Christ passed that He might become food for our souls!

Notice, next, that the Israelites were to eat the whole lamb and you who want to have Christ must have the whole of Him or none of Him! There are some who are willing to take His example, but not His doctrine—they cannot have Him. Others wish to take His doctrine, but not His precepts—they cannot have Him. Nothing of Him must be left, for there is no more in Christ than sinners absolutely need. You cannot satisfy your soul’s craving with half a Christ—neither will God allow you to insinuate that there is anything superfluous about His Son. The Jews had to eat all the lamb and he who would have Christ must have the whole of Christ—not only Christ as your Substitute, but Christ as your King! Not merely Christ to trust, but Christ to obey! He must be to you all that God sets Him forth to be, or else He will be nothing at all. Dear Hearer, are you willing thus to accept Christ as the Lamb of God? Are you willing to have Him altogether, to leave nothing of Him and to set aside nothing that appertains to Him? Then you may freely take Him as your own!

The paschal lamb was to be eaten that very night, nothing of it was to remain till the morning. The whole lamb was to be eaten at once, or to be consumed by fire. Now, dear Friends, I put the question to you—Are you willing to have Christ tonight? If there is anyone who wants to have Him tomorrow, I cannot promise that he shall have Him. But he who wants Christ tonight, is welcome to have Him. If you can truly say, “I am willing, at this moment, to take the whole of Christ to be mine, and to accept Him just as God gives Him,” you already have Him! Therefore be of good cheer, for God denies this Lamb to none who are unreservedly willing to receive Him. If you will have Him, that will of yours is given you by His Grace, so take Him freely!

As when one comes to a river and asks no leave to drink, but quenches his thirst at once, so come to Christ and freely take what God has provided on purpose for every willing soul. If you will have the whole of Christ to save you from living in sin as well as from dying in sin, then you may have Him and have Him now! Only delay not to take Him, lest you should even die while hearing about Him! Remember that solemn injunction which we united in singing only a few minutes ago—

*“Hasten, sinner, to be blest,  
Stay not for the morrow’s sun  
Lest perdition you arrest  
Ere the morrow is begun.”*

Another instruction which was given to the Israelites concerning this paschal feast was that they were to eat it with unleavened bread. Leaven, you know, is usually regarded in Scripture as the type of hypocrisy and other evils, so, in accordance with this symbol, Christ is to be received sincerely. He who wishes to know the value of Christ must not play at receiving Him—he must not say that he has Him when he has Him not. No, dear Friend, your whole heart must be yielded to Christ and you must take a whole Christ to yourself, or else He can never be yours. I seem to think that there must be some here who are saying, “Yes, the Lord is drawing us to Himself and we are willing enough to be drawn to Him.” Come along, then, look not back, but yield to the gentle pressure of His sacred love, and do it thoroughly. Be out and out in your surrender to Christ—have no leavened cake of hypocrisy to mar the paschal feast—do not try to be other than you honestly mean to be. I beseech you, trifle not with my Lord and Master! If you must play the fool, do it with something else, but not with religion! If you will gamble, play with halfpence, as bad boys do—your immortal soul is too precious to be thrown away in a game of pitch and toss! Be in earnest in dealing with the Lord Jesus Christ! Put away all leaven out of your house and out of your heart—and let it be with the unleavened bread of real sincerity of heart that you partake of the Lamb of God.

I have thus hurriedly gone over these instructions concerning the Passover in order to lead up to this one, which is to be the special theme of my discourse—“With bitter herbs they shall eat it.”

I. My first remark with regard to this command is, that JESUS CHRIST, WHO IS THE LAMB OF GOD, IS ALWAYS RECEIVED IN THIS FASHION AT THE FIRST.

Those bitter herbs were a kind of salad or condiment to be eaten with the lamb and are generally thought to have been lettuce, endive, chicory and such-like greens, as we call them—not nauseously bitter, but having a sufficient degree of bitterness to add a relish to the lamb. Now, when souls come to Christ, they carry out spiritually what is here set forth in metaphor—“with bitter herbs they shall eat it.”

That is to say, whenever anyone really believes in Jesus Christ, there is always mingled with the joyful belief, a measure of sorrowful repentance. “Yes,” says the truthful heart, “Jesus Christ died for me, but how grieved I am that I should ever have lived such a life as to need that He should die for me! I read about His terrible agonies and I perceive that I was the cause of them. It was all for love of me that He came from Heaven to earth because He knew how guilty I would be, therefore was He nailed up to the Cross and put to death.” So the penitent soul does not know whether to rejoice or to sorrow. There is a mixture of emotions—there is a bitter sweet and a sweet bitter. I rejoice that Christ has put away my sin, but I sorrow that He should ever have had to do it—

*“Alas! And did my Savior bleed?  
And did my Sovereign die?  
Would He devote that sacred head  
For such a worm as I?”*

I do not believe in that faith which has not a tear in its eye when it looks to Jesus. Dry-eyed faith seems to me to be bastard faith, not born of the Spirit of God. With our joy over pardoned guilt, we must mourn that we pierced the Lord. We think of our past sins—perhaps some of them were very black ones—and as they come up before our recollection, we wish that they could be blotted out of all remembrance. We mourn over the many times in which we resisted the Spirit of God and rejected the Savior and, while we know that all these sins are now forgiven, we cannot help being grieved because of them. And we sorrowfully sing—

*“I know they are forgiven,  
But still their pain to me  
Is all the grief and anguish  
They laid, my Lord, on Thee.”*

There is another set of bitter herbs that we eat at the time of our conversion, when there comes a distaste for the things in which we once took pleasure. As soon as a man knows that he is saved by the shedding of Christ’s blood, he begins to dislike the things he once enjoyed. Pleasures and amusements of a polluting character, no, even those of a doubtful sort, at once lose all their former charm. Of course, worldlings say, “The man is a fool! He has turned Puritan. He has gone mad.” These are some of the bitter herbs which you will have to eat—things that once seemed quite sweet will appear utterly loathsome and you will turn away from them with disgust. Your tastes will completely change. Your desires will alter. You will not always be able to understand yourself and, oftentimes, your mouth will be filled with bitter herbs on this account.

It may be that some of you will have to eat more bitter herbs than others have. For instance, a man who has been a thief, one who has secretly plundered his employer, must make restitution when he is converted— and that is often a very bitter herb. I have known some who did not like eating it, but there was no rest to their conscience until that was done. Friend, if you have anything which belongs to another, restore it, and restore it speedily—how can you expect God’s blessing to rest upon you while you retain that which you have stolen? Let him that stole, steal no more, and let him, as far as he can, make amends for the wrong that he has done. If you have been engaged in an evil trade while unconverted, as soon as you find Christ, you must clear out of that bad business. And if you have gained your livelihood in questionable ways, you must end all that sort of thing and come right straight out from it, if you would be a follower of Christ.

I have known a man who felt that he must go to one with whom he had been at enmity, and say to him, “I am a Christian, now, so let us be friends.” I have known some go and humble themselves very much and eat a lot of their own words—they had a proud spirit, so they would never have acted as they have done if Christ had not changed them by His Grace—but when He has met with them, they are ready to do anything that He wishes if they might but glorify His holy name! They found that in eating the Lamb, they had also to eat the bitter herbs, yet, surely, none of us need be unwilling to eat the bitter herbs if he may but have the privilege of eating the Lamb! If I may but feed on Jesus, I will seek to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and so let Him see that I do not follow Him in name, only, but in deed and in truth.

There are other bitter herbs, too, which we eat when we first come to Christ. They may be called the herbs of holy anxiety. When first you find the Lord, you are half afraid to put one foot before the other, lest you should tread where you ought not. I know that, in my early Christian life, I used to be afraid to speak lest I should say anything amiss. And I was continually on the watch lest I should grieve my blessed Master. I wish we all had this holy tenderness—it is a very proper thing to keep up all your life long. But we always begin with it if we begin aright—at first we are very tender and sensitive in spirit. Perhaps, afterwards, we learn to mix more confidence in God with our proper doubtfulness of ourselves, but, at the beginning of our Christian career, not having as much confidence as we ought to have in the promises of God, our anxieties are very real, so that while we eat the Lamb, we take a mouthful of bitter herbs at the same time.

If any of you are feeling sad just now, and are afraid that you may not come to Christ because you are so sad, let me tell you that is the very reason why you may come to Him! You have the bitter herbs—now come and eat the Lamb. Your heart is sorrowful, so come and have it made glad. Come with your burden of sin, come with your brokenness of heart, come with your despair, come just as you are and partake of the rich provision which God has prepared for you in Christ—and then go on your way rejoicing!

Thus I hope I have made it clear to you that Jesus is received at the first as the paschal lamb had to be eaten, that is, with bitter herbs.  
II. Now, secondly, IT IS THE SAME WHENEVER WE FEED UPON HIM AFTERWARDS.  
At least I find it to be so in my own case. I confess that my Lord Jesus is never so sweet to me as when I am thoroughly bowed down under a sense of my own unworthiness. I often feel far more unworthy than any of you can feel, for the Lord’s Grace and mercy towards me make me tremble and feel ashamed that I am not more earnest about your souls, and not more anxious to bring sinners to Christ. Yet I say again that He is a precious Christ to me and He is never so precious as when I am most vile in my own sight. Is it not so with you also, Beloved? When you are very great in your own esteem, Christ appears little to you. But when you are very little, then Christ becomes all the greater to you—is it not so? When you feel that you are poor, guilty sinners, Christ is regarded by you as a glorious Savior, but if any of you have begun to spread out the fine peacock feathers of perfectionism, Christ must seem very insignificant to you. It is a bad sign whenever you feel that you do not need to confess sin, or to look to Christ as you did at the first when you said— *“I’m a poor sinner, and nothing at all,  
But Jesus Christ is my All-in-All.”*  
Even after you have known Christ for 30 years or more, there is no feeding upon Him like feeding upon Him with the bitter herbs—with a sense of continued unworthiness pressing upon you—and then does Christ become exceedingly sweet unto your taste.  
And I believe, Brothers and Sisters, that it is a blessed thing to feed upon Christ with a soft suddenness of spirit. Full Assurance is a grand thing, but I think I have known a kind of full Assurance that I would never covet, though it speaks very glibly as though its warfare were accomplished and its victory were perfectly secure. It is a good thing to be able to read your title clear “to mansions in the skies” and happy is the man who can always do it. But it is a safe thing to feel the tears of repentance in your eyes through a deep sense of your unfitness for the skies at present, and to have your heart burdened because you do not feel Heaven within you and you are, therefore, afraid lest you should not be fit to be within Heaven. Cowper wisely wrote—  
*“He has no hope who never had a fear  
And he that never doubted of his state,  
He may perhaps—perhaps he may—too late.”*  
I would sooner shiver in dread anxiety with the poorest sincere soul who ever trembled before God than I would stand in an unwarrantable confidence as to my own security and boast and brag of my wonderful attainments. God deliver us from that sort of spirit! A quiet, peaceful frame of mind—a gentle, humble, tender walk with God, seems to me to be the thing that is especially to be desired. When you fear and tremble for all the goodness that God makes to pass before you—not because you doubt, but because you believe—you become anxious after a holy and gracious fashion. You think I am talking paradoxes, but I know what I mean, even if I cannot make you understand it. You know that you are a child of God and you realize that you are favored of the Most High—and therefore you are afraid to do anything that would be derogatory to His Divine dignity. I believe that there is no way of acceptably eating the Lamb and that there is no possibility of enjoying Christ to the fullest without such bitter herbs as these. I know that I never yet had a single mouthful of this paschal supper which my heart did really digest and assimilate without having, at the same time, a bowed and broken spirit to be as a bitter herb to help the digestion of the heavenly meat.  
III. Now, thirdly, dear Friends, as our text is true in relation to Christ, who is the blessed gift of God, “His unspeakable gift,” I think you will not at all wonder if I say that THIS RULE RUNS THROUGH ALL OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS—YES, AND OUR TEMPORAL ONES, TOO.  
God may give us many temporal blessings, but if we are His children, this principle will hold good, that bitter herbs will be mingled with all the sweets of life. If any of you are favored with great success, you will find that our text is true in your case. God sends bountiful harvests, but not without the oppressive heat that makes the laborer sweat and faint as he gathers in the golden grain. God up lifts men in His gracious Providence, as He did David, but David had to eat any quantity of bitter herbs before he reached the throne, and even after he became king, with bitter herbs did he eat his royal dainties. And his son Solomon, who had fewer trials, found so many bitter herbs that he cried out, “Vanity of vanities; all is vanity!” God never intends that there shall be any sweet in this world without something sour to go with it. The rose must have its thorn and among the wheat, the poppies must still continue to grow.  
You children of God, especially, will find it so, for what if your Heavenly Father gave you all sweet and no bitter? You would soon grow sick— eating nothing but honey would cause you many a qualm and pain. God does not mean us to build our nests here, so He sends a high wind that makes the trees rock to and fro, that we may look for a more secure place of abode. If we had all that we needed here, we would never wish to be up and away to that better world which is the goal of all our desires! If the bread was always plentiful upon the table and the fruits were always abundant in the garden, and the sky was always blue, and the fleece was always ready for the garment, and the brain was always clear, and the feet were always nimble, would we not, then, forget our God? I am afraid that we would and, therefore, He sends us these bitter herbs that nothing on earth may content us and that we may cry with the Psalmist, “Whom have I in Heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside You.”  
Go on, young man, get your degree and call your friends together to a festival! But “with bitter herbs shall they eat it.” And you, young woman, your marriage feast draws near, but with bitter herbs shall you eat it. Push on, good Sir, with that business of yours—you shall enjoy prosperity, but with bitter herbs shall you eat it. Whatever there is here below that is the object of lawful desire, you may seek—but always know that if you gain it, there will come some salutary medicine with it! Otherwise, if it is not so, you may question whether you are really a child of God. If there is no stone in your road, and no cloud in your sky, and if there has never been such a thing, but you have had unbroken prosperity, I tremble for you and I say, with David, “I have seen the wicked in great power and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away and, lo, he was not: yes, I sought him, but he could not be found.”  
IV. I will not now dwell upon many other points which I might mention, but will just briefly show you that our text also applies to us IN LIVING A GODLY LIFE.  
It may be fulfilled to us through persecution from the world. You who have fed upon Christ and now wish to serve the Lord with your whole heart, must not reckon that you will be able to do it without paying a heavy price for the privilege. You will have many bitter herbs to eat, whoever may be allowed to go without them. A man who tries to be honest will find many people who will give him bitter herbs to eat. If you speak the Truth of God wherever you are, you will often have bitter herbs handed to you. Try to do that which is right, either among working men or among merchant princes. Try to lead a really gracious, separated life, and see whether the seed of the serpent does not hiss at you and try to bite and sting you. There is no need for you to try to grow your own bitter herbs—your enemies will supply them to you for nothing—and you shall have them often when you would rather be without them. If you tack about and shift your course with every wind, perhaps you may curry favor with your foes and they may allow you to eat your lamb without any bitter herbs. But if you are straight as a pikestaff, and clear as the light, you shall soon have bitter herbs to eat, depend upon it!  
If nobody should give you any, you will find some growing in your own garden, for, even beside that sweet flower called heartsease, there will grow in our breast many herbs that are anything but sweet. For instance, if a man wishes to be downright true, he will sometimes detect himself in being false—his very love of truth will make him see that fault, and it will be a bitter herb for him to eat. One who wishes never to exaggerate in speaking, may himself discover that he has done so—he must eat that herb, bitter as it is. One who wishes to be scrupulously correct in all his business transactions may find that he has made a mistake across the counter—he may easily be entrapped into a dishonest action and then he will have many bitter herbs to eat. We cannot gain a victory over the natural tendencies of our corrupt nature, even through Divine Grace, without having some bitter herbs to eat! Then eat them like men— they will help to cleanse you, they will be a blessing to you and they will make the struggle after righteousness, honor and virtue for God’s sake, and for Christ’s sake, to be all the easier to you. May the Lord graciously enable you, in that struggle, to come off more than conquerors through Him who has loved you!  
V. The next point is THAT EVEN IN TRYING TO WIN SOULS FOR CHRIST, you will have to eat some bitter herbs.  
I am very thankful that I am addressing so large a company of dear Christian friends who help to bring others to Christ. I wish that I could say that of all of you who are members of the Church, but I can truly say it of most of you. You are our glory and our crown of rejoicing, because you live to bless others. Now, I believe that you will join with me in confessing that this holy work has been accompanied by much soul-humbling. If ever you have brought a soul to Christ, there have been bitter herbs in your feast of joy over it. I mean that you have never brought anyone to Christ without a great deal of trouble. Does anybody think that our sermons and our Sunday school teaching cost us nothing? “Oh,” says one, “I can preach off-hand.” Yes, I daresay you can, but I never heard of an off-hand farm that brought forth an off-hand crop. “Oh, I have nothing to do but to sit down and when the Bible is opened, just explain it to the boys and girls gathered around me—and I keep good order among them.” Yes, perhaps you do, but the best order that could be given to you would be an order to go home! If you go to your class with no agony of spirit, no anguish of heart, what good can come of your teaching?  
Dear Brothers and Sisters, I am certain that if God has ever honored you by making you the means of the conversion of any of your fellow sinners, you have rejoiced greatly, but you have known that it was, under God, the result of much previous agony of spirit on their behalf. Yes, and, often, at the very time when God has blessed you, you have had a bitter disappointment! You thought that dear girl really was brought to Christ, yet she turns out, before long, to be a giddy chit. And there is that bright boy—you believed that he was saved. So he is, perhaps, yet you see grave faults in him and you are very much grieved about him. Yes, that will always be the case with our work, here, and it is only another illustration of our text—“with bitter herbs shall they eat it.”  
Possibly, if God gives you very great success, He will take away from you, to a large extent, the power to rejoice in it. I know one who seldom lives through a day without hearing of many who have been brought to Christ by him, but who, nevertheless, has long been incapable of taking any delight in anything he does and who is obliged to live out of himself entirely, and on God alone. And I think, Brothers and Sisters, that in proportion as you know the truth about this matter, you will agree with me that it is so with you as well and that, somehow or other, if God means to bless you, He takes care to break the neck of your pride, lest you should be lifted up with conceit and fall into the snare of the devil. It is a high honor to be used by God as His instrument in blessing the poorest chimney-sweep, or the humblest child— but you may depend upon it that if He honors you in public, He will whip you behind the door and He will make you feel that you are nothing when He gets you by yourself.  
VI. I expect that the rule of our text will hold good with us to the last and that it will be applied IN MAKING US MEET FOR HEAVEN.  
Some of us will, within a very short time, eat our Passover supper in another sense, for we shall pass over Jordan and enter the heavenly Canaan. We shall go to the top of Pisgah, not to view the landscape, and go down again, but to fall asleep there and so spiritually to pass over the Jordan of death, into the land of the blessed, where God will reveal Himself fully to us. You will stand before long, dear Brother or Sister, with your staff in your hand, just as the Israelites did, and with your loins girt—and those who see you will say to you, “Where are you going? Where are you going?” And you will answer, “We are going to our own country—to the Promised Land above.” It may be that you will have bitter herbs to eat at that time. Do not, however, think any more of them than you do of those which you eat at your own table. Nobody ever turns away from the lamb because the sauce that goes with it seems sharp. You say, “No, it gives a relish to the meat.” So, when you and I come to die, it may be painful to bid farewell to dear ones here below, but that will be like eating bitter herbs. They will only give the greater zest to that last supper on earth which will melt into a blessed breaking of the fast in Heaven!  
You have often seen the sun go down, have you not? What a fine sight it is! He often seems to look far larger in the setting than he ever did before—and if the clouds come round about him, are they not often the very glory of the sunset? And have you not seen his departing rays brighten them all up? No painter could ever have put together such charming colors. The mighty Artist of Heaven has Himself displayed His skill, but how did He make all that splendor? It was out of clouds—they were the canvas which was spattered with the hues of Heaven by the sublime Artist. So shall it be with you, dear Friend, at last. Your old age, your pains, your groans shall only be a part of the splendor which God gives to His people when they set at the last like the sun.  
Be of good courage, then, and fear not! Nobody stays away from a feast because of the salad that is served with the food, so let nobody stay away from Christ, or away from Heaven because of the little griefs he may have to bear, the light afflictions which are but for a moment, which work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory! God bless you, Beloved, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **EXODUS 12:1-20.**

Verses 1, 2. And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. God thinks a great deal of the redemption of His people. When He redeemed them out of their Egyptian bondage, He took care that the mighty deed should be worthily commemorated. Thenceforth, the Jewish year was to begin with the celebration of the national deliverance and now, when any of us are converted to God, and so are set free from the slavery of sin, we should reckon that then we really begin to live! All the previous part of our life has been wasted, but when we are brought truly to know God, through faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, then have we realized, indeed, what life is. The month of our conversion should be to us the beginning of months, the first month of the year to us.

3, 4. Speak you unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: and if the household is too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. The worship of God must be rendered in an orderly manner, with due thoughtfulness and preparation. This paschal supper was not to be celebrated in any fashion that the people might choose, but they were to take time to have the lamb properly examined, that it might be found perfect in every respect, and that everything might be set in order so that the feast should be observed with due reverence and solemnity. Let us take care that we act thus in all our devotions. Let us never rush to prayer or hasten to praise, but let us pause awhile, and think what we are about to do, lest we offer the sacrifice of fools, and so cause the Lord to bid us take back that which we have brought to put upon His altar without due thoughtfulness.

5. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: you shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goat. It was to be a type of Christ and, therefore, it must be the best that they had. It must be in the prime of its strength, otherwise it would not be a fit emblem of the “strong Son of God” whose mighty love moved Him to give Himself to death for us.

6-10. And you shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the entrails thereof. And you shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remains of it until the morning you shall burn with fire. Everything was to be done exactly according to God’s order. The alteration of the slightest detail would have spoiled it all. I wish that all Christians would remember this rule with regard to the ordinances of God’s House. They are not for us to make, or for us to alter, but for us to keep!

11. And thus shall you eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD’S Passover. They were thus to exercise an act of faith. Why were they to eat in haste, but that they expected soon to be gone? They were to stand like travelers who are starting upon a journey, believing that God was about to set them free. Oh, that we would always exercise faith in all our devotions, for without faith it must always be impossible to please God.

12, 13. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. What a grand Gospel statement that is! When the sinner sees the blood, it is for his comfort—but it is God’s sight of the blood that is, after all, the grand thing—and when is it that He does not see it?

13-20 . And the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and you shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever. Seven days shall you eat unleavened bread; even the first day you shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. And you shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall you observe this day in your generations by an ordinance forever. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whoever eats that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger, or born in the land. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall you eat unleavened bread. Thus we see God instituting a commemoration of the deliverance of His people out of Egypt. How much more ought you and I, with joyful gladness, to remember the deliverance of our soul from the slavery of sin and Satan! Let us never forget it. I should like to refresh the memories of bygone times with you who know the Lord. the Lord help you, now, with deepest gratitude, to remember the day when first you saw your Savior and the yoke was taken from your neck, and the burden from your shoulder. Glory be to the delivering Lord!

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REDEEMING THE UNCLEAN  
NO. 3458

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 13, 1915.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 9, 1868.

**“And every first-born of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem it, then you shall break its neck.” Exodus 13:13.**

WE read to you in the former part of the service the origination of the Law of God by which the first-born, both of man and beast, belonged to the Most High. That Law seemed to be a very admirable memorial of what the Lord did, and also a very just requirement on the part of God that the first-born, whom He had so miraculous delivered, should be His through all time.

But the difficulty arose as to how some beasts, which were counted unclean by the Law, could be offered to God at all. There were many animals necessary to man, useful for draught, and so forth, but not coming under the list of clean animals, such as divided the hoof and chewed the cud. Among the rest, the donkey, useful everywhere, but most of all in oriental countries, was counted unclean. How, then, could it be dedicated to God? How could the first-born of the donkey be given to Him? Our text solves the difficulty. An exchange was made. A lamb was offered instead, and then the donkey, of course, was redeemed. But if the owner did not sufficiently value it to give a lamb, instead, then the neck was broken and the animal destroyed.

The teaching of the text is just as follows. It is fourfold and I think we shall have to bring out each fold. Of course, it is typical of something to do with ourselves and Christ, and our standing before God. And the first observation is this, that—

I. AS THE DONKEY, BEING UNCLEAN, WAS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO GOD, EVEN SO, UNRENEWED MAN, BEING UNCLEAN, IS ALSO UNACCEPTABLE BEFORE THE MOST HIGH.

Did it ever strike you that man, according to the Jewish ceremonial Law, is an unclean creature? Nothing was clean, according to the Law of Moses, but that which divided the hoof and chewed the cud. Now man fails in one of these, and by the Law he is put down as a sinner, as being on a level with the unclean beasts. What a wonder the Gospel does for us when, being redeemed with a price, we are said to be the sheep of God, the lambs of Christ’s flock, so that therein we bear the same name as the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, and we are raised from the condition of the brute, into which sin brought us, and are made to sit far above principalities and powers, in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus! Lost by sin through the Law and placed in the very depths, man, by Grace through Jesus Christ, is lifted up to the very heights!

But we return to what we started with, namely, that man has become, through sin, like the donkey—a creature incapable of rendering acceptable service to God. For, in the first place, every man has already broken the Law of God and, as God accepts no service but that which is, like Himself, perfect, no unrenewed man is capable of rendering perfect legal obedience such as God can accept. His Law is like a superb crystal vase. If it is whole, it is whole. But if it is chipped or cracked in the smallest degree, the Law is broken. It is like a great golden chain which is precious and useful while whole, but the snapping of one link breaks the chain. So, unless a man could keep God’s Law without any defect or transgression, it would not be possible that he could be accepted by the Most High. Now there is not one of us but has certainly broken some command. I fear we have, all of us, broken all the commands! If not in act, yet in word or in thought, so that before God’s bar we ought to plead guilty to every count in the indictment and should not hope to be accepted by our works. What a condemning text is that in Isaiah—“We are altogether as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags”! He does not say that all our wickednesses are so—no, these are worse and baser, still, but all our righteousnesses are—that is, the best thing which unrenewed nature can possibly produce is nothing better than the rag which is too filthy to be seen, but must be cast away and burned in the fire! Yes, you that seek to be justified by your good works, you may pant, and strive, and wear out your lives in energetic failures, for success is entirely impossible! You cannot thus, while you are what you are, produce a righteousness that God can accept, seeing that you have already sinned.

In addition to this, man’s heart is alienated. We would not, ourselves, accept a service done us by an enemy, or that is done without any motive of repentance. No, since the very essence of obedience lies in the yielding up of the heart—until a man’s heart is made new, till he loves the God whom he has despised, all that he can do is but the false serving of a hypocrite, the dead service of a formalist, or the forced service of a slave— and none of these can God accept! Do you think when the ungodly man repeats a prayer, and his heart is absent, that God accepts the prayer? I tell you that that prayer is, in itself, a sin and a great provocation against the Most High! When the ungodly man stands with God’s people and pretends to be one of them, repeats their creeds and declares himself to be a Believer in the things which he does not believe, he does but lie before God and the things he says cannot be received by Him. All outward, external religion, in which the heart does not join, so far from being received by the Most High with approbation, must be viewed by Him with utter abhorrence. How is it possible, then, for a man who loves not God to be accepted before the King of Kings?

In, addition to this, there is no service which unrenewed man can render which is not defiled with sin, even in itself, chiefly with one sin, namely, self-righteousness. If a man works works of righteousness with the idea that he is meriting a reward, thereby, to whom is he a servant? I answer, not to God, but to himself! If I obey, or profess to obey, the Law of God, but my whole motive is that I may save myself, and that I may get happiness unto myself, evidently self is the reigning principle. I am not truly obedient to God as the great delight of my spirit. I do not love Him with heart, and soul, and strength, but I love myself, and cover up this selfishness with the pretence that I love Him. Oh, you that are thus striving to serve yourselves under some spiritual garb or other, you cannot serve the living God, do what you will! Your holiest service will be an offense, a smoke in His nostrils, and He will put away your best things as being offered with strange fire and, therefore, not to be received!

Once more. By very nature, man is so obnoxious to the wrath of God that it is impossible for God to accept him as His creature. Kings would not delight to be served by men with foul hands who left defilement everywhere. Yet such are we! We would not like to always have before our eyes, in our servants, some dreadful disease, some disgusting leprosy and yet such is the disease of sin. “You are of purer eyes than to beheld evil, and cannot look on iniquity.” I have heard that text quoted, “You cannot look upon it but with abhorrence.” That is true, but it is put still stronger. The Prophet puts it that He cannot look upon it, that He cannot endure it. He is a consuming fire towards sinners and what He will do with the finally impenitent is, so He says, “tear them in pieces, and there shall be none to deliver,” for out of Christ, God cannot tolerate the ungodly! Not for a single hour would He spare this world were it not that the Mediator comes between—otherwise the Immaculate Perfection of the eternal God could not endure sin to be anywhere within His reach. He would sweep the universe clear of every rebel with the broom of destruction! He would, once and for all, ease Himself of His adversaries and shake Himself from His enemies, even as a man shakes the dust from his feet!

Now what a very solemn Truth of God this is! Do not think that it is my statement. It is really the teaching of God’s Word, that the unregenerate man is an unclean man and cannot be acceptable to God. “He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed on the Son of God.” The unrenewed man is corrupt! He is dead in trespasses and sins! Now this is meant for some of you. It is meant for some of you who are very excellent and amiable people, and very moral. It is meant not for the vilest of the vile, alone, but for all classes and conditions of men—for the professedly religious people, too. Unless your hearts are right before the Lord and you have believed in Jesus, you cannot, you never can, strive as you will, be received before the Most High any more than the donkey could be acceptable upon the altar of God! But now we advance to the second Truth of God which is in the text, namely, that—

II. THE SERVICE OF MAN, WHICH GOD CANNOT ACCEPT, IS, NEVERTHELESS, GOD’S DUE.  
God could not receive the donkey because it was unclean, but still it belonged to God for all that. God’s claim extended over all the first-born, clean or unclean, and that claim must be maintained. Sinner, you cannot serve God—you are too sinful! Your heart too evil—your service too impure! But still, God’s claim upon you for a perfectly holy life has not ceased. It has not lost its power, nor bated one jot or tittle of its just and righteous force. It has been laid down by some theologians as being almost a self-evident Truth that God will require no more of a man than he can do—but this, by every thoughtful mind—will be soon discovered to be a self-evident lie instead of being true—for God’s Law is not changed by our being changed! Whatever God demanded of man when he was perfect, He demands the same thing of him now that he is imperfect! The Law of God is holy, and just, and good. If it were ever too severe, then God was not righteous in making it. And if He alters it to suit us, what is that but the cutting down of His integrity and the disfiguring of the tables of His own perfectly pure and holy statute Book? It cannot not be! You, in common life, know very well that a man is sometimes bound to do what he cannot do. If a man is in your debt and he tells you he cannot pay you, you do not consider that his not being able to pay exonerates him from the debt. He is still in your debt. If he could have paid when he entered upon the debt, it was a debt—but now that he cannot pay it, it is still a debt! True, there are ways in which he can get cleared of the debt, just as there are ways of salvation by which a man may be delivered from sin, but still, the debt is none the less a debt because the man cannot pay it. Everybody knows that inability to pay does not exonerate the man from the duty to pay. So with God. He did not make you a sinner, Sinner. You were pure and holy when you came from His hands. Your sin is your own. Your weakness, inability, your willfulness, your backwardness to keep the Law—all these are your own, and so far from excusing you, they shall be swift witnesses against you to condemn you!  
Take another instance. There are some men who have become such thieves that we say of them, and say truly, that it is impossible for them to be honest. They are no sooner out of prison than their hand is into somebody’s pocket—they cannot be easy and at rest till they are up before the magistrate again! But did you ever hear such a man say, “Sir, I cannot be honest! I have such an irresistible tendency to steal that the law ought to be changed on my account because I have lost my principle of honesty—therefore the law ought not to bind me”? “No,” you say, “but he ought to be kept in prison always, for this is another offense to make his evil heart an excuse for his evil ways.” Remember, Sinner, that your inability to come to Christ is not your misfortune, but your sin! Your inability to keep the Law of God is not your calamity as much as it is your willful wickedness. Inasmuch as you are unclean and evil, the thought that you cannot help it should alarm you, for you ought to help it. You have no business to be in the state of sin you now are. If you could not help it, if there were any physical disability, you might be excused. But inasmuch as the disability is spiritual and moral, and deals with your will, there is no excuse for you! The donkey could not be accepted, but still the donkey belonged to God. You cannot be received as you are, all unconverted, but still God has a claim upon you—and for every idle word that you shall speak, He shall bring you into judgment—and for not serving Him, He will condemn you! For not believing in Christ, you shall be called to account at the last.  
But I must pass on. The third thing in the text is this, that the difficulty in hand was met in this way—the donkey must be God’s, yet it cannot be, for it is too impure for Him to receive! What then?  
III. IT MUST BE REDEEMED BY A SUBSTITUTE.  
“Every first-born of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb.” Oh, the glorious Gospel comes out here in much of its effulgence in connection with the redemption of men! The Jew would, perhaps, deliberate awhile. “Well,” he might say, “I fancy I should like to have this donkey grown up, for I need it as a beast of burden. But here is a lamb that must be killed in its place, and he is the more valuable of the two.” I fancy I can hear a consultation held in the family as to what should be done. It may be that in some cases the lamb would be the less precious of the two. However what may be, it is agreed at the last that the lamb shall die and that the donkey shall live.  
Now, in our case, there might have been a consultation, indeed, as to which was the more precious—our poor, willful, wicked selves, or the Lamb of God, the Only-Begotten of the Father. All of us put together, and millions upon millions of our human race could never equal in value the precious Lord Jesus! If you were to put in all the angels as well, and all the creatures that God has ever made, they could not equal Him who is the brightness of His Father’s Glory and the express Image of His Person! “Yet He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.” And this is the Gospel which we have to preach to you every time we stand before you, namely, that Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God, was offered to God as a Substitute for ungodly, unclean, unacceptable man! That we might not die, Christ died! That we might not be cursed, Jesus was cursed and fastened to the tree! That we might be received, He was rejected! That we might be approved, He was despised—and that we might live forever He bowed His head and died in our place!  
If any man wants to understand theology, he had better begin here. This is the first and main point. I do not think I should dispute with any of my Brothers in the ministry upon what else they hold if they all hold purely and straightforwardly the Doctrine of Substitution by Jesus Christ on the behalf of His own elect people. Martin Luther stood out for Justification by Faith, and rightly so, for in his day that seemed to be the center, where all the battle raged. I think that just now Substitution by Christ seems to be the place where the garments are rolled in blood—and where the fight is thickest. That Jesus Christ was punished in the sinner’s place—that the wrath which was due to His people was endured by Him, that He drank the cup of bitterness which they ought to have drunk—is the grandest of all the Truths of God and so sublime a Truth that if all the Christians in the world were to be burned in one dreadful holocaust, the price would be but little to maintain this precious Doctrine in its integrity upon the face of the earth!  
Now most men know that they are to be saved by Christ, but I am afraid—but I am afraid that it is not always preached plainly, so that men know how it is that Christ saves them. My dear Hearer, I would not have you go away without knowing this! Christ Jesus came into the world to take the sins of His people upon Himself and to be punished for them. Well, if Christ was punished for them, they could not be punished afterwards. Christ’s being punished in their place was the full discharge of their debt which they owed to Divine Justice, and they are sure to be saved. They for whom Christ died as a Substitute can no more be damned than Christ, Himself, can be! It is not possible that Hell can enclose them, or else where are the justice and the integrity of God? Does He demand the man, and then take a Substitute and then take the man again? Does He demand the payment of our debt, and receive that payment at the hand of Christ, and then arrest us a second time for the same debt? Then, in the great court of King’s Bench in Heaven, where is justice? The honor of God, the faithfulness of God, the integrity of God are certain guarantees to every soul for whom Christ died, that if Christ died for him, he shall not die, but shall be exempt from the curse of the Law!  
“How then,” says one, “may I know that Christ died for my soul?” Sir, do you trust Him? Will you trust Him now? If so, that is the mark of His redeemed! This is the King’s mark upon His treasure! This is the mark of the great Sheep-Master upon all of those whom He has bought with His blood. If you will take Him to be the only pillar of your salvation. If you will build upon Him as the sole foundation of your everlasting hope, then you are His! And as for your sins, they are laid on Him. As for your righteousness, you have none of your own, but Christ’s righteousness is yours! As in the case before us, the lamb was offered—the donkey was spared. The unclean animal lived—the clean creature died! There was a change of places. So does Christ change places with the sinner! Christ puts Himself in the sinner’s place and what do we read? “He was numbered with the transgressors,” and, being numbered with the transgressors, what then? Why, He was put to death as a transgressor! They crucified Him between two malefactors. He had to suffer the death of a felon! And though in Him was no sin, yet, “the Lord has made to meet upon Him the iniquities of us all.” He was, before God, the Representative of all His people, and all the sins of His people covered Him until He had drunk the cup of wrath. And then He threw off the horrible incubus of His people’s sins and cast the stupendous load of the guilt of all His elect down into the sepulcher and there left it buried forever! And in His rising from the dead, He gave to them the pledge and earnest of their acquittal and of their everlasting life! Ah, my Hearers, I wish I had a thousand tongues with which to proclaim this one Truth of God! As I have not, I ask the tongues of all those who know its preciousness to tell it forth. Tell the sick, tell the dying, tell the young, tell the old, tell sinners of every degree and every class, that salvation is not by what they do, nor by what they feel, but that it all lies in that Man who was once crucified, but who now lives in the power of an endless life before the eternal Throne of God! And if they say, “What do you mean by this?” tell them that this Man is none other than God Over All, blessed forever, and that He condescended to become Man and

take upon Himself the sins of His people, and to be punished for their guilt, so that whoever believes on Him might not perish, but have everlasting life! The Just for the unjust, He died to bring us to God! This is the Gospel—the core, the kernel, the marrow of the entire Bible! You may say of all the Book besides, that it is but folds and wrappings—but this is what it wraps up—Substitution by Christ! This is but the box, the case—it is Christ that is the Jewel, the Treasure for which the case was made! Believe this Truth of God! Believe it as a Doctrine, but, better still, cast your souls on it, and say, “If it is so, then I will trust in the power of Him who loved, and lived, and died for sinners that I might go free.” The last Truth of God in the text is a very solemn one, namely, that—  
IV. THE UNREDEEMED MAN MUST DIE.  
The unredeemed donkey was put to a speedy and very ignominious death. “You shall break its neck.” There was no bringing of it to the altar, but it must be as an obnoxious thing, killed with the axe and left. There is no choice for any man, woman, or child here, except this. If you trust in Christ, you are redeemed, and you shall live. If you do not, there is something worse for you than the breaking of the neck of the poor donkey. When they break its neck, it is done—just a pang and a struggle, and it is over. But it is not over with us when the time comes to execute the righteous sentence of the Law if Christ has not suffered that sentence for us and we are found unbelievers in Him! Then, first of all, the soul is torn from the body—the body left here, the soul to appear before God— and then it immediately receives the foretokens of its last and ultimate doom! It is driven from God’s Presence to abide as a naked spirit in utter wretchedness. When our Lord pictures the death of the rich man, He does not talk about any sleep, but He says, “In Hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.” He was one moment on earth, but the next moment in Hell! There the soul must continue till the Resurrection comes, and then the soul must come back to the body and, body and soul together must stand in that great gathering where every eye shall see the Pierced One and behold Him in His Glory. Then the great and final sentence shall be pronounced and to the unregenerate it will be this—“Then shall He say to those at His left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”  
I tremble while I speak thus, but you must hear it, lest you miss it. And we must speak it, lest we be found guilty of your soul’s blood. In the name of the living God, I speak to everyone to whom this voice can come. You must have Christ die for you, or you must die forever! It must be either Calvary or Hell—one of the two! His blood must be sprinkled upon your conscience, or else your blood shall be upon your own head! It is with you tonight—turn or burn—believe or perish! For I do assure you, according to the teaching of the Word of God and of His Holy Spirit, that there is not the shadow of a hope anywhere else for you. You may belong to some church and you may hope to be saved by your baptism or by your confirmation, but these are useless apart from Christ! You may attend some meeting house, and you may think to be saved because you are very orthodox, but your orthodoxy will perish with you, and will only be firewood for your burning if you trust to that! Perhaps you think that leaving something in your will at the last to some charity, or giving liberally to the poor, may cover a multitude of sins, and that with such a covering as Achan used when he covered up the wedge of gold that God’s eyes might not see the unholy thing. But Achan died, notwithstanding that he had covered up his ill-gotten wealth—and so will you!  
Ah, if an angel should come here tonight, and speak, perhaps you would listen to him more intensely than you would to me. But what could he tell you more simple than this, that there is but one hope for you, and that one hope neglected, there is no hope, no hope, no hope forever? God has been pleased to commit this ministry not unto angels, but unto us—poor men like yourselves—that we may tell you with affection, that we may speak to you with sympathy. Why will you die? You know what pain is, do you not? You have suffered enough already. Some of you have to endure the biting pangs of hunger. You are sometimes cold and poverty brings you very low. Will you be everlastingly poor? Will you forever endure the pangs and miseries infinitely worse than any you have known in this world? I am not inventing bugbears to frighten you. God forbid! I am only telling you what I have read in God’s Word and what you yourselves may see to be there. “Except you repent,” said Christ, “you shall all likewise perish.” Why need you perish? Why musts you perish? Jesus Christ is preached to you and we say to you, tonight, in the name of the Most High—Whoever believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved! Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool if you do but trust Him! Though you have gone ever so far into sin, yet simple faith in Christ will bring you out of it! And though your sins should be ingrained in your nature and have become such a habit to you that you seem no more able to get rid of your abominable habits than the leopard could get rid of his spots, or the Ethiopian of his black skin—yet such is the miraculous power of the blood of Jesus that it can take out the leopard’s spots, and remove the Ethiopian’s hue, and make those white who were once defiled, for it not only takes away the guilt of sin, but the power of sin! If you believe in Christ, you will have a new nature, new desires, new tastes, new enjoyments! You shall hate the things you once loved, and love the things you once hated—  
*“‘Tis but to trust Immanuel’s blood!  
‘Tis all! ‘Tis all!”*  
“Yes,” I hear you say, “but this is too little! It is too easy!” Well, and what a mercy that is for you, for if it were a difficult thing, how could you do it? You are precisely in the case of Naaman, when the Prophet said to him, “Go and wash in Jordan seven times.” “Oh,” said Naaman, “it is too simple!” Then his servant said, “My Father, if the Prophet had bid you do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much rather, then, when he said to you, Wash and be clean?” The poor Hindu will roll himself over and over for five hundred miles to get to the Ganges, because he has been told that he will get rid of his sin if he thus lies prostrate in the dust the whole painful journey. Poor soul, he is but like us! We would all do that if we were quite sure that we would be saved by it. How much rather, then, when Christ simply says, “Trust, trust, trust, trust Christ and live! Depend simply upon Him! Rely upon Him!”  
Are you not almost sick of hearing me tell you this? We have to iterate and reiterate on this point. We have to bring the hammer down continually on just the same place on the anvil, and to strike just the same note. Ah, well, if you were all saved, and all believed in Christ, we would gladly go on to something else—but until every soul is saved, we can do nothing but blow the trumpet with the same sound! Believe! Trust in the Substitute! Take Christ to be yours! Look out of self—look to Christ! Have done with your doings! Have done with your trusting in your own powers, and now, whether you sink or swim, give up every other hope and rest in Him, and rely on Him, and upon Him alone!  
Perhaps these simple words may bring the Gospel home to some aching heart with comfort. And if it should, I pray you to be sure to follow it up at once. Do not put it off. Do not delay! ‘Tis resting in Jesus, now— that is the thing. I call to recollection just now the morning when first I rested on Him. I never, never, never can forget it. I had been as downcast as anyone could be. I had attended places of worship. I had done all I could, but I could get no peace till at last I heard a simple preacher put it thus—“Look unto Me, and be you saved, all you ends of the earth!” Now there is nothing to do here but to look—a fool can do that! A baby can do that! You don’t need a deal of learning to do that—you only have to look! But you will ask what it is that you are to look to. Well, it is, “Look to Me”—that is, look to Jesus! There He is in the Garden, sweating great drops of blood! Every drop is for you—look to Him! There He is, scourged by Pilate till His shoulders run with gore, and every drop is for you! Look to Him! Look to Him! There He is, fastened to the tree! His hands are streaming with blood and every drop is for you—look to Him! There He is with His side pierced and with the blood and water running out, and every drop is for you! Look to Him! Look to Him! Do but look to Him! No, it is not to be able to understand it, but to look to Him! No, it is not to be able to write it on paper, but to look to Him! Look to Him! “Well,” he said, when he had gone thus far, “that young man under the gallery there looks very unhappy. I think he is feeling the burden of sin but he will never get rid of his burden unless he looks to Christ.” Then he shouted, “Look! Look! Look! Young man! Look now!”  
Blessed be God, I did look—simply looked, just as the dying men in the wilderness looked to the serpent! They did not calculate the value of the brass. They did not make a drawing of the various convolutions of the serpent. They did not consider how it could be. They did not get a physician to talk to them about how the eyes might operate upon the nerves. They just did what they were told to do! They looked, and they lived! Will you look, or not? Will you trust, or not, young man? On the answer which the Holy Spirit shall enable you to give to that question will hang your present peace and your everlasting happiness! If you answer, “No, I will not look,” then, Sirs, on your own heads be your blood if you will not rest in Jesus! So simple, so suitable, so gracious is this way of salvation, that I myself, though I love you in my very soul, must say that you deserve to perish if you will not thus be saved—  
*“How they deserve the deepest Hell  
That slight abounding love!  
What chains of vengeance must they feel, Who scorn these hands of love!”*  
Oh, that, instead thereof, you would simply trust! And, trusting, you shall live! Amen

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **EXODUS 29:38-46; ISAIAH 53.**

**EXODUS 29:38-46.**  
Verse 38. Now this is that which you shall offer upon the altar: two lambs of the first year, day by day, continually. Remember, as long as there was a Jewish state, the morning and the evening were to open and to close with the sacrifice of a lamb.

39-42. The one lamb you shall offer in the morning; and the other lamb you shall offer at evening. And with the one lamb a tenth an ephah of flour mingled with the fourth part of a hin of pressed oil; and the fourth part of a hin of wine for a drink offering. And the other lamb you shall offer at evening and shall do thereto according to the meat offering of the morning. And according to the drink offering thereof, for a sweet savor an offering made by fire unto the LORD. This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto you. See, the Lamb is the place of meeting! God comes to His people as His people come to Him—with the morning and with the evening Lamb.

43. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory. God’s glory is in the Lamb—it is there He is pleased to manifest Himself in the glory of His infinite Grace to His people.

44, 45. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, And the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to Me in the priest’s office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. Not without the lamb, you see—that morning and evening sacrifice must be the token and the way of God’s dealing with His people.

46. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God. Now concerning this same Lamb, we will read in—

*ISAIAH 53.*

Blessed passage! I hope you all know it by heart—it should be like the alphabet to every child. See how it begins.  
Verse 1. Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? This is the continual cry of the men of God. The sent ones of God who come to bear testimony of the Lamb of God have no easy time of it. With broken hearts they have to go to their Master, and say, “Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?”  
2. For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He has no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him. Carnal minds never did see beauty in Christ, and never will. Christ as the great Sacrifice is always rejected.  
3-5. 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. Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. Blessed be His name! Some of us can say that with great delight—“With His stripes we are healed.”  
6, 7. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opens not His mouth. “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth.” Our blessed Master—there are His seven cries upon the Cross, but not one word of murmuring, no complaint against His enemies—“He opened not His mouth: He is brought as the lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opens not His mouth.”  
8, 9. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? For He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of My people was He stricken. And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth.  
10. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief: when You shall make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him.” If ever there was a man whom God should have protected from every sorrow, and guarded from every stroke of injustice, it was Jesus! And unless it was for sins not His own, He suffered, unless it was as a Substitute for man, it was the most unjust of all heard of injustices that Christ should die at all!  
11, 12. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great. And He shall divide the spoil with the strong: because He has poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. “He shall see of the travail of His soul.” Oh, what a joy is this to us! He did not travail in vain. His pangs were as of a travailing woman, but the birth, the glorious birth that comes of it is the salvation of multitudes—this is His recompense!

—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 #541 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

DIRECTION IN DILEMMA  
NO. 541

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

**“Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.”  
Exodus 14:13.**

GOD’S great design in all His works is the manifestation of His Glory. Any aim less than this were unworthy of Himself. He cannot act for the good of His creatures as an ultimate aim, for that were for God to be impelled by a motive less great than His own Nature. Since there can be nothing greater than the Infinite and there can be but one Infinite—if the infinite God is moved by an infinite motive which is the only one worthy of Him, that motive must be found in His own Glory. It is, then, the Lord’s will to manifest His Glory to the sons of men. But how shall the Glory of God be manifested to such fallen creatures as we are?

Man’s eyes are not single, he has ever a side glance towards his own honor and so is not qualified to behold the Glory of his God. Vanity has covered our eyes with scales more dense than those which fell from the eyes of Saul of Tarsus. We are always prone to put a high estimate upon what we are, or may be, or can feel, or do. It is clear, then, that self must stand out of the way that there may be room for God to be exalted. And this is the reason, the true secret, why God brings His people, oftentimes, into straits and difficulties, that, being brought to their wits’ end and made conscious of their own folly and weakness, they may be fitted to behold the majesty of God when He comes forth to work their deliverance.

A man whose life shall be one even and smooth path will see but little of the Glory of God, for he has few occasions of self-emptying, and therefore but little fitness for being filled with the Revelation of God. They who navigate little streams and shallow creeks know but little of the God of tempests. But they who “go down to the sea in ships and do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep.” Among the huge Atlantic waves of bereavement, poverty, temptation and reproach, we learn the power of Jehovah, because we feel the littleness of man. Self-esteem is that speck in the eye which most effectually mars human vision. The Great Surgeon of souls removes this from us chiefly by sanctified afflictions.

At the mouth of the furnace the Great Purifier sits as a Refiner to purify the sons of Levi—and when this work has been achieved and they have become pure in heart, the Divine purpose is accomplished. Then God’s Glory is manifested, for the pure in heart shall see the Lord. Thank God, then, dear Brothers and Sisters, if you have been led by a rough road—it is this which has given you your experience of God’s loving kindness. Your troubles have enriched you with a wealth of knowledge to be gained by no other means. Your trials have been the cleft of the rock in which God has set you as He did His servant Moses, that you might behold His Glory as

it passed by.

Praise your God, O sons of sorrow that you have not been left to the darkness and ignorance which continued prosperity might have involved. Bless Him that you have been capacitated to show forth His Glory by being permitted and honored to endure a great fight of affliction. Our one aim in life is, I trust, to glorify our God, and if so, are not those afflictions precious which enable us to honor Him? We will call them friends if they help us to praise God. We will wear them as jewels and rejoice in them as a bride rejoices in her ornaments if they aid us in glorifying our blessed Lord. In this spirit we may almost envy the children of Israel as we see them entangled in the wilderness and overtaken by their foes, for now shall they see the mighty arm of God made bare!

Our text exhibits the posture in which a man should be found while exercised with trial. Methinks, also, it shows the position in which a sinner should be found when he is under trouble on account of sin. We will employ it in both ways.

I. Take our text first as A PICTURE OF THE BELIEVER WHEN HE IS REDUCED TO GREAT STRAITS. Then God’s command to him is, “Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.” In this brief sentence there are two things very conspicuous—first, what is to be done, “Stand still.” And secondly, what is to be seen, “See the salvation of the Lord.”

1. What is to be done? The man is brought, we will suppose, into very extraordinary difficulties. He cannot retreat—that is sure destruction. He cannot go forward—that appears to be an impossibility. On the right hand he is shut up by Providential hindrances—on the left an adversary prevents him. Here, then, is the counterpart of Israel’s position—Egyptians behind, the Red Sea in front, the craggy steeps of Pi Hahiroth on the right and the fortresses of Migdol and Baal Zephon frowning on the left. What is the Believer to do? The Master’s word is the same to him as to Israel, “Stand still.”

Brethren, let me warn you of other advisers. Despair whispers, “Cast yourself down, lie down and die. Complain against God. Give it all up. You have been buffeting for years with circumstances and you have made no headway. Give up the unfair contest. Float with the stream, even though you go over the waterfall. Let the worst come to the worst, for there is no hope of any success in life for you. If the Lord will always give you evil and not good, then curse God and die. No longer attempt to provide things honest in the sight of all men, just let things go as they will. Drift into poverty, or die in a ditch. God has given you up—evidently you have been the butt for all His arrows, the target for all His shots. Now, despair, let there be an end of the thing.”

Not so, says the God of our salvation. He loves us too well to bid us yield to despondency. He would have us put a cheerful courage on and even in our worst times rejoice in His love and faithfulness. Faith hears the bidding of her faithful God and is not willing to be shut up in the iron cage of despair. No, she defies the old giant to put so much as a finger upon her. Lie down and die? That she never will, while her God bids her stand. See, Beloved, the word stand. What does it mean? Keep the posture of an upright man, ready for action, expecting further orders, cheerfully and patiently awaiting the directing voice. This is a noble posture, but to despair is mean and beggarly.

Up, Brothers and Sisters, play the man, be strong! While Jehovah lives there is no room for fear. A happy future awaits you—yes, the present itself is bright with mercy—for the Lord’s love is still the same—

*“Behind a frowning Providence*

*He hides a smiling face.”*  
“Ah,” says Cowardice, “Retreat.” Cowardice whispered to the children of Israel that it was better to go back into Egypt. They are willing to go with ropes on their necks and their hands bound behind them and give themselves up to Pharaoh. To have their lives spared, they will relinquish their liberty. Hear them—they are basely talking about their graves while they are yet alive!

So Cowardice, sometimes, when the Christian comes into a great strait, whispers, “Retreat to the worldling’s way of action! You cannot play the Christian’s part, it is too difficult. Evidently there are some men who can have faith in God and can live in this world, but you cannot. If you must be in business, it is vain to attempt to be a Christian,” says Cowardice. “Do as others do—follow the hollow maxims and tricky customs that once ruled you. Let the shop be opened again on Sunday. Adulterate the goods once more. Tell lies as you once did. Be as other men are—go back and be Satan’s slave. It is evident that religion will not keep a coat on your back and bread on your table. Give it up now. Go back! Relinquish the ways of God and be once more a bond slave to your own corruptions and to the world’s evil habits.”

Ah, Trembler, however much Satan may urge this course upon you, you cannot follow it if you are a child of God. Cowardice may bid you do it, friends may advise it, and the devil may drive you to it—but if God has quickened you by His Divine Spirit, there is a something in you which is bound to go forward, which you yourself may struggle against, by virtue of the power of the old man, but which will get the mastery over you and lead you in a Divine captivity. So that even when evil is most rampant, the force of Divine Grace within will impel you towards the right, constraining you to stand in the ways of God.

Where God impels forward, Hell cannot drive back. O Sun, you turn not back because of the clouds which veil your splendors. Predestinated of the Lord to persevere in your perpetual path, you climb, still, the steep of Heaven and soon you descend to the western deeps. You pause not for tempest, hurricane, or storm. As a strong man runs a race, so do you speed onward towards your far-off goal, for the Almighty bade you move and in His might you travel onward evermore. So is it with you, Christian, God has said, “Forward.” His Divine fiat has bid you go from strength to strength, and so you shall, and neither death nor Hell shall turn you from your course.

What if for a while you are called to stand still? This is but to renew your strength for some greater advance in due time. Dream not, I pray you, of so much as looking back! Take courage and in believing silence possess your soul while your Captain bids you, “Stand still, and see the

salvation of the Lord.”

Rashness , another evil counselor, cries, “Do something! Something or other must be done! Do not despair! Do not turn back, but stir yourself and leave no stone unturned. To stand still and wait is sheer idleness. There is no time to be lost. You must do something, be it right or wrong.” Yes, but it is well to remember that in some cases, the more haste, the worse speed. When a Christian is in very sharp trouble, one of his strongest temptations is to be in an unbelieving, fretful state of agitation which leads him to premature and unwise action. How sadly some who are weak in faith are doing and nudging themselves by indiscreet haste! If they could but be quiet in faith, and stand still in patience until the Master led the way, they would be led aright. But they run before the cloud and fall into the net.

So in a hurry are they to escape from Pharaoh’s clutches that they run into them! I am sure that much of the sin which we commit when we are in trouble is produced by our being in a flurried state of heart. For then our soul is like a silly dove without heart—which has forgotten the dovecot and therefore flies here and there, round and round—at imminent peril of its life from the hawk. We must be doing something at once—we must do it, so we think—instead of looking to God, who will not only do something but who will do everything. Many of us, when in a strait, are hardly reasonable in our hasty endeavors. Fear blindfolds the judgment and makes fools of us. Why is there any need of such speedy leaping—why not stand still and look?

Are all means gone forever if not snatched at in an instant? Will the Lord’s arm grow short if I wait His time? Such questions we forget to ask. And therefore on we go, but our rash advance sinks us deeper in the mire. Very soon we try something else and only plunge into greater trials. We fly to this friend and take his advice, and then to that, and get the reverse. Then we go by our own judgment and are, perhaps, greater fools, still. O that we could learn to trust in the Lord with all our hearts and lean not to our own understanding! What the Christian does with cool deliberation, when he has waited upon God, when, like David, he has said, “Bring here the ephod,” he does with a purpose, and God is with him.

But what he does when he is excited or depressed, with an aching head and a fluttered heart, he will usually find cause to mourn over and possibly he will be involved in more trouble through what he has done himself, than through the affliction which God sent him. But faith, I say, listens neither to Despair, nor to Cowardice, nor to Rashness—it hears God say, “Stand still,” and, immoveable as a rock, it stands.

Another hiss of the old serpent, is the suggestion of presumption. “On, on,” says Presumption, “neck or nothing, make or break. If the sea is before you, march into it and expect a miracle. It is true you have no Divine command, but never mind, your own daring will work wonders. You know you are ordained to inherit Canaan, and therefore go on towards it, sea or no sea. God has not commanded you and He has not as yet divided the sea, but still go on.”  
Dear Brothers and Sisters there is much hellish craft in this temptation. It is peculiarly adapted to beguile those advanced Christians who know what it is to walk by faith. I am afraid it is very easy for us to mistake presumption for faith, although there is a wide difference between the two. There is so much of dash and dare about an incitement to presumption that brave, Christ-loving spirits must be on their guard against it. Presumption will never work the wonders of faith. If Christ bids me come on the water to Him, faith shall tread the billow. But if I spring upon the water myself, to walk to Christ, I must expect to sink far sooner than Peter did!

When our illustrious Commander puts a man upon an extraordinary work, He will give him extraordinary strength. But if a soldier runs without the captain’s order and defies a giant adversary, he may not expect assistance and will be sure to return with defeat. What a needful prayer is that, “Show me what I am to do.” In dilemmas between one duty and another it is so sweet to be humble as a child and wait with simplicity of soul upon the Lord. It is sure to be well with us when we feel and know our own folly and are heartily willing to be guided by the will of God. Such standing still has more true valor in it than the mad charges and dashes of an arrogant presuming. My Soul, seek earnestly the Divine Grace to stand still in obedience to your Lord’s behest.

But in what way are we to stand still, dear Friends? Surely it means among other things, that we are to wait awhile. Time is precious, but there are occasions when the best use we can make of it is to let it run on. If time flies, that is no reason why I am always to fly. Every experienced man knows that by being wrongly busy for one hour he may make mischief which a lifetime would hardly rectify. I may cut my fingers if I am too fast in reaching down for my sword. And if I run without waiting to enquire the way, I may run upon my ruin. Many who have been very busy in helping themselves had been better off if they had been waiting upon their Lord.

Prayer is never a waste of time. A man who would ride posthaste had better wait till he is perfectly mounted or he may slip from the saddle. He who glorifies God by standing still is better employed than he who diligently serves his own self-will. Wait awhile, then. Wait in prayer, however. Call upon God and spread the case before Him. Tell Him your difficulty and plead His promise of aid. Express your unstaggering confidence in Him—wait in faith—for unfaithful, untrusting waiting is but an insult to the Lord. Believe that if He shall keep you tarrying even till midnight, yet He will come at the right time. The vision shall come and shall not tarry.

Wait in quiet patience, not murmuring because you are under affliction, but blessing God for it—never murmuring against the second cause, as the children of Israel did against Moses. Never wish you could go back to the world again, but accept the case as it stands. Put it, as it stands, simply and with your whole heart, without any self-will, into the hands of your Covenant God, saying, “Now, Lord, not my will, but Yours be done. I know not what to do. I am brought to extremities, but I will wait until You shall split the floods, or else drive back my foes. I will wait if You keep me many a day, for my heart is fixed upon You alone, O God, and my spirit

waits for You in the full conviction that You will yet be my joy and my salvation, my refuge and my strong tower.”

Well, Brothers and Sisters, this is what is to be done. I dare say you will think it a very easy thing to stand still, but it is one of the postures which a Christian soldier learns not without years of teaching. I find that marching and quick marching are much easier to God’s warriors than standing still. It is, perhaps, the first thing we learn in the drill of human armies, but it is one of the most difficult to learn under the Captain of our salvation. The Apostle seems to hint at this difficulty when he says, “Stand fast and having done all, still stand.” To stand at ease in the midst of tribulation shows a veteran spirit, long experience, and much Divine Grace.

2. But now, secondly, what is to be seen? You are to see, O Believer, the salvation of God in your present temporal trials. You are to see God’s power and love manifested. Now I think I hear you say, “Well, one thing I know, I cannot deliver myself out of the dilemma in which I am now placed. I had some dependence once upon my own judgment and upon my own ability, but that dependence is entirely gone.” I thank God for that. It is a good thing for you, sometimes, Christian, to be wholly weaned from yourself. When you are made sick of self-dependence it is not long before your spirit shall be in a healthy state of trustfulness in your God.

“Well, but,” you say, “ I cannot conceive how God can deliver me. I have tried to think by what means He will interpose, but I cannot see a door open, nor a way of escape.” This is well, too, for now this shows that human wisdom is dead. God has nonplussed your wit. He has made a fool of your judgment. He laughs to scorn all that keen intellect of yours which once was your confidence. Now you shall see Divine Wisdom. When self goes, God comes in. And when human wisdom goes, then God’s Wisdom appears.

“Well, but,” says one, “whatever God may do for me, I can clearly perceive it must be His own doing, for I am powerless, paralyzed. I am so utterly broken by the strength of this tremendous current that if it is stemmed, it must be Divine energy that stems it. I cannot do it.” And this is well, too, for now your power is dead. It is now that all the Glory will be to God. While you had some power to help yourself, you would have shared the crown. But now, since all might is centered in the Eternal Arms, the whole of the crown shall be put on the Eternal Head. I am glad that your flesh is thus brought to a state of utter death.

“Ah, but,” you say, “Sir, I cannot believe it possible that I should be delivered. I find my faith, this morning, reduced to the lowest ebb. It has run dry. I cannot believe the promise. Ah, now,” you say, “even my faith fails me.” Everything that is of the creature has now gone. You are like the poor lost one in the desert, your tongue fails for thirst. And now the Lord will save you, for the God of Israel will not forsake you. Evidently you are reduced to the extremity of an extremity, when hope and faith, alike, are drowned. But now it is that the Lord will manifest His mighty strength. But you are saying, “What shall I see?” Well, I know not precisely what you shall see, except I am sure of this—you shall see the salvation of God—and in that salvation you shall see two or three things, just as the children of Israel saw them.

You shall see, if needs be, all nature and all Providence subservient to God’s love. They saw the waters stand upright, contrary to nature. The east wind was made at once to obey God’s behests and blow all that night. Thus they saw how there was nothing upon earth which could stand against the Divine will. And you shall see the same. If it is needful for your deliverance, fire shall not burn you, neither shall the floods drown you. If you cannot be helped in the common order of Providence, God will give some extraordinary proofs of His power. It may be that as you look back upon the method of your deliverance, you will be so surprised at it that you will say, “If anybody had told me this beforehand, I would have laughed at them. But now I admire and wonder at the love of God.”

You shall be led to see that all things, even the most deadly, work together for good to them that love God. The waters cannot drown them, but they shall drown their foes. You will see, again, if you will but stand still and see it, that the Lord reigns. You shall have such a picture of Jehovah sitting upon His Throne, controlling and overruling all things, that you shall extol Him with your whole heart as your God and King forever! You shall see most distinctly, if you will but wait and look for it, how He can make you a wonder. You shall be a wonder to yourself, and marvel how it is that God supports you. You shall be a wonder to your enemies. You shall do what they cannot do. You shall walk through the depths of the sea, which the Egyptians, wishing to do, were drowned.

You shall see your enemies utterly destroyed, if you will but wait. God’s bow shall be made quite naked. He shall make bare His arm. Death and Hell shall lie at your feet. Your spiritual and your temporal trials, too, shall be subdued under you. You shall tread them as straw is trod for the dunghill. And as for you, if you will but stand and see it, you shall go forth like Miriam with your timbrel of mirth and with your dance of joy! You cannot think it possible, shivering as you now are with the sight of your troubles, alarmed and afraid, that ever you should be singing, “O let us sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.” But you shall, in this life you shall praise Him. And if not, in the life which is to come. On that glorious shore you shall look back on all these perplexities and tribulations and you shall say, “Let us sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider has He cast into the sea.” Only learn to “Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.”

I have had this text burnt into my own consciousness. I desire to be found in that posture with regard to my own position in Christ’s Church and the work that the Master would have me perform. There are hours of perplexity when the most willing spirit, anxiously desirous to serve the Lord, knows not what part to take. Then what shall it do? Vex itself by despair? Fly back in cowardice, turn to the right hand in fear, or rush forward in presumption? No, but just say, “Lord, You know what I know not. Make a plain path for my feet. Because of my enemies, be my Guide. Guide me with Your counsel while on earth and afterward receive me to

Glory.”

Depend upon it, Beloved, if, by God’s Grace, we can get and keep in that frame of mind, it will not be long before God shall say to us, as distinctly as ever Moses said to the people, “Go forward.” And we shall go forward to our joy rejoicing, praising and magnifying His dear name!

II. I intend to take the text in reference to THE SINNER BROUGHT INTO THE SAME CONDITION IN A MORAL SENSE. I will trust that I have in this House of Prayer this morning some who have been led by God’s Spirit out of the Egypt of their sins, where they did eat the leeks and garlic and onions of their own sinful pleasures, but where they were made to smart as bond slaves under the Law. You have begun to feel some Divine awakenings. The Spirit of God has somewhat delivered you from the corruption of your former estate, but you are, as yet, under conviction.

You have as yet found no peace, no solid peace. Your sins are around you. You can hear their hoarse voices as they threaten to drag you back or to destroy you. Before you flows the tempestuous and deep sea of Divine Wrath—you know how richly you deserve it. And your spirit sinks within you as you think how soon it may swallow you up. On the right hand and on the left you see no method of escape. You had hoped to deliver yourself by your own righteousness, but the Law, like Pi Hahiroth, rises up with craggy battlements and blocks the way. On the right hand you seek to escape by ceremonies, but some dreadful threat of God against the depravity of your nature at once shuts out all hope in that direction.

You are come, this day, to a dead stand. Well, now, what are you to do? What is the Master’s word to you? O Sinner, thus convicted of sin, my message from the Lord to you, is “Stand still.” Understand what I mean, however, by it. I do not mean stand still in indifference, as though it were a little matter whether you are damned or not. I do not mean stand still in inaction, without prayer, without repentance, without faith. What I mean is this—“Stand still”—first in the renunciation of all your own righteousness and of all attempts to seek a righteousness by your own doings.

Man, you have been hunting the whole world round to get something that may commend you to God—cease your hunting and stand still. You have toiled and trod many a weary league of performances, and prayers, and thoughts, and willings, and doings—and you are not an inch the better for it. You have tried to make yourself feel this, and to compel yourself to do the other, but you are still as much in darkness as you were at the first. O, leave, leave, I pray you, all these attempts to work out a salvation for yourself and with regard to them all, “Stand still.” For, trembling Soul, how can you hope to save yourself by your own doings?

Can you keep the Law? Remember it is exceedingly broad—it takes in all your actions, private as well as public. Your words, even your idle words—no, it touches your thoughts—the imagination and the thoughts of your heart. Can you keep a Law so spiritual as this? Do you believe that you can live without sinful thoughts? Now, mark you, if you had no acts of transgression, yet your thoughts, themselves, were enough to send you to the lowest Hell. Why, when first of all a Christian gets a true view of the spirituality and extent of the Divine command, when he hears the Master’s Words and understands them, “Whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.” When he knows that this is true of every other command—that the thought of evil is sin—then he throws down the trowel with which he hoped to build himself a Babel tower of righteousness and he says: “I cannot do it, it is impossible. The Law is too great. I cannot attain unto it.”

Besides, remember your own weakness, Sinner. Have you tried to keep the Law? Have you not come down from your chamber in the morning full of good resolves as ever were in a man’s heart and yet before the first meal was over, have you not committed yourself by some wrong expression? Some angry temper? Did you ever pass a day without sin? Could you do it? Your many failures all tell you that there is no strength in your hand sufficient to open the gates of Heaven, no power in your feet that shall be strong enough to make you tread the weary pathway that would lead to salvation by the works of the Law. Stand still, Sinner! Why attempt a task for which you are incapable?

Do, I pray you, remember that if you could perform it in the future, yet your past sins—what about them? Why, man, remember your youth of folly? Did you always honor your father and your mother? Did your young tongue always speak the truth? Is it not true of you as the Apostle said, “They go astray from the womb, speaking lies”? Is it not one of the earliest things a child does—to lie? And do not all these things stand in the Book of God against you? There are your youthful sins. Who among us can look back upon our youth, with all its hot blood, without regret? “O God, lay not the sins of my youth at my door!” may be the prayer of even the most righteous man.

And, what about the crimes of your age? O Soul, if you will but look back through the glass of the Revelation of God, remembering that your thoughts and your words come into the account, you will surely see it to be a long, black, dismal list of reasons for condemnation! You cannot find in your whole life any cause why mercy should be extended—but you can see twenty thousand reasons why justice should have its way with you! Why, then, do you seek, being already over head and ears in debt, to work out your own salvation by the Law? You have already broken it, why try to keep it? That alabaster vase of God’s command—if you could have kept it spotless and whole, would have been a passport of entrance for you at the gates of Heaven. But you have broken it—broken it to shivers and your black and foul fingers have taken away all whiteness from it. O, be not so foolish as to seek to do what your past sins have rendered impossible!

Moreover, Soul, I do beseech you to remember that you cannot satisfy Divine Justice. What if you should put your poor body through a thousand mortifications—starve it in a prison, or stretch it upon a rack, or broil it upon the fire, or drown it in the sea? None of these things could take away the anger of God against you for your sins. No, when you shall lie in Hell, though the flames are hot, yet there is no power in the torments of Hell to make expiation for sin. The sinner is still as much an object of God’s righteous detestation, after millions of years of agony, as

when first the Law’s great whip began to fall.

Why then, do you go about hoping to do what the Justice of God may well assure you no creature of the race of Adam can do? And will you remember, too, that if—if you could atone for the past—and if you could prevent one sin for the future, yet you, yourself, are vile. Your nature is as evil as your actions. The marrow of your bones is impregnated with your lusts, and in your blood there rolls a black stream of sin. You are yourself loathsome. Not only does evil come from you, but there is a fountain of evil within you. The leprosy lies deep within.

You are yourself an enemy to God and your carnal mind cannot be reconciled to God. No power can reconcile it. God can give you a new mind and a new heart and a right spirit, but the old nature in you is so bad that it cannot be mended. It must be dead and buried, crucified and slain with Christ. For while it lives there is no perfection for you. It cannot help you. It can only mar God’s work till God strikes the nail through its head, even as Jael slew Sisera of old.

Sinner, why will you be trying your prayers, your Church attendance, your sacraments, your Chapel attendance, your Baptisms and the like? All these are a lie and a vanity, if you trust in them. Even God’s own ordained ordinances become a farce and a delusion when once you make them the foundation of your hope—

*“None but Jesus, none but Jesus  
Can do helpless sinners good.”*  
SINNER, STAND STILL NOW!

But now, in the second and last place upon this point, the sinner says, “Suppose then, I give up all hope and do no more by way of trusting to myself, what shall I see?” Why, you shall see the salvation of God! Do remark, dear Friends, that all the sinner can do is to see this salvation. He is not to work it out—he is not to help it on—he is to see it. Yet, mark you, that the sinner cannot even find out that salvation of itself. For if you notice, the next sentence to our text is, “which He will show you today.” God must show it to us, or else we cannot see it. “No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me draw him.” There must be a manifestation of Christ to us before we shall ever be able to perceive Him.

O that the Lord would now, while I talk for a few more minutes, reveal His great salvation to some sinner who is standing still! Now, Soul, you are thoroughly prepared to give up your self-righteousness. You are willing to be nothing and to do nothing in order to save yourself. Then let me tell you, God has worked out and brought in a glorious and complete salvation—far more resplendent than that which He meritoriously worked for Israel in the Red Sea. I will tell you of it. First, it was ordained of old, like that deliverance of the Red Sea. God had planned that. Before Pharaoh lived, it was written in the eternal Decree, “For this purpose have I raised you up, that I might show forth My power in you.”

From old eternity God had chosen Israel to be the objects of His love, and to cast away Egypt that it might show His honor in His terrible justice. The salvation of God’s people was ordained of old. Before yonder mountains lifted their heads, He ordained to save His people. And long before the ancient deeps began to roar in their channels, He had chosen them. God did not choose the Israelites because of any goodness in them. They were a stiff-necked generation. They had no hand in their own choice. He called their father, Abraham, as a Syrian ready to perish, and made him His chosen. And He made a covenant with Abraham’s seed after him. And so God has prepared a salvation for His elect, chosen by Him not because of any goodness in them, but because He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom He will have compassion.

Is not this a salvation that will suit you, O poor Sinner? If God had chosen them out of any merit, or if that choice depended on anything which men did or could do, you were a damned soul, for you have no goodness and you can do nothing. If God’s election comes to those who are without merit, without hope, without strength—here is hope for you! In the next place, the salvation which God shows is one worked by a Mediator. Moses was the mediator of that time. He stretched his rod over the sea. Jesus is the great Mediator, of whom Moses was the feeble type. Sinner, Jesus Christ has divided the Red Sea of God’s wrath, lifting up Himself upon the Cross, a far mightier weapon than Moses’ rod.

He made the floods of God’s wrath retire that all His chosen might march through. If you believe in Him. If standing still, today you will but see the salvation of God, you may discern a path to Heaven over which no waters of Divine wrath can ever dash. Christ Himself has substituted His own Person for yours—He took your guilt and stood as a sinner in the sight of God. He was punished instead of your being punished, and it is impossible, according to equity, that God can punish two for the one offense. If Christ has paid the debt, the debt is paid.

Since Jesus was the Substitute, wrath is gone. If Christ drank all the Hell-draught, then there is not a drop left for any of those for whom He died to drink. And if you can see this morning (it is all you have to do), if you can see that Christ has done this, rest assured that God who showed it to you, has not showed you a lie. Well do I remember when first my eyes saw the complete salvation of Christ Jesus. I had been gadding about after this and that and the other, but when I heard the Gospel message, “Look! Look unto Me and be you saved, all you ends of the earth,” I did nothing. I only trusted Christ to save me.

I turned away from deadly doings and from soul-destroying feelings to the wounded body of the Savior and believed that He had saved me. I trusted to the merit of His life and to the prevalence of His death and to the mighty power of His plea. And then the Spirit of God bore witness with my spirit that I was born of God and sin was put away. Sinner, if you are standing still—I pray God you have been brought to that—then LOOK! Can you not see it? Was ever anything more plain? Jehovah’s darling Son becomes a Man! Oh, mystery of mysteries! God was manifest in the flesh as a Man! He stands as the representative Head of all His elect.

Being such, when Justice cried, “Bring here the sinner,” Christ came forward bound like a captive and a malefactor. “Strip that sinner,” said Justice. And they stripped Him naked to His shame. “Bring forth the whip,” said Justice. “Ply it hard.” “He gave His back to the smiters and

His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.” “Drag Him to execution,” said Justice, “a sinner must die.” They pierced His hands and His feet. They lifted Him up upon the tree. They gave Him vinegar to drink in the midst of His bitterest grief. They mocked Him in His extreme sorrows. He cried to God, but God could not help a sinner and Christ stood as such, though in Him was no sin. That shriek of, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani,” was the gathering up of all human misery!

Hell did not know a more dolorous cry, than “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?” Let the thunderbolts be launched. Let the lightning scathe Him. Let every demon of the pit come up against Him. Let every friend forsake Him. Let His heart break, let His tongue cleave to His mouth. Let His mouth become a furnace. Let His heart be melted like wax. Let the joints of His bones be loosed. Let Him come into the jaws of death—the Law requires it all. It is done! Justice, have you any more to demand? She answers, “No.” The mighty Substitute exclaims, “It is finished.” And finished it is. The Red Sea of Justice is effectually and perpetually divided.

“But,” says one, “is this for the elect?” It is, and for them only. “But how do I know whether I am one of them?” The elect are known by this—“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” The true mark of election is trust. If you will stand still and trust Christ you are as certainly one of His elect as the Apostles that are before His Throne. Trust is the infallible mark of election. It is by this we make our calling and election sure. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved! Stand still, then, and see salvation in Jesus.

“Well,” says one, “but you really do not mean to say that I am now, just as I am, to trust Christ to save me and it is all done?” I do. Sinner, you have not misunderstood me. It is just that. Sinner, do nothing, either great or small. Jesus did it all, long, long ago. To add anything to Him were to insult His perfect work. To hope to complete His matchless righteousness were impertinence. To imagine that you could make better that which He has finished were an idle, soul-destroying dream. Take a finished Savior just as He is and you are saved now, even though you have no good thing of your own. Away with those rusty farthings of your own merit, those proposals and vows of your own doings! Take Jesus as He is and that act of accepting Christ through His merit saves your soul!

After you have done this, then will come the command—“Go forward.” For the present, all we have to say to you, poor Trembler, is, “Stand still and see the salvation of God.” May the Lord bless these last words to the sinner, and my first words to the saint. And, by His Grace, we will together stand still and see what the Lord has worked. We will together sing unto Him, for He will triumph gloriously and all our enemies shall be cast into the midst of the sea! The Lord bless you for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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UNSEASONABLE PRAYER  
NO. 2851

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1903.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 14, 1877.

**“Why do you cry unto Me?”  
Exodus 14:15.**

AT first sight we might suppose that crying unto God was so good a thing that it would never be necessary for the Lord to ask the question, “Why do you cry unto Me?” But the question we are now to consider shows that there may be a time when, even to a man like Moses, it is necessary for God to ask, “Why do you cry unto Me?” Think of the circumstances in which the Israelites were then—the Red Sea was before them and the Egyptians were behind—so that when the Lord said to Moses, “Why do you cry unto Me?” Moses might very properly have replied, “What else can I do? There are great multitudes of blood-thirsty foes behind us and nothing but the roaring sea in front of us—what can we do except cry unto You?” But the fact was that the time for praying about the matter was past and the time for acting had come. So the Lord said to Moses, in effect, “Speak not to Me, but ‘Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward’—forward through the sea that now rolls in front of them. That sea will divide as they march into it, so you need not pray any more about that difficulty. I will prepare a pathway for the people as they advance and they shall go safely through the very midst of the sea.”

There is a time for praying, but there is also a time for holy activity. Prayer is adapted for almost every season, yet not prayer alone, for there comes, every now and then, a time when even prayer must take a secondary place and faith must come in and lead us not to cry unto God but to act as He bids us, even as the Lord said to Moses, “Why do you cry unto Me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward; but lift you up your rod and stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.”

It is perfectly clear, then, that there may come a time when crying unto God becomes unseasonable. Our Lord’s command to His disciples is, “Ask.” But what follows that command? Why, the promise, “you shall receive.” Then there must be a time for receiving as well as season for asking! But if, instead of stretching out my hands gratefully to receive what God is waiting to give, I continue to ask and forget or neglect to receive, I put prayer out of its proper place! Our Savior also said, “Seek, and you shall find.” Well, if I have sought and, at last, have found the treasure I have been seeking—but if, instead of perceiving that it is there and taking possession of it, and blessing God that I have found it—if I still go on seeking for it, then I have forgotten that while there is a time to seek, there is also a time to find, and my seeking then becomes unseasonable!

It is the same with the command and promise, “Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” Suppose that I have knocked and that the door has been opened to me, but that I still stand knocking at it? It is manifest that I am acting foolishly and wrongly—that I am casting reflections upon the owner of the house and also upon the sincerity of my own knocking, for it is doubtful whether I really did knock with the honest purpose of getting the door opened if, when that opening has taken place, I do not avail myself of the opportunity to enter, but continue still to knock. I do not say that we may not pray for something else, but I do say, in respect to the one thing which we have asked of God, that there comes a time for receiving rather than asking. With regard to the thing which we have sought at the Lord’s hands, there comes a time for finding. And concerning the door at which we have knocked, there comes a time for opening. And, in each of these cases, the Lord’s question to Moses comes with appropriateness to each one of us, “Why do you cry unto Me?”

When do you think, dear Friends, that prayer about anything becomes out of date? I answer, When we ought to believe that we have the answer to our supplication. I do believe that many a time some of you go on asking for a certain blessing after you have received it though you are not conscious that you have it. I am glad that you still ask for it as you think that you have not received it, but it would be a better evidence of your spiritual growth if you perceived that when God has given you a certain thing in answer to your petitions, you certainly do not need to continue asking for it. You have it, so rejoice over it and bless the Lord for giving it to you! I think there are some Christians who have received many blessings of which they are quite unaware. They have what they asked for, yet they still continue to pray for them. For instance, in some cases the prayer for assurance is offered long after assurance has been granted. Someone says that he believes the promise of God, but he needs to be more fully assured concerning it. My dear Brother, what do you mean? To be more assured that God made the promise? Because if so, you will have to go into the question of the authenticity of that particular passage and of the Bible in general!

“No,” you say, “I do not mean that, for I am quite sure that God gave that promise.” Then, do you mean that you doubt whether God will fulfill the promise that He has given? Because if so, I must say with all solemnity, that you ought to be assured that God cannot lie. This is not a thing for you to pray about, but for you to believe! It is the Lord’s due that you should not allow anything like a question to arise over this matter. “Has He said, and shall He not do it? Or has He spoken, and shall He not make it good?” There is His definite promise and yet I go and ask Him to give me an assurance concerning it? If I were to give a promise to any of you and you were, afterwards, to come to me and say, “Give me further assurance,” I would feel that you did not believe that I could or would do what I had promised! If such treatment as that were meted out to me by any of you, I would not feel that you had done me any honor by finding it difficult to believe my word—yet why should I expect you to honor me? But I do expect that a son should honor his own father! And I do expect that a child of God should so fully believe his Heavenly Father that he should not talk about needing assurance of the truthfulness and reliability of His promises of Grace! Instead of continuing to pray for God to keep His word, it would be far better for you to believe that He has done so and that He always will do so!

“But it may be presumption,” says someone. No, it can never be presumption to believe God! It is presumption to ever doubt Him. However great His promise may be, it must be true—and it is presumptuous for anyone to ask, “Can this be true?” or, “How can it be accomplished?” It would be enough for me that God has said it—how He will fulfill His promise is His business, not mine. I rest upon His word with a simple, childlike faith—and I am sorry if any of you are not doing the same. I feel that, sometimes, in the matter of assurance, God might say to us, “‘Why do you cry unto Me?’ Believe My word and rest assured that I shall certainly fulfill all that I have promised.”

It is the same, also, in plain matters of Christian duty. It is a very shocking thing, but I have known the case of a man, I hope a Christian, knowing such-and-such a thing to be right, yet not attending to it, but saying that he was praying about it. He is quite certain about that particular thing—it could not possibly be plainer than it is, yet he is praying about it! Such-and-such a Truth of God is revealed plainly enough in the Scriptures—the man could see it there and did not doubt its authenticity—but he wanted it to be “brought home” to his conscience, so he said. Well, all I can say about such conduct as that is that it is a kind of rebellion against God, a shameful piece of hypocrisy—pretending to honor God in one duty while you know that you are neglecting another!

My dear Brothers and Sisters, if you are a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you know that it is the will of Christ that all Believers should be baptized even as He was, do not go home and pray about it—but be baptized! If you are not a member of a Christian Church and you know that it was the practice of the early Christians to first give themselves to the Lord and afterwards to give themselves to His Church, do not tell me that you have been praying about that matter for months—cease praying about it and go and do it! It is idle to talk of praying about things which are clearly according to the will of God. Cease praying about them— practice them!

You feel that you ought to have family prayer, yet you say that you have been praying about it! Praying about it? That is not what you have been doing—you have only been trying to see whether you could not find a loophole by which you could escape from an uncongenial but recognized duty! Go and do it, dear Friend—do not, any longer, act the hypocrite’s part by pretending to pray about it! Yet this is the way in which some, who say that they love the Lord, try to play fast and loose with known precepts and duties. Do not let any of us fall into this sin—if we do, the Lord may well say to us, as he did to Moses—only He may say it to us with more anger—“‘Why do you cry unto Me’ about such a thing as that? Do what you know to be right.”

I. Now, leaving that part of our theme altogether, I come to a more general subject, which is this, IT IS GOOD FOR A MAN OFTEN TO ASK HIMSELF THE QUESTION, “WHY DO I PRAY? WHY DO I CRY UNTO GOD?”

In some cases, I fear that the answer will be exceedingly unsatisfactory. One replies, “I pray because I was always trained to do so. My dear mother, now in Heaven, taught me a form of prayer and that is why I continue to repeat it.” If your mother had taught you the Muslim form of prayer, I suppose you would have kept on repeating it. Or if she had taught you to worship a block of wood or stone, would you have done so? I do not wish to speak with contempt concerning the influence of a mother’s teaching, but I must say that this, alone, is a very unsatisfactory reason for presenting a prayer to God. Let me ask, Did your mother, when she taught you that form of prayer, merely mean that you should repeat those words without any particular thought as to what they meant? If she did, your mother knew but little of vital godliness and, probably, you know even less! You must pray to God from your inmost heart. Your soul must have real fellowship with Him, or else the prayer your mother taught you may be of no more use for you than if you repeated the alphabet backwards or forwards. I have heard of a man of 70 who said that he always prayed night and morning. When he was asked what he said in his prayer, it turned out that he only repeated the form which he had been taught to say as a little child. Now, if you had taught a parrot to say a prayer like that, the parrot would not have been saved, nor will you, if that is all you have to depend upon. There must be something, as a reason for prayer, vastly superior to that, or else your prayer may be nothing but a mockery of supplication, a sepulcher of devotion with no life in it, an external form which cannot please God.

Another says, “ I pray because prayer is a part of my religion.” Yes, and it is a part of every true Christian’s religion to pray. It must be an essential part of his religion. But what sort of prayer is this of yours which seeks to justify itself upon the ground of being a part of your religion? And what is the religion of which it is a part? Is it a religion which knows God and draws near to Him? Is it a religion which leads you to seek the Lord in spirit and in Truth? If so, God bless your religion and the prayer that is a part of it! But if your religion consists merely in attendance at church, or at the meeting house so many times on the Lord’s-Day and in the repetition of certain words which you have been taught, God deliver you from it! If your religion is to be worth anything, it must have a heart—there must be heart-work—the work of the Holy Spirit upon your heart and the drawing near of your soul unto God. Otherwise, all your outward performances, however excellent they may appear to be, will land you short of Heaven.

Another friend replies, “I pray because it is a right thing to do.” There is something hopeful about that answer, but the question is, What sort of prayer do you pray? I make that enquiry because, although it is right to pray, it is not right to pray some sorts of prayer. It is the right thing for a clerk in the telegraph office to work the telegraphic apparatus, but suppose that he should merely move a handle backwards and forwards for a whole day, yet never send a message or receive one? I would not think it was right for him to keep on moving that handle to no purpose. Evidently a wire is broken, or something is out of order—there is no connection with the electric current, for the machinery does not work. And in like manner, a prayer that never reaches the heart of God as it should and never brings an answer to your suppliant soul—a prayer in which you have no fellowship with the invisible Jehovah—is not a right kind of prayer to pray. And I cannot say of such prayer that it has any good reason why it should be presented. If you do not mean the petitions that you present, you mock God when you utter them, for they are only words and nothing but words.

There are some who would not like to say, just in so many words, exactly what they think, but they really pray because they regard prayer as being more or less meritorious. They do not consider it so meritorious that they expect to be saved by it, but they have some kind of notion that it helps with a great many other things, among the rest, faith in Jesus Christ to procure salvation for the soul. All these things go into the scale and, at last, they make up the weight required—that seems to be their idea. In fact, according to some, our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, is only a make-weight—our prayers, tears, alms and good works count for a great deal. These people do not quite advocate salvation by works. They do not go the full length of the road that the Romanist takes, but they go a very long way in the same direction through their belief that there is some kind of merit about various things appertaining to themselves, and, especially, that their prayers are meritorious.

I will speak about this error very strongly, lest I should not be understood by all and I state my final conviction that if any man thinks that his prayers have any merit in them, of themselves, every prayer that he presents is an insult to the Lord Jesus Christ, for He is set forth as the only Propitiation for sin! If you think that your prayers help in any degree to put away sin, you make an antichrist of your prayers! Christ’s blood and righteousness form the only ground of your acceptance before God. If you reckon your prayers as a ground, or medium, or even a help to your acceptance with God, you push the Cross of Christ far into the background and put your prayers into the place of the only Substitute for sinners—and the more you pile them up, the more you multiply your sin!

Possibly I have quoted the answers which would be given if I were to ask many of you why you cry unto the Lord in prayer. I would like to listen to the prayer of every man here present—without his knowing that I was doing so—I would like to put my ear to the keyhole of his room and hear the style of his praying, but, as I cannot do that, I would like to ask whether you would wish anybody to hear them? How do your prayers appear to the eyes of God? Has it been humble, earnest, sincere, trustful, relying upon the atoning Sacrifice of Christ, and upon the effectual working of the Holy Spirit? If so, it is well, but if not, it is only vanity of vanities. All is vanity! How would it be with some of us if we were put into the condition of the Highland soldier of whom I have read? In our war with our American colonists, before they gained their freedom from this country, a certain Highland regiment was engaged. Every evening one of the men was observed to go away from the camp into an adjacent woods— and it was suspected that he had gone to give information to the enemy. He was, therefore, arrested and brought before the colonel of the regiment.

The other officers said to him, “Now tell us what you have been doing while you have been absent from the camp.” “Well,” he said, “I have been accustomed, whenever I can, to retire for an hour or two of private prayer.” The colonel happened to be a Scotchman and a Presbyterian, so he said to the soldier, “Well, you never had such reason to pray before as you have tonight. If you do go for an hour together to pray, you can pray—so let us hear you now.” The man knelt down and poured out his soul before God, seeking deliverance at the Lord’s hands and resigning his spirit into the keeping of his Heavenly Father. He prayed with such an earnest, simple power that when he had finished, the colonel said to the other officers, “A man who can come on parade like that must have been drilled a good many times. I think we may confidently accept what he has said as being true. There is no doubt about his having been alone in prayer to God, now that he can pray like that before us.”

Happy is the man whose prayer would bear to be listened to by his fellow men in such a critical season as that, so that they should be compelled to say of him, “That man has often prayed before tonight—he has the very brogue of one who communes with Heaven.” But he who gives such answers as I have been quoting would certainly not be able to pray before others as that soldier did!

II. But now, secondly, THERE ARE SOME ANSWERS TO THIS QUESTION WHICH BETRAY A GREAT DEAL OF IGNORANCE.  
“Why do you cry unto Me?” There are times, dear Brothers and Sisters, when a sinner’s crying to God in prayer hinders him from immediate repentance. The Gospel comes to each man and says, “Repent, and be converted.” The man says, “I will pray.” So he gets away alone and he prays—but such prayer as that cannot be acceptable to God. There is a favorite sin, of which he has long been guilty. He does not give it up, but he says that he will pray about it. God says to such a man, “‘Why do you cry unto Me?’ Give up your sin! This is not a matter for you to pray about, but to repent of.” The man says, “I was asking for repentance.” Ask, if you will, for repentance, but exercise it as well. Christ does not bid us pray to have our right hand cut off, or our right eye plucked out, but He says, “If your right eye offends you, pluck it out, and cast it from you...And if your right hand offends you, cut it off, and cast it from you.” It will never do for any man to hope to be saved by putting prayer into the place of genuine repentance and immediate forsaking of sin!  
The same is true of those who put prayer into the place of believing in Christ. “I mean to pray about the salvation of my soul,” says someone. My dear Friend, the Gospel says to you, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” “I have been praying for salvation, Sir, and I hope to get it if I keep on praying.” No, you will not—on the contrary, you will be lost forever if you pray instead of believing in Christ! As surely as you live, if you will not accept God’s way of salvation, which is to believe in Jesus Christ, whether you pray or do not pray, you are a lost man. “There,” says the Lord, “on yonder Cross is your only hope. Trust My Son, and you shall be saved.” “Lord,” you reply, “I will pray about the matter.” Again the Lord says to you, “You see My well-beloved Son hanging upon that tree? There is life for a look at Him.” “Lord, I will pray about the matter.” The Lord says, “I have said to you, ‘Hear, and your soul shall live.’ ‘Look unto Me, and be you saved.’” “Lord, I will pray.” To put the matter very strongly, might not the man almost as well say, “Lord, I will swear”? Is there not just as much of the spirit of rebellion in the one answer as in the other? He has chosen his own way instead of accepting God’s way! God’s way is, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.” And to this, the man replies, “Lord, I will pray.” And if that is all he does, he sets his seal to his own condemnation! In such a case, the Lord asks the question in my text, “Why do you cry unto Me?” Why are you crying? For another atonement beside that of the Lord Jesus Christ? Crying for God to save you in some other way than by believing in Jesus? Crying for somebody else to believe for you? Crying to the Holy Spirit to repent for you? Is that what you want? He will not do it! Why should He repent for you? You must repent for yourself and believe for yourself, for the Holy Spirit cannot repent for you, or believe for you. If a man, instead of believing the Truth of God which is so plain and which is evidently able to save him— if, instead of simply resting upon the atoning Sacrifice of Christ, he says, “I will pray about the matter,” he betrays the fatal ignorance of his heart in supposing that God will make a new way of salvation for him instead of the one which He has plainly revealed in His Word!  
Perhaps another one says, “I am in hopes that, by praying, I shall be made more fit for believing in Christ.” Fit for believing in Christ? You also are upon the wrong tack, like these others of whom I have been speaking. Your ignorance is misleading you. Fit for believing in Christ? A man is never so “fit for believing” as when, in himself, he is most unfit! It is unfitness, not fitness, that is required! What is fitness for being washed? Filth—and filth alone! What is fitness for receiving alms? Poverty, abject need. What is fitness for receiving pardon? Guilt—and only guilt. It comes not as an act of Grace, but as an act of Justice if there is no guilt—for the display of God’s pardoning Grace, guilt is needed. If you are guilty, if you are black, if you are foul you have all the fitness that is required! So, come and find in Jesus Christ all that meets your greatest and most urgent need!  
Does someone ask, “But must I not have a sense of my need?” Not as a fitness for coming to Christ, for the man who says, “I am quite fit to be saved, for I feel my need,” does not really feel his need as he should and is the farthest off from Christ. O you who are most empty, most guilty, most lost, most ruined, you are the most “fit” for the great Savior to save! May the Holy Spirit enable you to realize this and drive out of you the foolish notion that your praying is to help Christ to save you and to take you part of the way on the road to Heaven! Your prayer will not help the Divine surgery which alone can cure you! So, just as you are in all your wretchedness and sin, trust Christ to save you, for He is able to save you, from first to last, without any help of yours!  
III. Now I am going to close by mentioning OTHER ANSWERS WHICH MAY BE GIVEN TO THIS QUESTION—“Why do you cry unto Me?”  
I will tell you my own answer to this question. I cry to God, principally, because I cannot help doing so. I cry to God for the same reason that I eat when I feel hungry and for the same reason that I groan when I am in pain—it is the outward expression of the condition of my inward life. I cannot help praying. I think if anyone were to say to me, “You must not kneel down to pray,” it would not make any difference to my praying. If I were not allowed to utter a word all day long, that would not affect my praying. If I could not have five minutes that I might spend in prayer by myself, I would pray all the same. Minute by minute, moment by moment, somehow or other, my heart must commune with my God. Prayer has become as essential to me as the heaving of my lungs and the beating of my pulse. I do ask God to give me power in prayer and I chide myself if I am lax in prayer. Still, almost unconsciously, one gets praying in the streets, praying while preaching to you—yes, sometimes, one almost prays in his sleep! One gets so into the spirit of prayer that, without always knowing it, there is a prayer leaping from the heart and the very glance of the eye becomes a means of communion with God. So, that is my answer to the Lord’s question, “Why do you cry unto Me?” I pray because I cannot help doing so.  
It is an equally good answer when anyone can say, “I pray because I delight in it. There is no holy exercise which is so sweet, so blessed, so delightful, so inspiring, so care-removing, as praying to my loving Heavenly Father. Nothing brings me as near to Heaven, or opens its gate so wide to me, or gives me such a foretaste of its Glory, as prayer mingled with praise.”  
It would also be a good answer if you should say, “I pray because I have such great needs that I cannot help praying. I have such a little faith that I must pray for more. I have so many troubles that I must pray to be delivered out of them. I feel that I have so many sins that I must pray to be cleansed from them. I have so many desires after better things that I must pray for those things to be given to me. I feel that not merely my happiness, but my sorrow also drives me to my knees.” I do not mind how you get to the Mercy Seat as long as you get there in spirit and in Truth and do really pray. But, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I do hope that these reasons for prayer are those that you would yourselves give if the Lord were to say to each one of you, “Why do you cry unto Me?”  
I think I hear another say, “I pray because what little repentance and faith I have can express themselves best in prayer. I tell the Lord how I hate my sin and I ask Him to help me to hate it still more. I go to Him when I fall and ask Him to hold me up for the future. I tell Him all my faults and follies and I ask Him to teach me, and sanctify me. I find that my little faith is most at home and at ease when I go to God in prayer. I tell the Lord that I do trust Him and I ask Him to increase my faith. I tell Him that if He should refuse to listen to me, I will still cling to the hem of His garment and if I perish, I will perish at the foot of His Cross.” Well, that is the right way to pray—when prayer is the expression of penitence and faith.  
“Yes,” says another, “but I pray because I get more repentance and more faith by praying.” Just so. They grow while they are exercising themselves. He that weeps for sin will weep more as he prays, and he that believes in Christ will believe more strongly while he expresses that believing in prayer for yet greater faith.  
All these are good reasons for praying without ceasing.  
Perhaps one of the best is this. “I pray because I am nothing, and I want to get to the great ‘I AM.’ I pray because I have nothing and I know that all I can have must come from Him. I pray because my poverty would gladly draw upon His infinite wealth, because my weakness would drink in His eternal strength, because my sin would be a partaker of His perfect holiness, because my nothingness would find itself lost in the allsufficiency of God.” These are blessed reasons for praying and if these are your reasons, pray on, Brothers and Sisters. Pray on, if you can thus answer the Lord’s question, “Why do you cry unto Me?”  
I suppose that there may have come into this place someone who never prays. If so, I do not know where you are, Friend. I am glad I do not. I would look upon you with the greatest pity if I knew you. The very thought of such a sad case as yours makes me feel heavy of heart. A man who never speaks to his Maker! A man? Can he be a man? Let me look him up and down. A man, “fearfully and wonderfully made” by God, yet he never speaks to his Creator! O God, to what a terrible depth a man can sink if he can live without prayer! What a strange creature he is! A little chicken drinks and lifts its head each time it sips. “The ox knows his owner, and the ass”—you know how stupid the ass is, yet he knows “his master’s crib.” But here is a man, whom God has made, and kept in being all these years. He gave him a household and made him well-to-do among his fellow men, and kept him out of the asylum, and out of the workhouse, and out of the jail, and out of Hell, and yet he never prays? O knees that never bend before the Lord! O hearts that never yield yourselves to God, are you not accursed?  
Ah, Sirs, assuredly a curse rests upon the man who never prays! He who prays not, believes not, and what says the Word of God concerning the man who does not believe? “He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.” From my inmost soul, I pity even guilty men who are condemned to die because they have broken the laws of their country and have taken the lives of their fellow creatures. Yet, O you unbelievers, their condition only differs in degree from yours, for you, also, are “condemned already” because you have not believed on the only-begotten Son of God! Oh, I beseech you, turn unto Him before it is too late and you are cast into Hell, where the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched forever and ever! If you believe that what I have said is false, you will take no notice of it, but if you believe that this Book is, indeed, the Word of God, and most, if not all of you, know that it is—then, escape for your lives—look not behind you, but lay hold on eternal life and may God the Holy Spirit enable you to do so this very moment!  
It is not to prayer that I exhort you, but I urge you to obey that great Gospel command, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” And more than that, in the name of God, I command you to believe in Him whom He has sent as the only Savior of sinners. Believe on Him! Trust in Him and go your way forgiven! God grant it, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **LUKE 18:1-27.**

Verse 1. And He spoke a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint. Especially not to faint in prayer, not to become disheartened, or weary, even if their prayers should, for a long time, remain unanswered.

2, 3. 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. He would not have interested himself in her case simply because she was a poor widow. He had no heart of compassion for her, nor would it have concerned him at all that her adversary had wronged her. He did not trouble to discharge the duties appertaining to his office. No fear of God and no respect for public opinion affected him at all.

4. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man. He even boasted of the very thing of which he ought to have been ashamed—“‘I fear not God, nor regard man.’ I care for nobody and defy everyone.”

5. Yet because this widow troubles me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. He cared for nobody but himself. He was concerned about his own peace of mind. The poor woman could win through his selfishness, what she could not get from his sense of justice, since that had no weight with him. Her importunity won for her what nothing else could procure.

6-8. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge said, and shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith on the earth? God will hear the earnest, united, persistent cries of His people. His Church, today, is like a widow left forlorn. Her cries go up to God, pleading that He will vindicate her cause—and He will do so. He may wait a while, but the prayers of His people are not lost. By-and-by, He will avenge His own elect. So is it with regard to all true prayer. Though, for wise reasons, God may delay to reply, yet He files our petitions—they are registered in Heaven. Their power is accumulating, it is all adding to the great pile of supplication which is the real strength of the Church of Christ. What a question that is, “When the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith on the earth?” He can find it if anybody can, for He knows what faith is, where faith is—but will He find any? Well, He will find so little, even among the best of His people, that the question may well be put—and among a great many who profess to have faith, He will find none at all! Brothers and Sisters, we pray so feebly, we expect so little, we ask with such diffidence, we have such slight courage in prayer that if the Son of Man, Himself, came among us to search us, how little faith He would discover!

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. He could not even magnify his own excellencies without sneering at the poor publican who had said nothing against him, or about him. That is a poor kind of religion which has to look down upon all others before it can look up to itself. What, O Pharisee, if others are not, apparently, so good as you are in some things? Yet, in other things, they probably excel you and if you think yourself worthy of praise, you have never really seen yourself as you are in God’s sight! A correct knowledge of your own heart would have led you to a very different conclusion. It is a good thing that the Pharisee appeared to be thankful for something, but, probably, that was merely a complimentary speech which meant very little. He did not thank God half as much as he praised himself!

13. And the publican, standing afar off.—Away in some distant corner.  
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. He makes no reflection upon others, but confesses his own sin and appeals to the great Propitiation, for the word he used means, “God be propitious to me, a sinner.”  
14, 15. 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. And they also brought unto Him infants, that He would touch them: but when His disciples saw it, they rebuked them. Were not these children too little and too unimportant for Christ to notice? Their understanding was not sufficiently developed to know anything that He might say—what was the use of bringing them for His blessing?  
16. But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God consists of child-like spirits, persons like these children! Instead of needing to grow bigger in order to be fit to be Christians, we need to grow smaller! It is not the supposed wisdom of manhood, but the simplicity of childhood that will fit us for the reception of Divine Truth. Alas, we are often too much like men—if we were more like children, we would receive the Kingdom of God far more readily.  
17-19. Verily I say unto you, Whoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein. And a certain ruler asked Him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why do you call Me good? None is good, save One, that is, God. Yet the ruler was right. He knew not that he was speaking to One who is, assuredly, God and, in the highest sense, good. But, since he had asked, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Christ answered his enquiry.  
20, 21. You know the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, honor your father and your mother. And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up. All which appears to be simple enough if you only look on the surface. But when you come to recollect that there is an inward, spiritual meaning to all this, that a licentious look breaks the command about adultery, that a covetous desire is stealing, that the utterance of a slander is bearing false witness and so on, who is he that shall enter into life upon such terms as these? Yet they cannot be lowered, for they are, spiritually, just and right.  
22. Now when Jesus heard these things, He said unto him, Yet you lack one thing. Christ gives him a test. If he is what he thinks he is, he will be ready to obey whatever command God lays upon him. Christ is about to lay one upon him—let us see whether he will obey or not.  
22. Sell all that you have and distribute unto the poor, and you shall have treasure in Heaven: and come, follow Me. Now, which will he love the more—the Son of God—or his wealth?  
23-27. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, He said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God. And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved? And He said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. Yet some men spend all their lives in the earnest endeavor to make it hard for them to be saved! They are trying, as much as they can, to block up the road to eternal life, hoarding up that which will be a grievous burden to them, even if God shall lead them in the way to Heaven. How much better is it to live wholly unto God and then, be we rich or be we poor, consecrate all to Him and live to His praise and glory!

—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 #548 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FORWARD! FORWARD! FORWARD!  
NO. 548

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 18, 1863, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And the Lord said unto Moses, Why cry you unto Me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.”  
Exodus 14:15.**

SPIRITUAL men, in their distresses, turn at once to prayer even as the stag when hunted takes to flight. Prayer is a never-failing resort. It is sure to bring a blessing with it. Even apart from the answer of our supplications, the very exercise of prayer is healthy to the man engaged in it. Far be it from me ever to say a word in disparagement of the holy, happy, heavenly exercise of prayer. But, Beloved, there are times when prayer is not enough—when prayer itself is out of season. You will think that a hard saying and say, “Who can bear it?” But my text is to the point. Moses prayed that God would deliver His people. But the Lord said to him, “Why cry you unto Me?” As much as to say this is not the time for prayer, it is the time for action. “Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.” When we have prayed over a matter to a certain degree, it then becomes sinful to tarry any longer. Our plain duty is to carry our desires into action, and having asked God’s guidance and having received Divine power from on high, to go at once to our duty without any longer deliberation or delay.

Brethren, a vigorous faith will often shut its eyes to difficulties. When faith looks upon a difficulty as being exceedingly great, then she turns to prayer. But, on the other hand, after having sought God’s help and having received it, she frequently laughs at the impossibility and cries, “It shall be done.” and then, instead of betaking herself any longer to her knees, she boldly marches on, believing that the difficulty will vanish before her, that the crooked will be made straight and the rough places plain. We are not to be always praying over a difficulty. When we have fairly committed it to God, we are to act upon the assurance that He has heard us.

Nor will such an action be the fruit of rashness for it is a solid and substantial fact that prayer does avail with God. Beloved, it strikes me that the advice which the Lord gave to Moses was such as He has given to the preacher tonight—and that the message which Moses delivered to the children of Israel is a very fit one for me to deliver to you. Short, prompt, soldier-like, here is the whole of it—“Forward! Forward!” If you have been sitting down or tempted to go back—“Forward!” We have long been praying, let us tonight, “go forward.” The one subject we shall take up and try to deliver to different classes of characters, is, “Thus says the Lord, you children of Israel, Forward!”

I. First, we will contemplate THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL AS A FLOCK OF FUGITIVES. And in this light they give encouragement to trembling sinners flying from the curse of the Law and from the power of their sins. I think I see those poor Israelites crowding together, all alarmed and afraid, whispering to one another some such trembling words as these—“I saw them. I saw my old master on horseback riding after me. I looked and I saw regiment upon regiment of warriors marching in long red lines.” “I heard,” says another, “the sound of their war music. I heard the clash of their spears. We cannot stand against them! We are only defenseless multitudes and they are the well-trained sons of Mizraim. Their swords will be drunk with our blood.”

They huddled together as a company of doves seeking to escape the hawk. Alas! What can they do? They are crying to God and to Moses, thinking of this plan and devising another. And Moses himself, in some sort of alarm, is crying out to God for them—“Lord, help this people! They are in great straits. They are in frightful difficulties. The enemy says, ‘I will pursue them. I will overtake them. I will divide the spoil. My lust shall be satisfied upon them.’ Lord, what am I to do with this company?” Here comes the Divine answer, full of wisdom and love—“Speak unto them and bid them go forward.”

Now such is my message to the company of fugitives who are here tonight. You have been awakened. Your conscience has been alarmed. You have begun to feel the terrors of the Law. You have heard the crack of the whip and felt it on your back. You are trying to escape from your sins. You are not as you used to be, a contented bondsman, but you pant to be delivered altogether from sin and its power and its guilt. You have been flying as best you could from sin. But the whole of your sins are after you and your conscience, with its quick ear, can hear the sound of threatening judgment. “Alas,” your heart is saying, “unless God helps me, I shall be in Hell!” “Alas,” says your judgment, “unless God is merciful, I shall soon perish!” Every power of your manhood is now upon the alarm. The different parts of your heart are talking to one another and they are all foreboding desperate mischief.

Now what shall I do for you? Shall I pray for you? Yes, that I will. Shall I bid you pray? Yes, that I may. And we may blend our prayers together— “God be merciful to us sinners! Lord save us, or we perish!” But I think while I am praying for you, I hear my Master saying, “Why cry you unto Me? Tell them to go forward! Preach Christ to them instead of praying any longer or bidding them pray. Deliver to them the message of the Gospel— “Forward, Sinner, forward to the Cross! Forward to the five wounds! Forward to the bloody sweat and to the crown of thorns! Go forward to the agonies of Gethsemane and to the death struggles of Golgotha. Forward! Forward to the place—

*‘Where the full Atonement’s made,  
Where the utmost ransom’s paid.’ ”*

I know what you say. “Right before me rolls the great sea of God’s wrath. I am surrounded with a dark, dark night and I see no light but the sheen of these terrible waves of fire. If I go forward, God’s eternal wrath is in the way.” Forward, Sinner, whatever may obstruct the way! Let not Hell itself block up the road! Do you not know that when Jesus is your Leader, He will at once divide the Red sea of Jehovah’s wrath? He did divide it! He went through it Himself when He suffered the wrath of God instead of you!

As you go forward, you shall find Almighty Justice standing up as a protecting wall on either hand and no longer rolling as a devouring flood. Forward in the way of faith in the Savior’s name! And when you have passed through the dry bed of a sea once deep and stormy, you shall look back and see the deep sea swallowing up your sins and shall sing, “The depths have covered them, there is not one of them left.” Forward, Sinner, forward! “Well,” says one, “I will pray about it.” Beware of substituting prayer for faith—faith is your present duty—Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. “I will think about it a little longer.” Do no such thing! Thinking is a very poor substitute for believing. Forward! Forward at once and on the spot! Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.

“But I am not fit to believe!” Forward, in God’s name—forward! What have you to do with fitness? God commands you to believe in His Son Jesus Christ. Forward is my message—I come not here to tamper with you— to deal with your “ifs” and “buts,” and excuses and perhapses. Hell is behind you—you are shut up on the right hand and on the left by God’s Providence, your own fears, and Divine Justice. There is but one way of safety and that is the way of faith. Forward, Sinner! Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved!

Why, some of you have been frittering away your time—weeks and months and years! You have been thinking about it, praying about it, reading about it, hoping about it, fearing about it—but never coming to Jesus just as you are. It is wrong—it is all wrong! God’s command is neither work, nor feel, nor fear—it is simple and plain—BELIEVE! Forward! Trust a Savior’s wounds. And in trusting there is life. In a look at Him you are saved! O, I wish I could get behind some of you and whisper a word in your ear, for I know what Satan says. He says, “Tarry, tarry, tarry!” Ah, he loves to have you in the place of breaking forth as children, that he may vex and torment you.

“Go back,” he says, “go back!” Ah, I know he would like to have you at your cups again and in your old sins, but you cannot go back if God has once brought you out of Egypt! I know what he whispers. He says, “It is of

no use going forward. If you believe in Jesus,” says he, “you will perish after all.” Back, you old Liar, back! God never did permit a man yet to walk in a path in which He commanded him to go and not to walk safely. Forward, Sinner, FORWARD! Christ is before you and Heaven in Him is before you. If you stay where you are, you shall die. If you go forward, you can but die. And, therefore, take the captain’s word tonight, for it is the word of the captain’s King—“Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.”

II. Secondly, we may view the great company who came out of Egypt as AN ARMY UNDER COMMAND. Therefore they must obey. The command given to them is, “Forward! Forward! Forward!” Might the wise men have said in the host of Israel, “How can we go forward? That narrow beach leads down to the foaming billow. Forward? What do you mean? We are altogether as dead men if we go forward! Would you have us swim? Do you know where you are? There are miles and miles of deep water and who knows the bottom of the sea? Forward? Absurd!—We shall lose the camels and the sheep and the baggage and our wealth and our children and our little ones—yes, and our own lives also.”

But thus says the Lord, “Forward!” You came out of Egypt under Moses’ command, will you play the rebel’s part? If the Lord is your Captain, you must do absolutely what He bids you at any loss and at any cost. If He says, “Forward,” and it is into the Red Sea or into a gulf of fire, forward you must go. Now, Beloved, this presents us a picture of those who are savingly converted, who, on a sudden, meet with difficulties in following Christ and run to their minister or to their friend, and say, “What are we to do?”

The Lord’s message by me tonight to your anxious inquiry is this— “Forward!” It is a simple one—“Forward!” “Sir, I have just begun to be a Christian, but if I continue in it, I shall lose my business. My calling is such that I cannot be honest in it and serve my God faithfully without sinking all my capital and bringing myself and family to beggary. What ought I to do? Ought I not to give up my religion?” Forward! Forward! No matter what is before you. Forward! You are not fit to be a soldier of Christ unless you can count all costs and still hold fast to the Cross of Christ.

“Ah,” says one, “but what is to become of my children, my family, my household?” Friend, I cannot tell you, but God can. It is yours to trust them with Him, for the only command I have for you is, Forward! Forward! “But my husband says I shall never come into the house again! My father tells me he will turn me out of doors.” Be it so, no one pities you more than I do. But I dare not alter my message to your soul. I am to bid you, Go forward! “Well,” says one, “these are hard commands.”

Yes, but the martyrs had harder still. Theirs was the stake, the gibbet, the rack. They must rot in prison. They must be dragged at the heels of the wild horse. But what is the command? “Forward.!” On went the goodly host through floods, through fires, through seas of blood. They never paused. And if you would be worthy followers of them, you must do the same. The Master’s message to you is, “Forward!” At the famous charge of Balaclava, when the order was given to charge the batteries, what could that troop do but ride into the valley of death? There they go! On, on, up to the very cannons’ mouths! The word of command must not be questioned but obeyed—

*“Theirs not to make reply.  
Theirs not to reason why.  
Theirs but to do and die—  
Into the valley of death  
Rode the six hundred.”*

And you, if you are fit to be God’s soldiers—if you are really His and filled with His Holy Spirit—you must do the same. What would you think of our soldiers if, when they were bid to charge, they should say, “There is a ditch in the way.” Jump in it! “But there are soldiers in the way.” Cut them to pieces! “But they have very sharp fixed bayonets.” Fix yours, too! Push them at the bayonet’s point and drive them back. England expects every man to do his duty. What God commands must surely have a higher claim on men than what England commands them to do! Comrades in arms, all my message to you is, “Forward! Forward!” If God has called you to honor and glory and immortality and eternal life—if loss of business, comfort, honor, fame, friends. If relatives should threaten you, you must not be daunted—for He who loves any of these more than Christ is not worthy of Him.

There are cowards of another sort with whom I must have a word. They do not like going forward. They would not lose by it if they did, but they feel a quivering sensation of nervousness come over them. And though they know their Master’s commands, yet they say, “Well, I must think the matter over.” Now suppose one instance—and I take only one of the sort— suppose you know it (as it certainly is, whether you know it or not), to be your duty to be baptized? How often I have heard people say, “Well, yes, the Lord is my gracious Master and I am His servant and I believe it is the duty of Believers to be baptized. But if the Lord ever reveals it to me, then I will do it”?

There is a soldier for you! He is not content to get the same orders as his fellow soldiers! No, he cries, “When the regiment is on the march, if the captain will come round to my tent and talk to me by myself, I will not mind going.” Why, he deserves to be flogged as a deserter! I will not wish anything hard to my Christian Brothers and Sisters, but I do venture to prophesy that they will be beaten with many stripes if they talk in that way. “Ah,” says one, “but the Lord must apply it to me.” What for? The thing is clear enough without its being applied. If there is anything in the

Bible which is plain at all, it is that he who believes in Christ should he buried with Him in Baptism. Then, if it is your clear duty, you ought to do it at once.

“Well, I will pray about it.” And do you believe God will hear such a wicked prayer as that? If I tell my child that there is something for him to do and he tells me, “Well, I will think about it.” I shall let him know that I am not to be thus impudently trifled with. If I say to him, Now, my child, do so-and-so. “Father, I will pray about it.” Believe me, I shall not put up with such hypocritical rebellion! It will not do in one’s own house, much less in the House of God. Are you to be permitted to trifle with positive precepts and then to lay your sin upon God’s back? I do not think so.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, if you have been sitting down timidly and saying, “Well, one of these days I will come out and own my Lord,” instead of that, I am bid to command you on this point and on every other, if it is a plain duty, whether it is pleasant to the flesh or not, “Forward! Forward! Forward!” What are your marching orders? Does your Lord tell you to do it? Do it! Do the Scriptures bid you? Do it! It is not yours to reason why any more than it is the soldier’s. But as the seed of Israel marched right on, even though the sea was in their way, so must you—though death itself should be the result. “Speak to the children of Israel, that they go forward.”

III. We will change the topic once again and we will take a third view of it. Let us view these people as ON THE MARCH TOWARDS CANAAN. Many of you are on your way towards Heaven and the Lord’s command to you is, “Forward! Forward!”

I would that I could sound that one word in the ears of many whom I believe to be the Lord’s people but who have for a long time settled upon their lees. There are some persons who cannot be persuaded to make an advance in the Divine life. The moment you urge them to anything practical they call you legal. They seem to consider themselves as inanimate clay ordained to lie passively in the hands of the Holy Spirit. But they forget that the Holy Spirit works in us, not to be idle and powerless, but to will and to do of God’s good pleasure. They neither will, nor do, but talk about the Spirit as though He were to will and to do everything for them.

To such who have been converted but have made no progress let me, in my Master’s name, give clear utterance to that word, “Forward.” Brothers and Sisters, you and I ought to go forward in knowledge. If I know no more of Scripture than I did ten years ago, what have I done with my time? If I am no better instructed myself as a scribe in my Master’s kingdom, of what use shall I be to others? If you have been in this world these years and yet doctrine has not become more clear, nor experience more plain it is time you should look about you and follow on to know the Lord. We do not keep boys at school year after year if they make no progress. And yet how many there are of professing Christians who seem to have been stunted in their early profession so that they positively have not advanced in knowledge one iota beyond where they were ten or twenty years ago? In this point, however, they are not so much to blame as in others.

“Forward,” should be the motto as to our faith. You were doubting and fearing twenty years ago. If I recollect, when I was but a lad ten years ago, I heard you lament—

*“It is a point I long to know,  
Oft it causes anxious thought.”*

Have you not a better time than that now? Can you not sing— *“A debtor to mercy alone,  
Of Covenant mercy I sing;  
Nor fear with Your righteousness on,  
My person and offerings to bring—  
The terrors of Law and of God,  
With me can have nothing to do;  
My Savior’s obedience and blood  
Hide all my transgressions from view.*

I do not suppose you will altogether be rid of fears, but I do think your motto should be—“Forward!”—that your faith should become more constant and your doubts less frequent. Surely the venerable saint who has proved his Master a hundred times ought to find his faith more strong than those of us who are but babes in the family! Ought we to be always limping, always hoping and trusting, doubting and fearing? Is it not time for us to use the strong muscles of the fully developed man—and, leaving all nursery carts—ought we not to stand upright with Abraham with a faith which staggers not because of unbelief? Forward, Christian, forward as to your faith!

May I not use the same word in reference to our fellowship with Christ? I am afraid most of us make no progress as to nearness to Christ. Some of us, I am afraid, go backwards. We said, years ago, “Nearer, my God, to You, nearer to You.” Are we nearer? Have we come closer to the wounds of Jesus? Do we more frequently recline upon His bosom and sit at His feet? If not, I am commanded with Moses, “Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.”

Above all, have we made any progress as to work for our Master? Some, as they grow old, give up their work. I do not understand it! I must confess an inability of comprehending how any man who once preached the Gospel can ever leave his ministry while his strength lasts. If the Master has once allotted you a field of labor, unless it is sheer inability, I cannot understand how you can ever cease to till the ground, or reap the sheaves. No, you will, if God has called you, want to do more and more and more for Jesus!

You will feel a growing thirst after precious souls—at least you ought to. You will be moved with greater yearnings of your heart towards your fellow immortals and a higher zeal for the spread of your Master’s kingdom. Christian men, when I think of some of you who have tasted that

He is gracious, and are content with the taste. You who have been into the river of Jesus’ love until you are up to the ankles, but are loath to wade into the deeper parts of the heavenly stream. When I think of some of you who are worshipping in the outer courts and have no ambition to enter into that which is within the veil. When I remember how some of you seem never to comprehend the resurrection life, nor what it is to be raised up together to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus—I do marvel at you that you thus stand back and in the name of God, whose servant I am, I give you this motto—“Forward! Forward!”

Press onward in the Divine life! Forget the road already trod and onward urge your way. Cry for the Spirit of God! Ask for more unction, more power, more consciousness of the Divine indwelling and then take for the motto on your banner—“Forward! Forward! Forward!”

IV. In the fourth place, but with very great brevity, TO CHRISTIANS IN TROUBLE our text is applicable. The children of Israel were in great straits. They were in a trial into which God had brought them. And it is an absolute certainty that if God brings you in, He will bring you out. He never did take a saint where he must of necessity perish. The rocks of daily life rise on the right and on the left. The raging enemy is behind. The equally raging sea is before. What is to be done now? God’s word is— “Forward!”

God shall fight for you and you shall hold your peace. In this vast assembly there may be several Christians who said to themselves last Saturday night, “I will go up to the House of God and enquire at the hand of the man of God what the Lord will do for me.” This is the answer to your enquiry. You cannot help yourself—that is clear. Your trouble is none of your own finding—that you know. And your escape will not be of your own working—that you know, also. You have nothing now to do but to cast yourselves upon your God and go forward!

Beloved, it is a blessed thing to be absolutely stripped of creature comforts that you may be wholly clothed upon with the Creator. It is not pleasing to flesh and blood to be brought down to abject nothingness. But faith never is more happy than when the strength of the mortal is altogether dead—because then the immortal God comes in and clothes our weakness with His Omnipotence. If I might have any choice between having abundant wealth, or being brought to absolute dependence upon daily supplies. If in the latter case I could have greater power to exhibit and to exert faith in Christ, I must confess that I should prefer the mode of living which would give me most room to enjoy the luxury of depending upon my God.

I believe it is more happy and more Divine a life to live from hand to mouth, dependent upon the Providence of God and having the confidence to trust Him, than it is to have all the abundance of this world but to have nothing about which faith may exercise itself. Often when our joys are thick about us and we have ten thousand creature comforts, we are then naked and poor and miserable in spirituals. But when the creature comforts fall as the leaves are falling from the trees in autumn, then it is that we have frequently the most joy and the most peace in God. “Give me back my sickbed,” said a saint when he remembered what joy he had had upon it!

Theodoret, the martyr, said that his persecutors had done him an injury when they took him off the rack. “For,” said he, “while I was on the rack, God sent His angels to comfort me. And now you have taken me off, I am afraid I shall lose their heavenly presence.” Experimentally I have learned, dear Friends, that at the Red Sea of affliction we see most of the right arm of God. I am glad there was a Red Sea! I bless God that it had deep and foaming billows! I praise His name that there were fierce and cruel Egyptians—for if there had never been that Red Sea, never would the song of Moses and the shout of Miriam have been heard—“Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.”

Your tribulations will yet yield you music. All you have to do now is to honor God by going forward! Hold your peace and God shall fight for you! “Be still and know that I am God.” When the worst has come to the worst, that God—

*“Who moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform,  
Will plant His footsteps in the sea,  
And ride upon the storm.  
Forward! Christian, forward!”*

V. Let me not weary you, but I must, again, use my text in another manner—for the exhortation of all of you who are followers of my Lord and Master. THE ISRAELITES WERE UPON A DIVINE MISSION. They were going up to slay the Canaanites, Hivites, Jebusites and Hittites. They must all be slain with the sharp sword of Israel. But a difficulty rolls between them and their prey! The message, however, of God’s captain, is still, “Forward! Forward!”

My Brothers and Sisters, let me specially address you who are associated in Church fellowship here. Some of you will remember when I came up from the country. I remember better than you do, for I have hidden these things in my heart. A child, almost a babe, I came into your place of worship which was half empty, no, not one-sixth full. You may, some of you, remember that sermon when the youth preached of the faithfulness of God and tried to magnify Divine Immutability. I believe the note of the charge that morning, was, “Forward!”

Hope was kindled in the breasts of many. The few there who were faithful to the cause hoped and believed that God had better days for them and we took heart. You will remember, some of you, when the people began to throng the aisles. Within three or four Sundays, when the place was full,

our cry was “Forward!” We had more Prayer Meetings, more earnestness every day! I recollect it was thought a strange thing to see such zeal! Then we wanted to enlarge the Chapel. And one Sunday evening, preaching from that text—“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down”—when certain ones had objected to any alteration because it was a mere spasm, a mere excitement—the young lad from the country would soon be forgotten—I said concerning that wall at the back, “By faith this wall will fall down,” for our motto was “Forward!”

We held a little meeting, raised the money at once—down went the wall—the place was enlarged. The enlargement was of no use, our motto was, “Forward!” God opened the doors of Exeter Hall to us. We went there. The place was crowded, multitudes of souls were converted. The Church increased—did we stop? Our motto was “Forward!” The Surrey Hall was proposed to us, a larger structure. We went about it and we said, “This is too immense a place, too bold a venture.”

I thought in my own mind, “The place will never be filled.” You remember we still dared it, for our motto was “Forward!” Then came a crushing blow, a terrible disaster which seemed to shatter us all and, most of all, the man who was called to take the brunt of the battle. He was laid upon the ground all broken-hearted and wretched by the catastrophe, but God suffered him not to lose heart! He rose from the dust of despondency. The Spirit of the Lord was upon him. His cry was “Forward!” And once again he stood among you and again the thousands gathered and on, on, on, from that time, “Forward!” has been the cry.

“We will build a tabernacle,” said we. Thirty thousand pounds! We stood back. Where would it come from? “The silver and the gold are Mine,” was the promise of God. Some bold hearts went on, for our motto was “Forward!” And we prayed and worked and believed and lo—we entered this spacious house without a debt and we worship in it, remembering that of our own we gave unto God and that this goodly structure is a proof of the power of faith. Our motto was still “Forward!”

The pastor took one or two young men to educate. He soon had a dozen. He asked your help, you helped him. He had a score. Some said it was too many. He had forty—before long fifty—now seventy. And still the cry is, “Forward! Forward!” What I want to do tonight is just to stir your souls with a little of the old enthusiasm, to scatter among you some coals of that holy fire which once set you in a blaze. “Forward! Forward!” is what we want! Brethren, we want to be doing more for Christ!

Compared with our congregation I believe we are doing much, but still not what we might do—not what we ought to do. Here is this great city teeming with its multitudes and the proportion of evangelistic work which we take is far too small. “Forward! Forward!” At this time we have men ready to preach the Word. But we do not know where to find the room for them. There are rich men in this congregation and men in middling circumstances who might take a little room and pay the rent and let some young man come and preach in it and try to raise a Church in a destitute neighborhood. Some of you might cry, “Forward!” and do that.

Others of you in the Providence of God live in poor neighborhoods and you may have a room which holds twenty, perhaps. Could you not let some one preach in it? Preaching is the great weapon of God for pulling down strongholds. It will pull down the largest blocks of stone the enemy can pile together. Preach the Gospel, the gates of Hell shake! Preach the Gospel, prodigals return! Preach the Gospel to every creature—it is the Master’s mandate and it is the Master’s power—“the power of God unto salvation unto everyone that believes.”

I would I could make every member of this Church feel in earnest about doing good. Do you not long to win souls? Do you not desire to spend and to be spent for your Master? I will venture to say that if you do not, you are not worthy of membership with such a Church as this! If no Divine zeal stirs you. If no heavenly fire has fallen on your soul, you might find a more congenial place of rest among some dull and sluggish people who care not for God. As for my own soul, God knows how I yearn over souls— I work and if there is any man living who can work more for God than I do, I envy him his strength and endurance!.

It is not twelve, nor thirteen, nor fourteen, or fifteen hours a day which will satisfy me in the service of my Master. I wish I could be cut in pieces to preach His Gospel and that every drop of blood might tell it to my perishing fellow men. As I cannot do that, I do love to see my young men preaching the Word of God. They are so many new mouths for me, so many tongues for some of you who have no power of speech for your Master. They speak for you, if you have a share in their maintenance. But, oh, what I can do seems to be nothing but contributing a drop, but taking out a cupful from the great see of the world’s sorrow and the world’s sin!

Do help me! Do help me, I pray you! Brethren, pray for us! If you can do nothing else, pray that the Spirit of God may rest upon us in our preaching and in our efforts to extend His Kingdom—and may every one of you take a hand in this good work. I would sooner have half of you and have you all alive and earnest, than have the whole of you and have some of you a drag upon the wheels. If this Church does not serve God—mark these words, I speak, I think, prophetically—God will make this House a hissing and write “Ichabod” upon these walls!

Never was a Church more favored than you have been! For more than two hundred years God has given you a succession of faithful pastors. We have, each of us in our, lot strived to do our work. We have stood upon the walls of Zion and those who have gone before, at least, have not been found unfaithful. And as God helps me, neither will I be unfaithful either to God’s Truth or to the souls of men.

But if with such appliances—with such preaching of the Gospel and helped so marvelously—and so many of you great sinners saved from great sins, having had much forgiven. If you do not love much and serve much, O my God, let me not live to see the curse fall upon this Church! But at least in my day let the blessing continue! Yes, and when this head sleeps among the clods of the valley, find them better men than we are to preach the Word and let this Church still be a star in Your right hand to shine amidst the thick darkness of the world!

Dear Friends, if you are not in earnest about this, I am. Oh, we must not let this opportunity pass! There is much which you can do. I want you to help the heathen world, but I want you to begin with caring for this great heathen world of London. And if you can do nothing else, at least give us your prayers.

VI. I have done when I shall say that soon you and I will stand on the brink of Jordan’s river. The deep sea of death will roll before us. Trusting in Jesus, washed in His blood, hoping in His mercy we shall not fear the last solemn hour. We shall hear the angel say, “Forward!” We shall touch the chilly stream with our feet, the flood shall fly, and we shall go through the stream dry-shod. If the flood gathers and the Jordan overflows its banks, still the Divine watchword, “Forward!” shall speed us on and we will enter Heaven’s gates among the blood-washed throng and sing unto Him who has enabled us to triumph gloriously in obedience to that command, “Forward! Forward!” God help you to go forward and unto Him be praise forever and ever. Amen.

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THE GLORY IN THE REAR  
NO. 1793

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 3, 1884, **BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And the Angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them, and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel, and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.”  
Exodus 14:19, 20.**

**“The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.”  
Isaiah 58:8.**

**“For the Lord will go before you; and the God  
of Israel will be your rear guard.”  
Isaiah 52:12.**

WHEN the Israelites left the place of their bondage and came to the edge of the wilderness, a visible token of the Lord’s Presence and leadership was granted to them. They saw high in the air a pillar, which, by day, might be compared to rising smoke, but at night became a flame of fire. Such displays on a small scale were usual in the march of armies, but this was of supernatural origin. Where it moved, the people were to follow—it was to be their companion, that they might not be alone—their conductor, that they might not go astray. We have become familiar, by accounts of our own soldiers in Egypt, with the extreme danger of the oriental sun when men are marching over the fiery sand. This cloud would act as a vast umbrella, covering the whole of the great congregation, so that they could march without being faint with the heat. By night their canvas city was lighted up by this grand illumination.

They could march as well by night as by day, for we are told at the close of the previous chapter that by night the Lord went before them, “in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night.” Might not they have said, “The Lord God is a sun and shield”? Did they not realize the fulfillment of the promise not yet spoken in God’s Words, “The sun shall not smite you by day, nor the moon by night”? This sacred symbol of the Divine Presence must have been a very great solace to them in those early days, when their pilgrim life was novel to them, and their newly-found liberty was darkened by a terrible fear of recapture.

The particular sign which the Lord promised them was very practical— it was not only glorious, but useful—it served them both for shade and light and was both their guide and guard. It was exceedingly conspicuous, so that they could all see it. Any man of the millions who came out of Egypt could stand at his tent door and see this flaming signal high in Heaven, floating over all as the banner and symbol of the Great King. It appears to have been continual—an abiding token—not an intermittent brightness. Even thus has Moses written—“He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.”

Beloved Friends, God is always with those who are with Him! If we trust Him, He has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” There is a special and familiar Presence of God with those who walk uprightly, both in the night of their sorrow and in the day of their joy. Yet we do not always, in the same way, perceive that Presence so as to enjoy it. God never leaves us, but we sometimes think He has done so. The sun shines on, but we do not always bask in his beams. We sometimes mourn an absent God—it is the bitterest of all our mourning. As He is the sum total of our joy, so His departure is the essence of our misery! If God does not smile upon us, who can cheer us? If He is not with us, then the strong helpers fail and the mighty men are put to rout.

It is concerning the Presence of God that I am going to speak this morning. You and I know how joyous it is. May we never be made to know its infinite value experimentally by the loss of it! If we see no cloud or flame, yet may we know that God is with us and His power is around us. In that sense we will pray—

*“Cover us with Your cloudy shrine,  
And in Your fiery column shine.”*

Or in more familiar words we will sing—  
*“Let the fiery cloudy pillar  
Lead me all my journey through.”*

I. In considering the subject of the Lord’s abiding with His people, I shall first call attention to THE DIVINE PRESENCE MYSTERIOUSLY REMOVED. According to our text, “The Angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed.” The chosen of the Lord may lose the manifested Presence of God and, indeed, they may often miss it in the particular form in which they have been accustomed to enjoy it. The symbol of God’s Presence removed from where it had usually been. From the day when they entered the desert, they had seen the fiery, cloudy pillar well to the front. But now, suddenly, it wheeled about and left the front comparatively dim because the Glory had departed. Those who looked forward, saw it no more!

So has it been with us at times—we have walked day after day in the Light of God’s Countenance. We have enjoyed sweet fellowship with Jesus Christ, our Lord, and all of a sudden we have missed His glorious manifestation! Like the spouse, we cried, “I sought Him, but I found Him not!” Before, everything had seemed bright and we expected to go from strength to strength, from victory to victory, till we came unto the mount of God— to dwell forever in His rest—but now before us, all of a sudden things look dark. We do not feel so sure of Heaven as we did, nor so certain of perpetual growth and progress. The prospect is darkened, the clouds return after the rain and our soul cries out of the darkness, “Oh that I knew where I might find Him!”

Moreover, they missed the light from where they hoped it would always be. They had been given to understand, I do not doubt, that the Lord would always be with them. And yet now, as they looked forward, the bright light was gone from its place of leadership. They looked for it as their guide and, behold, that guidance was gone! The pillar might be behind them, but it was not before them—they could see nothing ahead to lead them into the land flowing with milk and honey which the Lord had promised them!

Sometimes you, also, may imagine that God’s promise is failing you— even the Word of God which you had laid hold upon may appear to you to be contradicted by your circumstances. Then your heart sinks to the depths, for, “if the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?” If ever the Word of God becomes a subject of doubt, where can any certainty remain? Where can there be any hope for the unsure? We have said, “This God is our God forever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death”—but what if He refuses to guide us? Then we are in an evil case! Can it be so? “Is His mercy clean gone forever? Does His promise fail forevermore?”

The pillar of fire also removed from where it seemed more than ever to be needed. Now they were in a dire predicament—how could they possibly escape? Pharaoh was behind them, with all the horsemen of Egypt! They could hear the noise of the chariots and the neighing of the horses—and the shouts of the armies eager for the prey! Before them rolled the Red Sea in its might. How could there be a way through the mighty waters? Now, if ever in their lives, they must have looked anxiously for the symbol of the Divine Presence! What could they do if Jehovah did not lead them? Yet the token of His Presence was not there.

Even thus is it with you, dear Friend, who once walked in the Light of God’s Countenance—you, perhaps, have fallen into temporal trouble and, at the same moment, the heavenly Light of God has departed from your soul. Now, it is bad to be in the dark on the king’s highway, but it is worse to be in the dark when you are out on the open road and do not know the road! It is well to have a guide when the road is easy, but you must have one when you are coming upon precipitous and dangerous places! Is it so with any child of God here, that he sees no light to shine before him, no star to guide him on his road? On the contrary, does his future become more and more clouded? Is the track quite gone? Does the sea seem shut in with an ironbound coast without a harbor? Does he—

*“See every day new straits attend,*

*And wonder where the scene will end”?*  
Then let him trust—but he will need all the faith of which he can muster! Oh, my Lord, if ever You leave me, forsake me not in the day of trouble! Yet what have I said? It is a day of trouble when You are gone, whatever my condition may be! Yet, Brothers and Sisters, our Lord said, “Pray you that your flight be not in the winter.” Pray that if you must, for a while, bewail the Lord’s absence from you, it may not be in a time of dire and dark necessity!

Thus it did seem a mysterious thing that the Covenant Angel should no longer direct the marches of the host of God and, I dare say, that some of them began to account for it by a reason which their fears would suggest. Naturally, there was only one way of accounting for this removal of the guide and that way was a wrong one, but one to which the Lord’s people often refer their trials. I should not wonder that if they had been asked why the blazing pillar was no longer in the front, they would have replied, “Because of our murmurings against the Lord and His servant, Moses. God will not go before us because of our sins.”

Now, it is true, and does happen, that the Lord often hides His face behind the clouds of dust that His own children make by their sins—but this is not always the case. When the consolations of God are small with you, you may generally conclude that there is some secret sin with you— and then it is your duty to cry, “Show me why You contend with me!” But in this case, God was not punishing them for their sins, as He did on later occasions. He seems to have been very patient with their early murmurings because they were such feeble folk, so unused to pilgrimage, and so unfit for anything heroic. Every trial was severe to the raw, undisciplined spirits of the tribes and, therefore, the Lord winked at their follies. There was not a touch of the rod about this withdrawing of His Presence from the front—not even a trace of anger—it was all done in loving kindness and tender mercy, and no sort of chastisement was intended by it.

So, dear child of God, you must not always conclude that trouble is sent because of wrath, and that the loss of conscious joy is necessarily a chastisement for sin. Such thoughts will be a case of knives cutting your heart in pieces. Do not make for yourself a needless pain. All trouble is not chastisement—it may be a way of love for your enriching and ennobling! Upon the black horse of trouble, the Lord sends His messengers of love! It is a good thing for us to be afflicted, for thus we learn patience and attain to assurance. Shall the champion who is bid to go to the front of the battle think that he is being punished? No, verily, my Brothers and Sisters— whom the Lord loves, He sets in the heat of the conflict—that they may earn the rarest honors. Great suffering and heavy labor are often rewards of faithfulness. Know you not how the poet puts it—

*“If I find Him, if I follow,  
What is His reward here?  
‘Many a labor, many a sorrow,  
Many a tear’”?*

Darkness of soul is not always the fruit of Divine anger, though it is often so. Sometimes there is no trace of wrath in it—it is sent for a test of faith, for the excitement of desire—and for the increase of our sympathy with others who walk in darkness. When the cloud of the Divine Glory is no longer seen in front, it has gone behind because it is more needed there! And it is no loss, after all, as we shall have to show. When the Lord hides His face for a moment, it is to make us value His face the more, to quicken our diligence in following after Him, to try our faith and to test our graces. There are a thousand precious uses in this adversity. Yet it is a mysterious thing when the light of the future fades and we seem to be without a guide.

II. Now, secondly, all this while THE DIVINE PRESENCE WAS GRACIOUSLY NEAR. The Angel of the Lord had left, but it is added, He “removed and went behind them,” and He was just as close to them when He was in the rear as when He led the front! He might not seem to be their guide, but He had all the more evidently become their guard. He might not, for the moment, be their Sun before, but then He had become their Shield behind. “The glory of the Lord was their rear guard.” The Lord may be very close to you, dear child, when you cannot see Him—perhaps closer than He ever was when you could see Him!

The Presence of God is not to be measured by your realization of it. When you cannot tell that He is with you at all, and you are singing and crying after Him, those very sighs and cries after Him are the holy fruit of His secret Presence! It may be the day shall come when you shall think that He was more near you when yours eyes were filled with weeping after Him, than when you took yours ease and spoke confidently. Much of the creature, much of human excitement will mix with our most spiritual joy. Our groans and our sorrows, when we are pining after the Lord, are often more purely spiritual than our own delights and, therefore, they are all the surer proofs of the work of the Lord in our souls. Oh, Soul, the Lord may be very near you and yet He may be behind you, so that your outlook for the future may not be filled with the vision of His Glory!

Note in the text that it is said the pillar went, and “ stood behind them.” I like that, for it is a settled, permanent matter. The Lord had left, but He was not gone. He would stay as long as was necessary where He then was. That glorious Angel, shrouded in the clouds, stood with His drawn sword in the rear of Israel, saying to Pharaoh, “You dare not come further, you can not break in upon My chosen.” He lifted up His vast shield of darkness and held it up before the tyrant king so that he could not strike— no—could not see! All that night his horses champed their bits, but could not pursue the flying host! “They were as still as a stone till Your people passed over, O Lord, till Your people passed over whom You had purchased.” It is glorious to think that the Lord stood there and the furious enemy was compelled to halt!

Even thus, the Lord remains with the dear child of God! You cannot see anything before you to make you glad, but the living God stands behind you to ward off the adversary! He cannot forsake you. He says to you out of the pillar of cloud, “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will I not forget you.” He stands fast as your rock, steadfast as your safeguard, sleepless as your watcher, valiant as your champion—

*“God is near you, therefore cheer you,  
Sad mind! He’ll defend you,  
All around you, and behind.”*

What is more, these people had God so near that they could see Him if they did but look back. Earnestly I desire you to think of this. If you cannot see the Lord bright before you and you are very dull and heavy, then, I pray you, look back and see how the Lord has helped you up to now! Sit not down with your eyes shut, but look back! Steadily observe the past! What do you see there? Loving kindness and tender mercy, and nothing else! As I look back upon my own past life—and I think I am not one by myself—I cannot discover, even with the quick eye of selfishness, anything of which I can complain of my God. “Truly God is good to Israel.” “His mercy endures forever.” Not one good thing has failed! He has never left me, nor forsaken me. I have received blessings through my joys and even greater blessings through my sorrows! The Lord’s way has been all goodness—undiluted goodness all the while. I look back and see the Light of His Presence shining like the sun at noon! It is as a morning without clouds! I am overwhelmed with the boundless bounty of my God! I am unable to conceive of anything more kind than the heart of God towards His unworthy child! Well, then, God is not far away—if we look backward He is there!

He has been mindful of us. He will bless us. He gave us mercies yesterday and He is the same today and forever. The blessings of last night we have not forgotten. The blessings of this morning, are they not still with us? The fountain will not fail—it has flowed too long for us to raise the question. If there is no light breaking in the east, behold, it is lighting up the western sky! The Lord is evidently still behind us and it is enough, for we can sing, “The Lord lives; and blessed be my Rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.” “He is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.”

A thoughtful person would conclude the Lord to be all the more evidently near because of the change of His position. When a symbol of mercy comes to be usual and fixed, we may be tempted to think that it remains as a matter of routine. If the rainbow were always visible, it might not so assuringly be a token of the Covenant. Hence the Lord often changes His hand and blesses His people in another way to let them see that He is thinking of them! If He always did the same by us, every day and every night, we should get to attribute His dealings to some fixed law operating apart from God, just as our modern philosophers dethrone the Lord to set up the calves of Nature.

But now, when our God is sometimes before us and sometimes behind us—and makes those apparent changes because of deep and urgent reasons—we are compelled to feel that we are the objects of His constant solicitude. “I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks of me.” He deals with us in all wisdom and prudence. His modes change, but the changes are all from the same motive and with the same reason—all to make us sick of self and fond of Him! Blessed be His name—the change of His operations makes us feel the unchangeableness of His design! And the different ways in which He visits us only makes us value each visit the more!

III. Thirdly, let us see THE DIVINE PRESENCE WISELY REVEALED. That the symbol of God’s Presence should be withdrawn from the front and become visible behind was a wise thing.

Observe, there was no fiery pillar of cloud before them and that was wise, for the going down into the Red Sea was intended to be an act of lofty faith. The more of the visible, the less is faith visible. The more you have of conscious enjoyment, the less room there is for simple trust. Faith performs her greatest feats in the darkest places! These Israelites were to do what, after all, was a grandly glorious thing for them to do—to march right down into the heart of the sea! What people ever did this before? Modern haters of miracles may say that they passed over the sands at an unusual tide and that an extraordinarily strong wind drove back the water and left a passage, but that is not the notion of the Holy Spirit. He says, by His servant Moses, “The floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.”

It is also written, “But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.” The tribes went down into the dread valley which remained when the waters dried up and they crossed over between two frowning walls of water! You and I would have needed great faith to have gone down into such an abyss as that—but they descended without fear! Moses lifted up his rod and the waters parted to make them a passageway! And, with no fiery cloudy pillar in front of them, they calmly marched into the heart of the sea! That was a grand act of faith! This would not have been so clearly of faith had the way been made easier by miracle and token.

I know some of you who are Christian people need to be always coddled and cuddled like weak babies. You pine for love-visits and delights and promises sealed home to your heart. You would live on sweetmeats and be wheeled in a spiritual baby carriage all the way to Heaven! But your heavenly Father is not going to do anything of the sort. He will be with you, but He will try your manhood and so develop it. I have seen children pampered into the grave by their fond mother. And I suppose that a great many more will follow in the same way, but God never spoils His children! He educates them for nobler ends. He takes visible guides away from them that they may exercise faith in Him. Why, Job would have been nobody if He had not lost everything! Who would have heard of the Patriarch of Uz? What glory would he have brought to God with his camels and his oxen and his children? These were all taken away and then Job became famous! Look how he sits on the dunghill and is much more noteworthy, there, than Solomon in all his glory! Where the word of King Solomon was, there was power—but nothing to equal the power of Job’s words when he blessed the God who takes away! Solomon spoke many proverbs and wrote many songs—but none of them attained unto the glory of that saying—“Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” Here was a triumph of faith! Beloved, you and I lose the enjoyments of religion and the comforts of hope in order that we may walk by faith and not by sight—and may the more greatly glorify God!

Moreover, let us mark that the cloudy pillar was taken away from the front because the Lord meant them simply to accept His Word as their best guidance. The Lord said to Moses, “Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.” That Word of God was a sufficient guide. Suppose they had said, “Lord, we will go forward if the fiery pillar leads us forward, but not otherwise.” What then? Why, they would have been rebels! We are to obey God’s Word as God’s Word. I heard a Brother say, some time ago, that he would be baptized when it was laid home to him. I thought of what a father would say to his boy if he said, “Father, I will obey you if it is laid home to me.” In all probability the child would have it laid home to him more feelingly than he desired! There are some disobedient children in the Lord’s family who, if they do not look out, will have Scriptures laid home to them in a way they do not quite reckon upon! What have you and I to guide us but the Word of the Lord?

“Well,” says one, “I guide myself by outward providences.” Do you? You will get into a terrible maze, one of these days. Jonah wanted to flee from the Presence of the Lord and, therefore, he went down to the seaside, and lo, he found a ship going to Tarshish! Might he not have said, “I must be in the right way of duty in going to Tarshish, for no sooner did I go down to the wharf than I found a ship starting immediately and a cabin vacant for a passenger! I paid my fare and walked on board at once. I had not to go off to the shipping agent’s and wait for the next liner, but all was prepared for me. Was not that a providence!” Yes, but if you get to following providence and turning aside from the Word, you may soon find yourself in the sea and no whale prepared for you! Our way is clearly set before us in the Word of God and that most sure Word of testimony should be followed.

I have known a Brother wanting to go abroad to preach the Gospel to the heathen, but a great many difficulties have been thrown in his way and, therefore, he has said, “I can see that I am not called to go.” Why not? Is no man called unless his way is easy? I should think myself all the more called to a service if I found obstacles in my way! The course of true service never runs smooth. I would say, “The devil is trying to hinder me, but I will do it in spite of all the devils in Hell.” Will you always be needing to have your bread buttered for you on both sides? Must your road be graveled and smoothed with a garden roller? Are you a carpet knight, for whom there is to be no fighting? You are not worthy to be a soldier of Jesus Christ at all if you look for ease! Go home! I dare say, after all, it is the best thing you can do. True Believers expect difficulties. It is ours to do what we are bid to do—not to act according to fancied indications of providence. When the Lord said “Forward!” Israel must go forward, without a fiery cloudy pillar to cheer the way. Has not the Lord spoken? Who shall ask for plainer guidance?

Moreover, God was teaching them another lesson, namely, that He may be near His people when He does not give them the usual tokens of His Presence. Who shall say that God was not in the front of Israel when they went down into the sea? They could not see the symbol of His Presence, but He could see their obedience to His bidding! How else did the sea, in fright, draw back? Was it not because the Lord rebuked the sea? The strong east wind did not, of itself, divide the sea, for a wind naturally strong enough for that would have blown all the people into the air! The wind was used of God to move the waters, but its chief objective was to dry up the dampness from the floor of the sea and to make marching the more easy for the vast host of Israel. Truly the Lord was there, gloriously triumphing! No cloudy pillar was seen across the waters as Israel looked forward to the shore, but yet the Lord was there majestically—and you may have but little comfort of the Lord’s Presence at this time, yet God may be with you wondrously.

Do not so much set your heart upon comfort, but rejoice in the fact which gladdened Hagar in the wilderness—“You, God, see me.” It does not matter to the fire whether the logs are cast upon it from the front, or the oil poured upon it secretly from behind the wall, so long as it finds its fuel. To you the daily supply of Grace is more important than the supply of comfort—and this shall never fail you so long as you live. Let me whisper to you one more word. After all, the host of Israel did not require any guide in front when they came to the sea. “How is that?” you ask. Why, Beloved, there were no two ways to choose from—they could not miss the way, for they must necessarily march through the sea! No room for wandering remained—their road was walled up and they could not miss it.

So when men come into deep trouble and cannot get out of it, they scarcely need a guide, for their own plain path is submission and patience. Tried child of God, you have to bear your trouble and when that is quite clear, your way is no longer doubtful! Cast all your care on Him who cares for you and, in patience, possess your soul. “Oh, but I thought I was going to find a way of escape made for me. Listen! “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.” You have to bear it, you see. Your great need for the present is faith in God, who has said—“I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring My people again from the depths of the sea.”

Thus, you see, the light for guidance was not needed just then. What they needed was the pillar of cloud behind them and that is where they had it. Why was that cloud behind them? Well, it was there for several reasons—the first was to shut out the sight of their enemies from them. We read that Israel lifted up their eyes and saw the Egyptians and then they began to tremble, and cry out—and so God drew the blinds down, that His poor children could not see their frightful taskmasters! It is a great mercy when God does not let us see everything. What the eyes do not see, perhaps the heart will not sorrow. May I ask you just to try and use your eyes a little, now? There are your sins—will you look back on them for a minute? Look steadily. They are quite as dreadful as the Egyptian horsemen and chariots. I have looked intently and I cannot see a sin remaining.

“What, have you lived such a life that you have never sinned?” Ah, no, Beloved, I have to mourn over many offenses, but I cannot see one of them, now, for my sins are covered. I believe this text, “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” If I am cleansed, why should I see spots, or speak as if I did? The Lord stands between His people and their sins. Jesus, who veiled His Glory in the cloud of our humanity, interposes between us and our transgressions. Is it not written, “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”? If God declares that our sins cannot be found, then I am sure we need not look for them! And if He says that Christ has made an end of sin, then there is an end of it! The Egyptians shall not come near us all the night of this life—and when the morning breaks, we shall see them dead upon the shore. Then shall we sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously, and our transgressions and iniquities has He cast into the depths of the sea!

“Ah,” says one, “I know that my sins are forgiven, but I am troubled about my circumstances.” Will you now look back? How about the circumstances you have passed through? Do you see anything wrong about them, now? Oh, no, you say, they were all right. As you look back you can only see the Glory of God—the Lord has led you by a right way. Very well—learn to look at your circumstances through the light God has set between Israel and the Egyptians. Who is he that can harm us? What is there to distress us? See your circumstances through the medium of the love of Jesus and you perceive all things working for your good! Up to now the Lord has been our shield and our exceedingly great reward! We see now no current evil; He has turned for us the curse into a blessing. The Lord has caused us to be far from fear and has put terror far away.

The cloudy pillar went behind for another reason, namely, that the Egyptians might not see them. Their enemies were made to stumble and were compelled to come to a dead stop. “The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my lust shall be satisfied upon them.” Why does he stop? Why does the lion pause when about to spring? He is blindfolded! He shivers in the dense blackness, thinking of that former day when all the land of Mizraim quailed beneath a darkness that might be felt! Be calm, O child of God, for the Covenant Angel is dealing with your adversaries, and their time is generally the night. You will hear, byand-by, of what He has done. Meanwhile, remember what He did to Pharaoh and Sennacherib. The Lord may not be before you, shedding delight upon your face, but He is behind you, holding back the foe! He looks forth from the cloud and discomforts your foes. “No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment you shall condemn.” Why, stand still, and see the salvation of God!

IV. Now, Beloved, I must draw towards a conclusion by observing, that THE DIVINE PRESENCE WILL, ONE DAY, BE MORE GLORIOUSLY REVEALED. I have been speaking about the Lord being the rear guard of His people and so explaining my second text—but I must now refer you to my last text, in the 52nd of Isaiah—“The Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard.” This is the condition into which the Lord brings His people when they depart from Babylon and are no more conformed to this present evil world. I trust He has brought many of us into this all-surrounding light at this good hour. The Lord is behind us, we know—our sins and iniquities are covered, our past mistakes are all erased—we are accepted in the Beloved. But we have not to look forward and say, “The angel of God has left us.”

Oh, no! We can still see the bright light before us. Our ways are ordered of the Lord and none of our steps shall slide. We glory in tribulations, also, believing that we shall glorify God in them. We look forward to the time of old age, believing that to gray hairs He is the same, and that in our days of decline He will carry us. We look forward to the coming of our Lord with delight or, if that may not be in our day, we look to falling asleep upon the bosom of our Savior! Before us we see the Resurrection morning and all its splendor—we anticipate the risen body—that glorified fabric in which our pure and perfect spirit shall dwell forever! We hear the voice of harpers harping with their harps, saluting the reign of Christ and the glorification of His people with Him!

Below there is nothing before us now but that which is inexpressibly delightful! The day has long dawned with us, whose morning clouds have passed away—a day which grows warmer and brighter—and is nearing to the perfect day. A few more months, a few more years, and we shall be in the land of the unclouded sky. What joy will it be to be there! What ecstasy will it be to be there forever!—

*“Far from a world of grief and sin,*

*With God eternally shut in.”*  
How willingly would I fly away and be at rest. I feel my wings, but they are not strong enough, as yet, to bear my soul away—but they will be! God is making His children ready to depart and He will only have to beckon them and they will cry, “Here am I,” and then they shall be with Him forever!

Yes, the Glory of the Lord is above us and beneath us, on the right hand and on the left, outside us and within us. We depart not from it, though it is behind us! We are always going into the glorious Light of God, for it is before us, too. The Lord shall be a wall of fire around us, and the Glory in the midst. If you have come there, dear Brothers, stay there. If you have entered there, dear Sisters, never quit that charmed circle, but abide in full communion with the Lord your God.

V. But now I have a sorrowful word to say and with that I have done. THIS DIVINE PRESENCE HAS A TWOFOLD ASPECT—that same Glory which lit up the canvas city and made it bright as the day, darkened all the camps of Egypt. They could see nothing, for the dark side of God was turned to them. I am afraid it is so with some of you. Oh, dear Friends, is it not a dreadful thing that to some men the most terrible thing in the world would be God? If you could get away from God, how happy, how merry, how jolly you would be! You want to depart from Him—you are departing from Him. One of these days Jesus will tell you to depart. “Keep on as you were,” He says, “you were always departing from God; keep on departing! Depart from Me, you cursed!” That will be the consummation of your life. To some of us the thought of God is joy, but to the ungodly nothing would be such good news as to hear that there was no God! Indeed, they find a dreadful comfort in endeavoring to be skeptical and unbelieving. God has a dark side to sinners—His justice and His righteousness— which are the comfort of His people—are the despair of the wicked!

The Word of God has a dark side to sinners. I will tell you what they say. They say, “We do not understand this Book, it is so full of mystery. We find it full of dark sayings, hard things and things difficult to be believed. It is all knots and snarls.” Just so—you are an Egyptian—it is dark to you. Let me call up the smallest babe in Grace and say, “Dear child, is that what the Bible is to you?” “Oh, no,” he says, “it is my joy and my delight. I may not understand it all, but I love it all and I feed on it all.” Oh, it is a good thing when you cannot understand a revealed Truth of God. to feed on it! And when you find it to be good for your soul, you will not complain of its mystery. The Bible is dark to the Egyptians, but it is light to Israel.

Now look at the Gospel itself. Why, there are many that sit and hear the Gospel and they say, “I do not understand this believing, this atonement, and so on.” No, I know you do not. You are an Egyptian, it is dark to you. It is a savor of death unto death to you! I am afraid you will go on quarrelling with it until God ends the quarrel in your destruction. But if you are one of His, you will quarrel no longer! You will say, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief. The blessed way of salvation by atoning blood I eagerly accept and rejoice in it.” That will prove you to be an Israelite—it will be a savor of life unto life to you! Why, even the blessed Lord Jesus Christ has a dark side for sinners. If He were to come here, this morning, oh, how gladly would I stand back to let Him come forward and show His surpassing beauty! Why, some of you would think it Heaven if you could but see Him here and look into His pierced hands and side—and mark that blessed, marred, unutterably lovely visage!

Yes, but it could not bring any joy to you who do not love Him! You do not trust Him and if the news were given out, “Christ has come!” why, you would swoon with fear in your pews, for you would say, “He has come to judgment, and I am unprepared! He that is not my Savior will be my Judge and sentence me to everlasting woe.” There is a dark side in the Mediator to the Egyptians while there is a bright side to Israel. Oh that you would believe in Jesus Christ! Oh that you would “kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little,” for, “Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.”

You can come and be numbered with Israel, for the door into Israel is Christ, Himself! If you come to Christ you have come to His people, you have come to safety and, therefore, “the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rear guard.” Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Exodus 13:20-22; 14:1-20; Isaiah 52.**  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—145 (PART II), 212, 230.

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ENTANGLED IN THE LAND  
NO. 2188

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1891 DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 21, 1890.

**“For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in.”  
Exodus 14:3.**

ISRAEL was clean escaped from Egypt. Not a hoof of their cattle was left behind, nor foot of child or aged man remained in the house of bondage. But though they were gone, they were not forgotten by the tyrant who had enslaved them. They had been a very useful body of workers, for they had built treasure cities and storehouses for Pharaoh. Compelled to work without wages, they cost the tyrant nothing but the expenditure of the lash. His exactions of forced labor had grown intolerable to the people, but the buildings erected had been a joy to the lord of Egypt. When they were quite gone, Pharaoh woke up to a sense of his loss and his attendants felt the same. So they cried, “Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?” Then they resolved to drive them back, again, and they thought it easy to do so, for they said, “They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in.” They knew that the Israelites had no spirit for war and they felt sure that they had only to overtake them and hurry them back like a drove of cattle. They had found them such submissive servants that they expected to fit their fetters on them, again, and rivet them forever. Perhaps their God had shot His last arrow and Egypt might capture His people, again, without fear of plagues. Thus men thought—but the Lord thought otherwise.

Do not I speak to some at this hour who, during the last few months, have, by the power of the Lord’s gracious hand, escaped out of the bondage of sin? You have got clean away from your old master. With a high hand and an outstretched arm has God brought you forth into liberty! You remember the sprinkling of the blood and the eating of the Paschal Lamb—and you are now on your way to Canaan. But your former master and his friends have not forgotten you. You were once a valuable servant to Satan and he will not willingly lose you. Some of you whom God has saved by Grace could drink for Satan, lie for him, swear for him, lead others into evil ways and you could do other things, cheerfully, which I need not mention, which he always desires to have done in his kingdom. You were a trained servant and knew your master’s way so as to answer his purpose better than most. Servants of Satan usually serve him greedily and you were very eager. Nothing is too hot or too heavy for men who are thoroughly enthusiastic for evil. Sins that should be thought degrading are followed by men under the notion of pleasure and gaiety. “A short life and a merry one,” is too often the cry of persons who are preferring death to life.

The devil has the knack of making his bondsmen boast of their freedom and they follow with eagerness that which is to their own loss and ruin. Poor slaves! Their slavery has blinded their minds. Thanks be unto God, certain of you have lately fled from your former bondage! But the point I am to speak of is this—the great tyrant has not forgotten you and he designs in his heart your capture and re-enslavement. He and his are continually looking for opportunities by which they may bring you back into the thralldom of evil, fasten the manacles of habit upon your hands and fit the fetters of despair upon your feet. By the Grace of God I hope that the Prince of Evil and his helpers will be disappointed, but they will leave no stone unturned to effect their purposes. One of their hopes of driving you back is the belief that you are entangled by your circumstances and surroundings. They conceive that you have got into serious difficulty through your conversion and that you cannot find your way out of your perplexity. Now the enemy says, “I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil.” The Pharaoh of the infernal regions thinks to drive the fugitives back, again, like a flock of sheep and, notwithstanding all that God has done for them, he hopes, again, to bring them under his yoke. If Jehovah has brought you out, His work will never be undone, but the enemy’s hope lies in his belief that you are hopelessly entangled by your present environment.

I speak, just now, mainly to new converts, and I trust I may encourage them. Satan has less hope of getting back those who have escaped from his tyranny for many years. If he can trip them up or worry them, even now, he will take a delight in doing it, but he begins to see that the older pilgrims are really the Lord’s and cannot fall into his hands. Of those who have only lately escaped from his power, he has greater hope, for they have not yet proven, by the test of experience, that the work within them is Divine. He hopes that possibly theirs is only temporary reformation and, if so, he can soon make them slip back into the mire of sin from which he hopes they have only half escaped. I am going to speak to the raw recruits, “from Egypt lately come,” hoping that, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, they may be cheered in pressing forward and may feel that they can never go back to their old sins.

The early period of Christian faith, like the infancy of life, is crowded with dangers. Literally, new-born life is so precarious that it is a wonder that any infant survives! Infant spiritual life is so full of weaknesses and diseases that none would survive were it not for Almighty Grace. Hence the need of the special precept, “Feed my lambs.” It is our bounden duty to look well after beginners in the ways of God. The moral mortality in our Churches is mainly among the new converts. If they survive the first years of temptation, as a rule they continue with us. Our Church Roll shows that the leakage is through the unseasoned timbers—

*“When they have conquered early fears,  
And vanquished youthful wrong,  
Grace will preserve their following years,  
And make their virtues strong.”*

If we leave them without help and comfort in their beginnings, we cannot tell how much they will sin and suffer. With the view of helping them, I shall speak, first, upon one of our early dangers and, secondly, upon our security against that danger.

I. ONE OF OUR EARLY DANGERS is this—we may become entangled in the land—the wilderness may shut us in. That entanglement takes a great many shapes. I will only hint at a few of them.

Dealing with old friends is a frequent one . The man is a new creature in Christ Jesus and since his friends find that he is so, they trouble him. His foes are they of his own household! How is the youth to make an open confession of Christ before his infidel father? Possibly the convert is a wife. How is she to be a Christian if she is married to an ungodly husband? Our earthly loves have great power over us and it is right that they should—but herein comes a hindrance to spiritual life. Satan says to himself, “Ah, he cannot break away from my kingdom, for his brother, his wife, or his betrothed will keep him in my service!” It may not only be one member of the family, but several may combine to draw back the halfescaped one. It may be that parents, brothers, sisters, friends of all sorts will unite in their efforts to jeer the young Christian out of his faith and lead him off from the road of uprightness. We hear much of the Salvation Army, but, alas, there is an Army of Damnation, too! Very zealous and crafty are these followers of the Evil One. Cruel mockings, accusations of hypocrisy, slanders and unkindnesses are not spared, to turn the young Christian from the right way. Because of household opposition, Satan says, “He is entangled in the land.” The adversary thinks that you have not the courage to stand up against your relatives and you will not dare to confess your Lord before your wife, or your father. We shall now see whether the Lord has brought you out, or whether you are running off on a mere whim of your own—the devil will not be slow to apply the test!

In some cases the entanglement is not so much that of the family as of society. I have personally known one or two friends moving in high circles who have said to me, “As soon as I am known to be a Christian, my friends will cut my acquaintance. I do not know what I shall do when I have to visit at certain houses. Assuredly I shall have to run the gauntlet.” It has been a quiet pleasure to me when I have found that they have been banished from such “society” altogether, for it could never have been of any spiritual advantage to them and it might have proved a snare. Their loss was a real gain. But, oh, how many are afraid of Sir John and of Lady Mary, or of some wealthy neighbor! These fine folks may be nothing very great, after all, but, still, weak hearts are all too apt to dread the loss of their patronage and are ready enough to make a great cross of being frowned out of their society.

In other circles the same difficulties occur. The workshop has its trials as well as the drawing room. “Ah,” says Satan, “the man came out and confessed himself a Christian the other night, but I know where he works and there is not a man in the place who will sympathize with him! He will be entangled in the land.” It happens that one begins in the morning with a joke. A second comes on with an oath. A third follows suit with a sharp and bitter observation. All day long they give the new convert such handfuls of mud as they can find—and the hope of the Evil One is that thus he will be forced back into his old ways. The same thing happens on the farm, or on board ship, or in the barracks—old companions want to have our society and are not pleased with the silent rebuke which is implied in our separating from them. You know more about this than I do, but I wonder not at Satan saying, “They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in.” Why, some of you can scarcely descend the steps of this Tabernacle, convinced of sin and awakened to seek eternal salvation, before an old friend meets you and, by his careless salutation, he makes you forget the emotion which just before was so manifest! Or if you get over the first attack, you are so warmly assailed indoors that you are greatly inclined to give in. Alas for the many who are speedily entangled in the nets of human associates and never gain the liberty of Christ! The demands of business, of position, of self-interest, of custom—these all hold men as birds are caught with bird-lime, or as the needle is held by a powerful magnet—and so they are prepared to listen to evil entreaties and return to the country from which they came out.

To some, the entanglements come from having to deal with new matters. All things have become new and among the rest, even their ordinary business wears a different aspect. It used to be conducted in such and such a way, but now, on examination, the man says, “I am a Christian. I cannot do as I have done and yet, how can I alter it?” It is a very simple matter to fall into those ways of trade which are questionable—but it is not quite so easy to quit them and to gain a livelihood. When you alter one custom of trade, another matter hangs upon it, and needs a change. And it is not easy to bring partners, clerks and workpeople out of old ways into new. They are very apt to be sticklers for former methods. Moreover, there are people in the trade who think you more nice than wise and will even refuse to do business with you if you are so particular. It is no small thing for the convert to set himself right with the world in his changed mode of dealing, yet this has got to be done and done with decision, too, or there is no escaping from evil! At such a time the struggler feels—“I am entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut me in”—and the enemy of souls is of the same opinion. Now is his opportunity, but if you escape him, now, he will never again have such an advantage over you.

At the same time, our young Brother may be alarmed about the other side of his new associations—namely, joining the Church. It seems an ordeal to young beginners to come to see the pastor about uniting with the Lord’s people. I am sure they need not be at all terrified of me, for no one will more heartily welcome any sincere seeker after Jesus! All that I shall ask is a simple confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—and if that is given, even with fear and trembling—I shall be well content. Yet, to the timid beginner, it seems very solemn to be spoken to by the Elders of the Church. Mr. Bunyan puts lions in front of the Palace Beautiful, by which palace he means the Church. I have been told by a facetious person that Mr. Bunyan meant by these lions the Deacons and Elders! Well, I can only say that I find them brave as lions, but even if they were terrible as those monarchs of the forests, there is no just cause for fearing them, for Mr. Bunyan adds, “The lions are chained.” If any of you are afraid of our Deacons and Elders, you are so without reason, for the lions are chained by the intense love they bear both to their Lord and to all pilgrims to Zion.

A guard is set before the door of the Church for a necessary purpose, for we would have none enter who are self-deceived—but none of the Brothers in office among us will harm anyone who desires to serve the Lord and dwell with His people. If you have been troubled about your admission to the Church, I hope that fear will come to an end by your pushing forward and being enrolled in our ranks. Get right in your position, both towards the world and the Church, and let not the Evil One say with regard to either of these matters, “They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in.”

We have known others bewildered with doctrinal difficulties. When a man’s soul is renewed, he begins to think, and he desires to understand many things which, before, were indifferent to him. He meets with that most plain and precious Truth of God that, “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,” and he is well satisfied with that declaration. Still, as he grows, he seeks more knowledge and longs to understand the deep things of God. Possibly, as a young beginner he goes beyond his depth. He perceives the Doctrine of Election in the Bible and he asks, “What is this?” It may be he is greatly puzzled with this doctrine, for though it is rich with comfort for those who, by reason of years, have had their senses exercised, yet it is a hard nut for babes in Grace. It is simple enough when seen from one side of it, but from another it is a bottomless mystery. We have seen minds quite bewildered where, to us, all things have seemed plain.

I have known people stumble over hard texts . “What does this text mean? What does that passage mean? What does this other Scripture mean?” You would be astonished if you knew how many people are disturbed in mind, lie awake at nights and are likely to lose their faith in Christ over Scriptures which are as cheering as can be when once they are understood! These people need that some man should guide them, for, like the Ethiopian nobleman, they will not otherwise understand what they read. In former periods, many lost themselves in meditations upon free will, predestination, Irresistible Grace and so forth. It was a pity that they dwelt so much upon the decrees of the Father and so little upon the work of the Lord Jesus! They got their heads muddled by things too high for them. People are more frivolous now, as a rule, and this evil is rare. Still, there are to be found, here and there, thoughtful persons not yet fully instructed in the faith who are puzzled and confused as the Infinite Glory of revealed Truth opens up before their astonished gaze!

They will know, hereafter, but for the present they are sorely troubled and perplexed—and their cruel enemy rejoices that, “They are entangled in the land.” Nothing contributes more to this than the divisions in the Christian Church. One preacher cries up one thing and another quite the contrary, till young converts cry, “Who are we to believe?” And they stand as if they had come to crossroads and do not know which way to take. I am sorry it should be so, but there is a promise to the family of faith, “All your children shall be taught of the Lord.” You shall not lose your way if you will accept the Word of God as a little child. Be of good courage, for it is written—“He shall guide you continually.”

Far worse is the case of those who are entangled through strange discoveries. They came in among professed Believers and they supposed that all Christians were perfect, (which, by the way, is a mere supposition), and now they have met with a certain loud professor who has acted very dishonorably and unkindly towards them! And they cry out with astonishment, “How is this?” We who know by experience and observation that Judas may be looked for among common disciples—since he appeared among the chosen 12—are not so staggered when we see a hypocrite! We expect to see black sheep even in the choicest flock—but the new convert is sorely grieved and stumbled when he finds out the melancholy fact that all men are not what they seem. Great mischief is worked among young Christians by hypocritical or inconsistent professors. God grant that none of us may be of that kind, for the blood of souls will lie at the door of such persons!

It may be that, in his earliest days, the young convert finds out with surprise that his own heart is brimming over with sin. He thought that he was so changed that no sin remained in him and no temptation from without could move him. He hoped that he was so sure of the Truth of God that he would never doubt. But now he has to cry, “Lord, help my unbelief,” for he can hardly decide whether he believes or not! He has discovered another law in his members warring against the law of his mind and bringing him into captivity. He finds that when he would do good, evil is present with him—and this inward conflict between the flesh and the spirit comes upon him as a terrible surprise. “Why am I like this?” he cries. “Can I be a child of God and have such dreadful thoughts? Could I feel so wretched if I were, indeed, a possessor of Grace?” When young beginners get into this rough road, they are taken by surprise and know not what to do. Then is it that the adversary of their souls hopes that, “They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in.”

Akin to this are their amazements at painful experiences. It may be the Lord withholds the light of His Countenance from them and then they walk in darkness and see no light. If they were always to enjoy calm and comfort, they would, with self-complacency, boast, “My mountain stands firm! I shall never be moved!” But the Lord hides Himself from them to slay their pride. If they were always at ease, they would fall into living by feeling, instead of walking by faith. Therefore the Lord tries them, leads them by a desert path, clouds their sky and burdens their backs. Then they enquire, “How is this?” Some of us know that when God shuts us up in the dark, He loves us as dearly as when He pours sunlight upon us, but beginners in the Divine Life do not know this—and they are terribly put to it since they judge God’s heart by His hands. “Can I be a child of God, and yet be so afflicted? And why is my light so dim?” These frames and feelings, which come of our being frail, foolish and feeble-minded, are a great perplexity—and when we cannot make them out, the adversary cries, “They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in.”

What if, at the back of all this, we should be assailed with special trials? Suppose it should be true that ever since you have been a Christian, you have not prospered in worldly concerns as you did before? It will seem strange. When you were a man of the world and were an enemy of God, you had plenty of money and a host of friends—but now that you have become a Christian, your means and your friends are gradually melting away. It may be the case. I have known such an instance. Yet it is not hard to explain this in several ways. The Lord would not have us follow Him for the sake of what we get from Him. He would have us men, against whom even Satan could not say, “Have You not set a hedge about him and all that he has?” Our Lord desires followers who will cling to Him at all risks, for no other reason but their value of Himself and His Truth. He would have servants who, having counted the cost, would lose estate and repute, yes, and life, itself, sooner than turn aside from the way of their Lord! Perhaps you are being educated to this point of faithfulness. Do not, therefore, doubt because of your exercises and tribulations. but take these things joyfully! The path to Heaven lies by the dens of the leopards and the haunts of the young lions. Dream not that God has forsaken you! Leave it to the devil to say, “They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in.”

Possibly, once more, some may be much beset on the road to Heaven by mental difficulties. I do not often say much about these things because there are plenty of preachers who, by mentioning difficulties, are really spreading them. Certain clever gentlemen of the cloth may think it their duty to sow doubts among their hearers, but I have no such ambition. They may imagine that they are answering the questions which they suggest, but it seems to me that they are merely advertising them to many of those who were previously unaware of them. This is an age when men assail the Inspiration of the Bible, the atoning Sacrifice and the Election of Grace. I need not enlarge. Everything is now attacked. There is no part of the Bible which some critic would not take away from us. It may be, young Friend, that you cannot answer all the objections which you hear. Do not wonder if you cannot! You would be wiser than Solomon if you could reply to all objections that quibblers may invent!  
A friend came to me with a great difficulty, supposing that I could answer it off-hand; but I replied, “He who fashioned this piece of criticism took time in the making of it and you must allow me the same time to demolish it. I will do my best with it, but remember, if you find a thousand difficulties which I cannot meet, that fact will not prove that they cannot be met, for I do not profess to be Omniscient, nor do I assert that faith is a Grace which has no difficulties to surmount.” If there were a thousand more objections which could not, at this present time, be answered, they might confuse our feeble minds, but they would not shake the eternal Truth of God, itself! God’s Word is sure, be the difficulties what they may! Know what you know and believe what you believe—and get a firm grip of undoubted Truths of God—and though, when you are worried with the doubts and hypotheses of philosophers and the like, Satan will say, “They are entangled in the land,” let him see that your worry is soon ended by a childlike faith in the living God! Real faith will find a way out of perplexity, or will make one! True faith will sooner set aside the conclusions of human reason than the declarations of God. In fact, faith teaches reason to be reasonable by setting before it the highest of all reasons, namely, the Testimony of God! God send us such a childlike faith and then we shall not be “entangled in the land”!

II. I have thus shown you what our danger is. Now, secondly, let us think of OUR SECURITY UNDER THIS TRIAL.  
My text is, “Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in.” Upon this I make the first observation, that this is not true. It is only what Pharaoh said. And so when Satan says, “They are entangled in the land,” it is not true! It is only one of the sayings of the Father of Lies. “They say”—says one. Well, what do they say? Let them say it—their saying it will not make it true. A troubled one comes to me and complains of a certain charge which has been made. And he adds, as the sharp edge of it all, “Sir, it is not true.” Well, then, do not fret about it! One cries out, “They are taking away my character and I feel it keenly because what they say is cruelly false.” Friend, do not feel it at all! You ought to feel it only if what they say is true.  
Now, what Pharaoh said was not true and his speech did not cause the children of Israel to be really entangled in the land. Pharaoh’s tongue speaks his wish—but his wish will not be realized. Our adversaries say that our cause is defeated. Is it? “Ah,” they say, “we have shut him up. The man cannot answer us! We have crushed his faith and argued his confidence to death.” Have you? By the grace of God we stand fast in the once-delivered faith, after all your sophistries and boasts! You say that we are entangled, but we are not. “Show us,” they say, “the way in which you will get out of the wilderness.” No, that we cannot do, but, if you will wait a while, the Lord will show you—by leading us graciously through the divided sea—and, it may be, by also drowning you therein, as He did the Egyptians when the waters overwhelmed them! Israel could not guess her way, but Israel could wait till God revealed it. Newly-emancipated one, you are shut in with doubts and difficulties suggested by carnal reason, but, I pray you, believe your God! By the blood of the Cross, I entreat you, believe the Lord Jesus! By the eternal judgment and the Great White Throne, believe your God. “Let God be true but every man a liar.” Wait till He shall clear your way, through the very heart of the sea if need be—a way which will conduct you in safety to the other shore, where, with timbrel and with song, you shall proclaim His victory!  
My next observation is this—though Pharaoh said, “They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in,” yet they had a Guide. Look at the surroundings of my text and you will see that they were guided by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, so that they had no need to be in any perplexity as to their road. We, too, have a Guide. In Providence we are not left without a Leader and in spiritual things we are not left without the Spirit of God who shall lead us into all Truth. Young traveler, you are not turned out alone into a wild wilderness to find a path— the Good Shepherd goes before you! Follow Him as the sheep follow their shepherd. He never led His flock in the wrong direction yet! Do what He bids you and you are safe. Do as He did when He was here below—His example is your safe direction. Believe Him and obey Him. Keep to the narrow path. Hold fast your integrity and never let go of your faith. You have a heavenly Guide. You are not left alone and, therefore, you cannot be entangled in the land—the wilderness has not shut you in!  
Remember, next, that the Lord had appointed a way for these people. There was not only a Guide, but a way. But where was that way? Mountains blocked them on either side. They could not turn back, for Pharaoh shut up that route. Where should they go? The reedy Red Sea rolled across their front. Listen! Their way is across the bottom of that sea and up from its depths to the other shore! A strange path! “It is no way at all,” cries unbelief. Have you never read, concerning God, “Your way is in the sea, and Your path in the great waters, and Your footsteps are not known”? Tried Believer, the Lord will make a way for you where no foot has ever been! That which, like a sea, threatens to drown you, shall be a highway for your escape!  
I once had a friend, an upright gracious man, a gentleman whom God had prospered. He had, when engaged in a bank, acted uprightly in a matter in which his superiors judged him to be foolishly scrupulous and, therefore, dismissed him. He could not do wrong and so he was left with a wife and family, without a job and, as everybody told him, irretrievably ruined because of his “foolish conscientiousness.” He was for years the head of that very bank. In a singular way, the Lord made his discharge the means of his advancement so that he rose, step by step, to be the master where he had been the rejected servant! And this, humanly speaking, would not have come about had it not been for the incident mentioned. Have faith that God can turn the evil into good and that which threatens to annihilate you will be the means of your enlargement! Look well to your integrity and the Lord will look to your prosperity! The way of faith is not a common turnpike road which every careless traveler may traverse without care or study. It is a mysterious way which no fowl knows and the lion’s whelp has not trodden. Those who inherit the special glories of Heaven must encounter the special perils of the deep and of the desert—and in their amazing journey they shall behold the glorious arm of the Lord working wonders for them!  
Note well that the Lord would not only find them a way, but, at the same time, overthrow their enemies. You have come up out of Egypt, O young Believer, but the taskmasters are at your heels! There may come a decisive moment, after which they shall never pursue you again. These who seek your soul are to be destroyed, so that there shall not be one of them left. I believe that many a young convert hates sin and hates all evil habits, but these evils keep dogging his footsteps and seem as if they would master him—and then there comes a time of great struggle and tremendous battling without and within—on that one desperate field he fights the matter out. His adversaries are drowned in that Red Sea! His old sins and his old habits lose forever their former power. The Red Sea rolled between Israel and Egypt and whatever else might trouble the pilgrim host, they were never, throughout the whole 40 years, molested by Pharaoh, or any of the Egyptians.  
It is a grand thing when a man gets clean away from the world and is reckoned as dead to it. He has burnt his boats and has landed on the shore from which he never can go back, again, but must fight out the battle against sin even to the end. When a man is sworn into the army of Christ for eternity and the world has cast him out, there is nothing for him but to go right ahead. Everything that he has is now staked on the Cross of Christ. Happy man to have come to such a pass—to be once and for all crucified to the world, and the world crucified to him! The Egyptians of sin which had so fiercely pursued him are drowned and the rest of the Egyptians of evil have given him up—and he may go on his way to the promised land in peace so far as his old taskmasters are concerned.  
Remember, also, dear Friends, that when these people were thought to be hopelessly entangled, they were about to see the Lord perform for them a work which would be most helpful to their ultimate conquest of Canaan, for when Pharaoh and his chariots were drowned in the sea, Palestine heard of it and all the natives there began to tremble. Thus sang Moses in his famous song, “Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of Your arm they shall be as still as a stone. The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold of the inhabitants of Palestine.” That day in which a convert has to fight out the battle, once and for all with himself, shall give him strength for all future conflict and smooth his pathway into the land that flows with milk and honey!  
You must not think, young Christian, because you are saved from guilt, that everything is done and the warfare ended! There is a life-long conflict for you before you obtain possession of your inheritance and, it may be that, if now, when you are in special trouble, you are found faithful, all the rest of the road will be cleared from similar troubles. Now shall the Egyptians be drowned in the sea! Some of us can remember the time when we had to stand still and seriously ask, “Can I now be true to the Lord and His Law? I am advised the other way by a very prudent friend. Can I reject this advice? I can see the worldly advantage that I should gain through acting in a crooked course. Can I forego that advantage? I can see that I shall have to suffer if I am conscientious. Can I take up my cross?” When, after hours of anguish and prayer, you have come out of every entanglement pure and free, from that time forth the Lord may lift up the light of His Countenance upon you, and your victory over all other adversaries will be easy. Will not this comfort some of you who have just come to the Red Sea? The place of test and trial shall be the place of the ending of the foe!  
Why had the Lord led the people so far if He would not still help them? Do I hear someone say, “I fear that I shall never get out of my difficulties”? Yet you believe that the Lord has brought you out from the dominion of Satan? Tell me, has God brought you so far to let you perish? He has broken off the yoke of sin. He has given you a hope in Christ and you are a changed man. Do you think that He would do all this for you and then leave you? Come, my Brother, has the Lord brought you out of Egypt, by the precious blood of the Lamb, that you should die in the wilderness? Do you believe that Jesus has redeemed you to let you be lost, after all? I would speak personally to any elderly Christians here who begin to think that they shall one day fall by the hand of the enemy. How old are you? “Sixty.” Sixty? How long do you expect to live? Answer: ten years. Then if God has taken care of you for 60 years, can you not trust Him for the odd ten? “Well,” says one, “I am eighty.” Eighty? How long do you reckon to remain on earth Are you going to doubt for the few years that are yet to come? Have you trusted your God for 80 long years? Do not doubt Him now, I pray you! Do not please the devil by distrusting your faithful God! As surely as Jehovah begins, He will finish! It shall never be said of any work of God, “He began to build and was not able to finish.” If He has set you on the way to the eternal inheritance, He will surely bring you into it! God is never defeated or turned aside. “He shall not fail nor be discouraged.” Comfort one another, therefore, with such words as these.  
Lastly, the Lord must bring Israel out of all entanglement, for how else could He be glorified? Suppose that the Israelites had been left to perish when Pharaoh said they were shut in? What then? What would the Lord have done for His great name? Would not the Egyptians have exulted over Israel’s God? A Scotch minister tells the story of an aged saint who, on her dying bed, said that her Savior would never leave her to perish. “But suppose that He did not keep His promise and you were to be lost?” She answered, “He would be a greater loser than I.” When asked what she meant, she answered, “It is true that I would lose my soul, but God would lose His honor and His Glory if He were not true.”  
Brothers and Sisters, if we have trusted in God, and have come out of the Egypt of the world through His Grace, and have left all its sins behind us—if we were left to die in the wilderness—the Lord Jesus Christ would lose His Glory as a Savior, the Divine Father would lose His name for immutable faithfulness and the Holy Spirit would lose His honor for perseverance in completing every work which He undertakes! The Lord God of Israel will never stain His Glory—therefore be confident that He who brought you out of Egypt will bring you into Canaan! How I delight in that verse which we sang just now—  
*“My name from the palms of His hands eternity will not erase; Impressed on His heart it remains in marks of indelible Grace. Yes, I to the end shall endure, as sure as the earnest is given; More happy, but not more secure, the glorified spirits in Heaven.”*  
“Ah” murmurs one, “I don’t believe that!” Then I am sorry for you, for, “according to your faith be it unto you.” “I believe,” says one, “that men may fall away and perish.” It will be an evil thing for you if it should be to you according to your faith! If you have Grace enough to grasp the whole range of blessing which the Covenant of God offers you, then the whole shall be yours by a covenant of salt. He that thinks he can be off and on with God—saved today and lost tomorrow, and then saved again—has a comfortless creed to defend and a world of absurdities to meet! You are born again! Suppose that you could lose the new life which comes by the new birth? What then? I have heard of people being born again, but could they be born again, and again, and again? According to the notion of some, certain persons are born again, and again, and again, and again, and again I do not know how many times! There is nothing in Scripture to warrant such a strange idea.  
If you, my Friend, will come and cast yourself on Christ and take Him to be your Savior, once and for all, He will save you right now with an everlasting salvation! He says, “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” Jesus, Himself, has said it, “I give unto My sheep, eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.” Believe for this with heroic faith! Believe for eternal salvation in Jesus Christ, who is able to work in you a livelong escape from sin! According to your faith, so shall it be.  
Oh, no! The devil may say that we are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut us in! But we shall get out of the labyrinth right enough. Is it not written, “Sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under Grace”? We shall yet sing unto the Lord who has triumphed gloriously. He has thrown our sins and our fears into the sea. So be it! Hallelujah! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Exodus 13:21, 22; 14.**  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—739, 689, 738.

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JUBILATE

NO. 1867

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 25, 1885, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spoke, saying, I will sing unto the Lord,  
for He has triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea. The Lord  
is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation, my father’s God, and I will exalt Him.”  
Exodus 15:1, 2.**

THIS is the first song unto the Lord which is recorded in Holy Scripture. In Jacob’s blessing of his children there are verses which may be regarded as songs, but they are mere fragments and can scarcely be said to be sung unto the Lord. There are other couplets in the Book of Genesis, but this is the first connected song upon record. I should think that Abraham often sang unto the Lord, but we have no record of it. We can hardly doubt but that Isaac had his quiet Psalm, as Enoch had—and Noah and others who called upon the name of the Lord. But none of these hymns are left to us. This is the very first of those sacred songs preserved in Scripture and, in some respects, it is first in merit as well as in time. At any rate, its august occasion lifts it into the highest place among patriotic hymns.

The Song of Moses appears to have been chanted by an exceedingly great multitude. Miriam, the Prophetess, took her timbrel and led the strain—all the daughters of Israel going forth with her with their timbrels and dances—and the whole multitude of the people taking up the strain. Never had the shores of the Red Sea, or any other sea, heard such a song! There were at least 600,000 men, beside women and children. What an assembly! Millions made up that choir! Though their voices were little tuned to music, yet as they lifted them up, each one throwing his whole strength into the strain, it must have sounded like the noise of many waters, especially when they repeated the refrain, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.”

We saw just now, in our reading in the 15th Chapter of Revelation, that the Song of Moses, the servant of God and of the Lamb, will be sung toward the close of this dispensation when those who have gotten the victory over the beast and his image shall stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. Before the seven last plagues shall be poured out upon the earth and God shall overthrow the hosts of Antichrist once and for all, then shall this song be heard, sung, not by the Israelite nation, but by that higher Israel who have escaped by the Grace of God from the power of the spiritual Pharaoh and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! How sweetly will they together take up the song, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously! Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty.”

It is obvious, then, from the plentiful allusions to this song in Holy Scripture, that it is full of deep spiritual significance. It teaches us not only to praise God concerning the literal overthrow of Egypt, but to praise Him concerning the overthrow of all the powers of evil and the final deliverance of all the chosen. It is God’s intent that from the day of Moses, downward, even to the hour when flames of fire shall lick up the works of men and the heavens, themselves, shall be dissolved with fervent heat, that this shall be the song of the chosen people everywhere, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.”

The first verse of this song was quoted by David. I think you will find it in almost the same words three times in the Psalms, but especially in the 118th Psalm you have the exact words, “The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.” As if the Holy Spirit, when He furnished Isaiah with his noblest minstrelsy, could not excel the earlier strains of Moses. Isaiah himself, in Chapter 12, has the same words—“Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation.” It is evident that this patriotic song was interwoven with the life of Israel and that when good and gracious men would express themselves in praise at their very best, they fell back upon this Song of Moses and they sang unto the Lord who had triumphed gloriously! So full of significance, then, as this song is, there is something for us to learn from it this morning. May God the Holy Spirit, who dictated this song to Moses, now write it afresh upon His people’s hearts! Breathe on us, Holy Spirit, that we, also, may be filled with the praises of Jehovah!

First, I shall want you to notice the time for singing this song. The text begins, “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song.” Secondly, I shall want you to observe the tone of this song—it is worthy to be sung in Heaven itself—it is, indeed, high and lofty! And thirdly, we will consider the first clauses of the song itself—“The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt Him.”

I. It will be instructive to notice THE TIME OF THE SINGING OF THIS SONG. To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under Heaven—there is a time of the singing of birds and there is a time for the singing of saints. “Then sang Moses.”

It was, first of all, at the moment of realized salvation. “The Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore; and Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and His servant Moses. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord.” There was no singing in Egypt. Sighing, crying, groaning lamentation abounded there, till the Lord said, “I have surely heard the cry of My people.” There was no singing that I know of even at the celebration of the paschal supper on that dreadful night when they ate the lamb in haste with their loins girded and their staves in their hands. Its first observance was upon a night almost too solemn for song. I do not read that they sang when they came to Succoth, or reached their first encampment.

I doubt not that they sang snatches of songs when they found themselves free from their daily tasks and from the Egyptian rod. No doubt there were individual songs, but the masses did not unite in concerted music—they were too hurried and too much in fear of pursuit. No poet, as yet, had arisen to write a lyric in which all would join. The hour of their complete deliverance had not yet fully come. They marched on steadily, but they had hardly reached the time for timbrels. When they had crossed the sea and the waters thereof rolled between them and the house of their bondage, “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord.” Their previous lives had been one long-drawn sigh, or one discord of anguish and fear and woe. But when their slavery was altogether a thing of the past, then sang Moses. The depths have covered the Egyptian host—there is not one of them left—“Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord.”

You will have noticed, perhaps, in reading the previous chapter, that Moses had said to the people (14:14), “The Lord shall fight for you and you shall hold your peace.” But now that God had fought for them, they are not commanded to hold their peace any longer! The battle is fought, the victory is won and, “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord.” How could they help it? Surely, “if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.”

What does that teach us, Brothers and Sisters, but that we cannot sing in the land of bondage while under the dominion of sin and Satan? How shall we sing the Lord’s song in that strange land? We do not even sing in the first moments of our spiritual life, when our question is how to escape destruction through the sprinkling of the blood! Nor do we, perhaps, sing in those first hurried steps when we fly from the power of sin and Satan, endeavoring to escape out of bondage. But, oh, when we see that Christ has saved us! When we understand that he that believes in Him has everlasting life—then we sing! When we learn that, “He that believes is justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the Law of Moses,” and hear the Word of the Lord declaring, “To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name,” then we sing unto the Lord! Who could stop us? It would be unnatural for us to be silent after sin is put away! When we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son, the dumb devil is cast out of us. “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord.”

Our early days, when we first saw how complete was the redemption of Christ, were days of constant praise, and I think, today, if we see afresh how perfect is the righteousness of Christ, how fully accepted is the great Atonement, how secure is our standing by virtue of our union with the Son of God, we shall return to our music and make this house resound with grateful Psalms! When we doubt our salvation, we suspend our singing, but when we realize it—when we get a grip of it, when we see clearly the great work that God has done for us—then we sing unto the Lord who has for us, also, triumphed gloriously! I say again, how can we help but sing? How can our joy of heart any longer be pent up? It must pour itself forth in floods of harmony, in tunes of realized salvation!

So is it, also, in times of distinct consecration. You may not see this at first, but I would remind you that the Apostle assures us that all Israel were “baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” When Pharaoh and his hosts had been destroyed, Israel stood, for the first time, as a nation separated from Egypt. The Red Sea was a most effectual division. Israel became a distinct people, a race redeemed from among men—they would never again feel the yoke of Mizraim—they would not return to Egypt, nor would Pharaoh, again, pursue them. They were now a distinct people consecrated unto Jehovah. To them God would reveal Himself and among them He would dwell. That passage through the Red Sea was the type of their death, their burial and their resurrection to a new life. It was their national baptism unto God and, therefore, they sang, as it were, a new song.

Do you wonder that they did so? It is the happiest thing that can ever happen to a mortal man, to be dedicated to God! It is the grandest posture in which a creature can stand, to be fully consecrated to his Creator! It is the sweetest and happiest condition in which a heart can be, when it feels that it is redeemed of the Lord and, therefore, is not its own, but bought with a price. No song among sweet pastorals can exceed in sweetness that heavenly Canticle, “I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine.” There is no greater joy than to know that the Lord has chosen us unto Himself to be His peculiar heritage! Conscious of redemption by blood and separation unto Jehovah, their God, “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord.”

Oh you that hope that you are Christians but have never yet taken the distinct step to declare yourselves to be wholly the Lord’s! Oh you that have never come clean away from Egypt and made the waters to roll between you and a guilty world—you have delayed a joy which, I trust, you may not longer miss, lest that dreadful text is fulfilled in you, “Whoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My Words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him, also, shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He comes in the Glory of His Father with the holy angels.” “Then”—in the day of realized salvation. “Then”—in the day of distinct consecration they sang this song unto the Lord!

Brethren, it was also a day of the manifest display of God’s power. Our hearts are heavy. At least mine is so, when God seems to put His right hand into His bosom and not to vindicate His own cause. I am most sad because I see error prevalent everywhere! Falsehood reigns and Jannes and Jambres withstand Moses—and the Prince of this world disdainfully demands, “Who is Jehovah?” Many plagues are upon us—the earth swarms with errors as if the dust were turned into lice throughout all the land. Heresies, like frogs, are croaking everywhere! They have come up into the King’s chambers. The Lord has sent a thick darkness over all the land, even darkness that may be felt. The people loathe to drink of the waters of our sanctuaries, for a curse is upon them in many a place. Our heart feels bowed down and we go mourning and say, “Why have You made us to drink the wine of astonishment?”

But when we hear of conversions! When we see God blessing the work of the Sunday school! When we hear of sinners turning to Christ and seeking mercy! When we notice the children of God diligent in service! When we see the work of the Lord worked with vigor—then is our heart exceedingly glad, and then, like Moses and the children of Israel—we sing unto the Lord! How can we be silent when God’s arm is made bare? A revival is our joyous holiday! If we had our choice of all the benedictions that God can give us on earth, it would be to see the Church revive, His truth prevail and His Kingdom come! It is not, with some of us, a matter of indifference whether the Truth of God is preached or error is proclaimed! No, it is our life to see the Gospel conquer! We live if you stand fast in the faith, but our spirit distinctly sickens in proportion as the Church of God decays. When the Church is strong and God is with her, then is our heart revived and our song bursts forth, “The Lord is my strength and my song, and He is become my salvation.”

But this song may be sung at all times throughout the life of faith. I want to put it to the people of God here whether it is good to save up our songs for special occasions of great joy, or for times when we have something visible to sing about. Should not the Believer sing by faith as well as live by faith? Do you not think that the Song of Moses and the children of Israel at the Red Sea was, after all, a poor affair as far as faith is concerned? The bulk of the Israelites had very little faith, indeed, and loud as was the song, there was more noise than faith in it—for within a day or two they began to murmur against God! Sing in fine weather! Any bird can do that. Praising God when all goes well is commonplace work. Everybody marks the nightingale above all other birds because she sings when the other minstrels of the woods are silent and asleep—and thus does faith praise God under the cloud. Songs in the day are from man, but God Himself gives songs in the night!  
O come, let us sing unto the Lord under the clouds! Let us pour forth His praises in the fires! Let us praise Him under depressions—let us magnify Him when our heart is heavy. Faith believes in God when there is nothing to support her but the bare promise. That man was highly commended who did not despair of the Roman Republic—let us never despair of the Redeemer’s Kingdom! That is the true Christian who can say when everything grieves him, “Nevertheless, with joy will I draw water out of the wells of salvation; for I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live.” “Therefore will we not fear, though the earth is removed, and though the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea.” I ask, today, from every heavy heart and every downcast spirit, from every man that contends earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and trembles for the Ark of the Lord, that in the midst of his trembling and grief, he should burst into song! Rob not God of His Glory, but let it be said, this day, “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spoke, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.”  
Thus we have spoken upon the time for singing. I think that time is NOW. Let your hearts begin to ring all their bells and let not their sweet chimes cease forevermore!  
II. Notice, secondly, THE TONE OF THIS SONG. “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord.”  
Note, first, that the tone is enthusiastic. There is not a dull line, there is not a dreary sentence all through! It is full of force, life, power—it is Luther’s Old Hundredth Psalm and more! It rises to a height of intense enthusiasm which cannot be excelled. The words are, “I will sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously,” and the singers endeavor to sing gloriously, too!  
The tone is also congregational, being intended for every Israelite to join in. Though Moses began by saying, “I will sing unto the Lord,” yet Miriam concluded with, “Sing you to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.” This is a hymn for every child of God—for all that have come out of Egypt. Should not there be praise from every one of you? You in the back settlements, you that bear the mark of Egypt’s lash and smart from wounds still unhealed. You that remember well the taskmaster and the iron furnace, yet sing you unto the Lord! From Egypt lately come, sing you unto the Lord! There should be sent up unto God by His Church a perfectly unanimous harmony of praise! “Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness!” Let all the redeemed of the Lord say so! “O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation.” Let the song be enthusiastic and unanimous!  
Yet please notice how very distinctly personal it is. It is strikingly so. “I will sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously. The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation; He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt Him.” Do not lose yourself in the throng. It is not egotism to resolve that if nobody else will sing, you will say with David, “I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live.” The fact is that unanimity cannot become fact if each mind is not active in praise. We cannot have a perfect accord unless each child of God feels that he must make his own distinct music melodious in the ears of the Most High. I tell you, Brothers and Sisters, if you will not praise the Lord this day, I will! Do you not say the same? Does not each Brother and Sister here say, “If no others feel bound to gratitude, yet I have such reason for thanksgiving that I will praise the Lord while I have any being”? In my case the Lord has “triumphed gloriously” and if others will not take Him to be their God, yet this God is my God forever and ever! He shall be my Guide even unto death! I like the personality of this song and would urge you to follow it.  
Some of you cannot sing unto God because you have no personal enjoyment of Grace from Him and do not know God for yourselves. Oh, if this is your case, do not let the sun go down until you know this God and so can offer your own peculiar song to Him!  
Note, again, the tone of this song is exceedingly confident. There is not a shadow of doubt in it—it is all the way through most positive in its ascriptions of praise. The lips do not quiver, the mind does not waver. It begins, “I will sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.” It declares a fact about which there can be no doubt—“The horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea”—and it goes on to make statements which are not qualified with hopes, desires and “ifs,” or, “buts,” but are bold assertions which cannot be challenged! “The Lord is my strength and my song, and He is become my salvation.” That is the kind of singing! I do not mind, occasionally, singing with Cowper when he is down in the dumps, for some of his dreary hymns admirably express the experience of the weaker members of the family. But I would not always keep to the minor key. Oh no! Let us sing songs of joy and victory! Doubts and fears ill become the children of God. The full assurance of understanding is our privilege and our duty—why should we not have it? When we come before God, why should we bring Him such broken-legged worship? No, let us bring Him perfect praises, the firstlings of our bullocks, even as David says, “Then shall they offer bullocks upon Your altar.” God should be worshipped with the best we have! His mercy is so sure, so true, that He ought to have our fullest faith. Where is room for doubt? Let us sing with confidence unto the Lord!  
And this song is exceedingly comprehensive. It sings of what God has done and then of what God will do in bringing His people into the Promised Land. Nor does it finish till it rises to that loftiest strain of all—“The Lord shall reign forever and ever.” I think I hear them repeating that verse again and again—“The Lord shall reign forever and ever. Hallelujah.” Sing to the Lord, not only of the past, but of the present and the future! Sing of the Second Coming! Sing of the Glory to be revealed! Sing of high Heaven and the City that needs no candle, neither light of the sun! Sing of the victories of Christ when the armies of Heaven shall ride forth on their white horses and He shall lead them whose name is written on His vesture and on His thigh—King of kings, and Lord of lords. There is matter enough for eternal music if our hearts are right with God!  
Note, too, all through, that this song is immeasurably joyous. The Israelites were slaves enjoying new liberty—children let out to play! How merrily did they disport themselves! They did not know how to be glad enough! Let us give to God our unlimited joy. David said, “God is my exceeding joy.” I know of no greater word than that word, “exceeding,” because, however far you go, if your joy is, “exceeding,” it is above the highest—and however brave the description, if your joy is, “exceeding,” it surpasses all language! Believers ought to be unutterably happy. Men redeemed with the precious blood of Christ ought always to be almost too happy to live! Men that are children of God and heirs of the Covenant— and are soon to be where Jesus is in the ineffable splendor of Jehovah’s light—ought to feel their soul overflowing with delight! The pulse of the Believer should beat hallelujahs, every heaving of the lungs should raise a Te Deum! Oh, if our minds could but rise into the heavenlies, where we ought to be, we should not only be happy as the days are long, but we should enjoy the days of Heaven upon the earth!  
Yet I must say, however enthusiastic that song was and however full of joy it was, it was only such a song as was due unto the Lord. If those people on that day had sung to the Lord some dull, heavy tune, I think if I had been there I would have said, “Change that note! Awaken yourselves to ardor! Awake, awake, put on strength!” The new tunes of the present age are constructed upon the principle of, “Let us sing and rattle through the words as hard as we can go.” I like weightier music moving swiftly, but yet grandly. Such was the Song of Moses, full of solemnity, but full of heart—a tune into which everyone could throw the full volume of his voice without fear of spoiling the delicacy of tone. But, Brothers and Sisters, the tribes of Israel did not even, then, praise the Lord half as He should be praised. If all the angels in Heaven had left their seats and descended to the Red Sea shore—and if cherubim and seraphim had joined the lofty song—it had not been more than meet for the occasion!  
So today, if we could awaken all on earth and all in Heaven, as well as all that is within us, to bless and magnify the Lord, the song would not be equal to the majesty of the Divine goodness! It would be but a faint expression of what God deserves from each one of us. Therefore, let us sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously!—  
**“Sound the loud timbrel o’er Egypt’s dark sea! Jehovah has triumphed, His people are free! Sing—for the pride of the tyrant is broken, His chariots, his horsemen, all splendid and brave, How vain was their boasting. The Lord has but spoken, And chariots and horsemen are sunk in the wave!”**  
III. We are to dwell for a few minutes upon THE FIRST CLAUSES OF THIS SONG. “The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt Him.”  
Notice the song is all of God. There is not a word about Moses. Read this song through and neither Moses, nor Aaron, nor Miriam are in it— God is All in All—“I will sing unto Jehovah.” That is blessed praise when self lies with the Egyptians at the bottom of the sea—when everything that is in us that is commendable is traced to the Grace of God and the Lord is magnified for it! All for the glorification of Jesus and none but Jesus! Brothers and Sisters, we spoil our music by diverting our thoughts to man. Let us forget men, forget earth, forget time, forget self, forget this mortal life and only think of our God! The song shall be all for You, O Lord, for You are All in All and if we have one note that is determined to go astray, we will this day bind it with cords, even with cords to the horns of Your Altar, O Jehovah!  
Observe, the song dwells upon what God has done—“The horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.” There is nothing concerning the deeds of Moses and Aaron, or the pride of Pharaoh, or the craft of Jannes and Jambres. No, the whole is consecrated to the doings of the

ord. Let us trace all the mercies we get to our God, for He has worked all our works in us. He has chosen us, He has redeemed us, He has called us, He has quickened us, He has preserved us, He has sanctified us and He will perfect us in Christ Jesus! The Glory is all the Lord’s. Let us sing of what the Lord has done. When you read human history, read it to see the finger of God in it—trace all along through human story the silver line of Covenant working—observe how the Lord casts the horse and his rider into the sea when they come out against Him or His people.  
The song also declares what the Lord will yet do. It is not about what evil men are doing, or what we are afraid will happen through their malice, but of what the Lord, alone, will do. He says, “You will surely bring them in.” He pictures the whole affair finished and Israel settled in the Promised Land—and this is His song. Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us sing the music of the future, the music of what God will do! Do you believe that the Lord will be defeated in the long run? Do you fear that at the end, Jehovah’s everlasting purpose will fail—that Christ will have died in vain? Do you think the eternal Truths of God promulgated in this Bible will be driven out of the earth by modern thought? Or that our old Christianity, for which our fathers bled, will become extinct? By no means! We shall yet conquer in the great name of Jehovah! Therefore let us take heart of hope to ourselves and sing of what the Lord has done so often, for, again and again, “The horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.”  
Take up the first note—“The Lord is my strength.” What a noble utterance! Poor Israel had no strength! She had cried out by reason of her sore bondage, making bricks without straw. Poor Israel was weakness itself! but Jehovah drew near in power. The Lord is my strength when I have no strength of my own! By the strength of the Lord, Israel came forth with a high hand and an outstretched arm. Egypt was glad when they departed and the Egyptians gave them jewels of silver and jewels of gold that they might wish them well in departing—for God had given them honor in the sight of the people. Thus the Lord is our strength when we are at the extremity of weakness.  
The Lord was also Israel’s strength against strength. Pharaoh was exceedingly mighty. The kings of the earth trembled at the neighing of his warhorses! The rattling of his chariots made the very heavens to resound! But God was more than a match for him. When strength comes out against God’s people, God meets it with His Omnipotence! What is Pharaoh’s strength when matched against Jehovah’s might? A paper pellet thrown against a wall of brass! The enemy said, “I will pursue; I will overtake; I will divide the spoil” and so on—but Jehovah had only to blow with His wind and the sea covered them! Thus will the Lord be our strength when the mighty are against us.  
It is well to say, “The Lord is my strength” when we are weak and the enemy is strong, but we must mind that we say the same when we are strong and our enemies are routed. Suppose Israel had stood on the shore and cried, “The Egyptian power is broken by the sons of Jacob. Israel has cut Rahab and wounded the dragon.” Suppose the nation had boasted itself—it would have been guilty of a treasonable attempt upon God’s Glory! Lo, Israel is strong enough to make the dukes of Edom tremble and the mighty men of Moab to be afraid—but she must not sing unto her own honor! “Give unto the Lord, O you mighty, give unto the Lord, Glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the Glory due unto His name.” Let this, then, be our song when we are weak and our song when we are strong—“The Lord is my strength.”  
Note, the word is not, “The Lord gives me strength,” but, “The Lord is my strength”! How strong is a Believer? I say it with reverence, he is as strong as God—“The Lord is my strength.” God, the infinite Jehovah, in the infinity of His Nature, is our strength.  
The next is, “The Lord is my song,” that is to say, the Lord is the giver of our songs. He breathes the music into the hearts of His people. He is the Creator of their joy! The Lord is also the Subject of their songs—they sing of Him and of all that He does on their behalf. The Lord is, moreover, the Object of their song—they sing unto the Lord. Their praise is meant for Him alone. They do not make melody for human ears, but unto the Lord. “The Lord is my song.” Then I ought always to sing! And if I sing my loudest, I can never reach the height of this great argument, nor come to the end of it. This song never changes. If I live by faith, my song is always the same, for “the Lord is my song.” Our song unto God is God Himself! He alone can express our most intense joy. O God, You are my exceeding joy! Father, Son and Holy Spirit, You are my hymn of everlasting delight!  
“The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation.” The Father, in His eternal purpose, is my salvation. The Son, in His complete redemption, is my salvation. No, not in His redemption, only, but in His life, His death, His Resurrection, His intercession, His Second Coming He has become my salvation. And the Holy Spirit indwelling in me, quickening me, instructing me, illuminating me, perfecting me, keeping me—He is become my salvation! Triune God, it is not alone that You save me, but You are my salvation. I look for nothing but what is in You and if You give Yourself to me, You have given me a perfect salvation—salvation from bondage, salvation from worldliness, salvation from death and Hell, salvation into light, liberty, love and joy—salvation that shall culminate in eternal Glory! A full salvation is God to His people.  
Next “He is my God.” Perhaps this is the most joyous note of all. “He is become my salvation”—this is very sweet. “He is my God”—this is the sweetest of all! “He is my God,” I choose Him to be my God, but I choose Him of necessity. I can do no other. Who else can be my God? In the Revised Version it is, “This is my God,” and a very proper translation, too— as if Israel saw what God did at the Red Sea and then exclaimed, “This is my God.” This God of justice, this God of vengeance and power is my God. Beloved, choose Jehovah to be your God—whom else can you choose? Let your hearts cling to Him!  
But then comes the added word, “He is my Father’s God,” that is to say, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob—a God by Covenant, the God who has given Himself to us by His own purpose and promise and, therefore, is our God—not by any right or merit on our behalf, but solely by the gift of His free, rich, Covenant Grace! Let us praise the Triune God of Free Grace, for He belongs to each one of us! There is nothing in God that is not mine; there is no high and lofty attribute that is not mine; there is no deep and dark decree that is not mine. You have neither Cross nor crown, O Jesus, which is not mine. He has given Himself over to us to be our God forever and ever. Come, let us exult in His name! Have you lost your goods? You have not lost your God! Have you nothing on earth? Yet you can say, “Whom have I in Heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire but You.” This is a holy portion, a happy portion, a heavenly portion, a sure portion, an endless portion, a portion which makes us feel rich to all the intents of bliss! This God is our God forever and ever. Let us praise and bless His name!  
Note, once more, that as Moses said, “He is my strength, my song, my salvation, my God,” now He adds, “He is my praise.” The text in the Old Version is, “I will prepare Him as an habitation.” This jars a little on my ear—it rather sinks the majesty of the majesty for Israel to think so soon of Jehovah as One for whom she could prepare a habitation. Building a habitation was rather the idea of David in his hour of decline, than of Israel in the day of her astonishment and victory. The Revised Version of the Old Testament, which is infinitely superior to the Revised Version of the New Testament, renders it—“This is my God: I will praise Him.” The fact is, there are two words so nearly alike that it is hard to tell which is correct—“habitation,” or “praise.” Some of the oldest versions of all have it, “He is my praise.” I never like meddling with the Old Version, however, so we will take them both and make sure that we do not miss the meaning.  
Does not the Lord inhabit the praises of Israel? We will prepare Him a habitation of praise. As soon as Israel had got clear of the Red Sea, clear of Egypt, clear of Pharaoh by the power of Jehovah, then she said, “I will praise Him.” O God, it shall be the business of Your people from now on to praise You! We have no bricks to make, but we will praise You! we have no whips to fear, but we will praise You freely! We are not slaves, now, but we are bound to You forever and we will praise You! Then the people seem to say, “We will praise the Lord by regular and abiding worship.” Inasmuch as in order to worship, a place is needed, the thought comes up, “We will prepare Him an habitation.” We will habitually praise our God for this great deliverance. Let us build our God a house of praises! Let us lay the deep foundations in love, set up the pillars with gratitude and roof in the whole with joyous hallelujahs!  
The thought of care comes before me in the Authorized Version—“I will prepare Him an habitation,” as if Israel said, “I will take pains to praise God. I will do it intelligently and with my best powers. He shall have the best I can give Him. My best is poor compared with His deserts, but the preparation of my heart shall be His. I will lay myself out that everything shall be done decently and in order for the praise of this most High God. I will prepare Him an habitation of praise. Does it not look as if Israel said, “The Lord has come here to this Red Sea to fight my enemies and I pray that He may abide with me. I will prepare an habitation that He may remain. Lord, be not as a wayfaring man that tarries but for a night—let Your Presence be always with me and I will praise You always.” To have abiding fellowship with God is the natural desire of every redeemed soul. O Brothers and Sisters, let us import our own desires into Israel’s words. Let us say—  
*“Come, dearest Lord, descend and dwell  
By faith and love in every breast!  
Then shall we know, and taste, and feel  
The joys that cannot be expressed.”*  
Never leave us, nor even hide Your face from us, O Lord, our God! Dwell in us that we may dwell in You! Reside in these bodies and make them your Temples. Abide with us! Manifest Yourself to us as You do not to the world!  
The verse closes with, “He is my father’s God, and I will exalt Him.” How can we exalt Him who is already high above all thought? We cannot really make God any greater, but we can make Him greater in the estimation of our fellow men. Let it be the business of our lives to magnify Him. Let us tell our friends that which will make the Lord appear more glorious in their estimation. Let us lay ourselves out, by pen, tongue and life, to make our Lord Jesus Christ more honorable among those who surround us. Say, “I must and will exalt Him. Perhaps I have groaned too much over my trials. Perhaps I have been too depressed and heavy in spirit. But from this day on I will exalt my Lord and sound forth His praises! If He will permit me, I will make the Glory of the Lord the one objective of my being.”  
Come, you young men and maidens, you old men and fathers, let us praise the Lord on the high-sounding cymbals, and spend the rest of our days in crying, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.” Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Exodus 15:1-21; Revelation 15.**  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—175, 46 (PART II), 136 (PART II).  
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MARAH BETTER THAN ELIM  
NO. 2301

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MARCH 26, 1893. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 4, 1889.

**“So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them, and said, If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD your God, and will do that which is right in His sight, and will give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon you, which I have brought**

**upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that heals you.” Exodus 15:22-26.**

AFTER I had fallen down at Mentone, and was grievously ill, a Brother in Christ called to me and said, “My dear Friend, you have now come to Marah.” I replied, “Yes, and the waters are bitter.” He then said, “But Marah is better than Elim, for in Elim the Israelites only drank of the water and ate of the fruit of the palm trees, and that was soon over. But at Marah we read that God, ‘made for them a statute and an ordinance,’ and that was never over. That statute and ordinance stood fast and will stand fast for Israel as long as they are a nation. There is much more benefit to be reaped from Marah than from Elim.” I thanked my friend for that good word. I had found it true before. I have found it true since then and you and I, if we are, indeed, the people of God, will find it true to the end, that Marah, though it is bitter, is also better. And albeit that we do not like it, yet in the end there shall be no bitterness in it, but an unutterable sweetness which shall be ours through time and eternity!

We have a long record about Marah, have we not? I have read you four verses concerning Marah. How many verses have we about Elim? Only one. Does Marah deserve to be talked about four times as much as Elim? Perhaps it does. Perhaps there is four times as much fruit to be obtained from the bitter waters of Marah than from the 12 springs of water, and 70 palm trees at Elim. Who knows? This I know, however, that we are very apt to talk more about our bitters than about our sweets—and that is a serious fault. It were well if we had fewer murmuring words for our sorrows and more songs of thanksgiving for our blessings. Yet Holy Writ seems, here, to speak after the manner of men, and to let us have the four verses for the trial, and the one verse for the delight! Still, as it speaks, also, after the manner of God, I gather that Marah is, after all, more noteworthy than Elim and, truly, there does come to God’s people something better out of their troubles than out of their joys.

Certainly one thing is clear, Israel had no miracle at Elim. Wells and palm trees they had, but they had no miracle, there, no miraculous change of the bitter into the sweet. And they had no statute, and no ordinance, and no promise, and no new Revelation of God, and no new name for Jehovah, there. All that belonged to Marah, “for there He made them a statute and an ordinance.” And there He promised, if they were faithful and obedient, that He would put none of the diseases of Egypt upon them. And there He revealed Himself as Jehovah Rophi, “the Lord that heals you.” Oh, yes, there are many virtues and many blessings in the bitter waters of Marah! Often have we found it true that, “Sweet are the uses of adversity.”

I hope that nobody here thinks that these Israelites experienced a small trial. We are not accustomed to traveling in the desert, but those who are, tell us that thirst in the wilderness is something awful to endure. For all that great host to go three days without water must have been a very trying experience. You would not like to try that even in this country, but what must it be to go three days in the wilderness, beneath a burning sky, without a drop of water to drink? Then came the bitter disappointment at Marah. Probably the people knew that there were water springs ahead, so they hurried up to the place to drink, but when they stooped to taste the waters, they found that they were bitter. They could not drink of them and there they stood, in their desperation, with the long thirst parching their throats, and bitter disappointment adding to their agony! And they murmured against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?” I say not this to excuse them, but lest you should think that they had only a small trial to bear.

Remember, also, that this was a new form of trial. They never lacked for water in Egypt—there were plenty of rivers and canals there—and they could drink as much as they chose. This was an experience to which they were quite unaccustomed and I should not wonder if they were greatly surprised at it, for they knew that they were the people of God. They had just seen the Lord divide the Red Sea and drown their enemies—and now He has brought them out of Egypt to let them perish of thirst in the wilderness? They fancied that they were going to have one long triumphant march right into the Promised Land, or to be always dandled upon the lap of Providence, and indulged in every way, like spoiled children. They must have stood aghast at finding that, when the earth yielded water to slake their thirst, it was such water as they could not drink!

Well, now, this kind of surprise happens to many who have set out on the way to Heaven. God has been very gracious to them—their sins are washed away and they think that the great joy which they have lately experienced will never be taken away from them and will never be even diminished. They reckon upon a long day without a cloud. God has favored them so much that they cannot imagine that they shall have any trial or any bitterness. It is not so, Beloved! A Christian is seldom long at ease! No sooner does he start out on pilgrimage to Heaven than he meets with difficulty and, as he goes on, he finds out that the way to Heaven is not a rolled pathway—it is up hill and down dale—through the mire and through the slough, over mountain and through the sea! It is by their trials and afflictions that the people of God are proved to be His children! They cannot escape the rod, whoever may—yet this experience does, at first, come as a very great surprise to them, so I want to talk, tonight, to some who have been lately brought to rejoice in the Lord’s pardoning mercy, but are now staggered because they have come to an encampment in the wilderness where their thirsty mouths are filled with bitterness.

I begin my discourse by saying that this experience was a great gain to Israel. Marah, with all its trials, was no loss to them. They made a decided advance in three things through having to endure this trial. They were gainers, first, by examination. Next, by experience. And, thirdly, by education.

I. First, Israel’s trial at Marah was a gain to them by EXAMINATION. It was to that end that they were brought there, that they might be examined by the Lord—“There he proved them.”

Speaking of Israel at Marah, let me say, first, that they were in a new position. They were no longer slaves, they were not in Egyptian territory. The Red Sea rolled between them and their former lives and their former masters. But it is evident from their conduct that they were not altogether a new people. They had brought a great deal of evil out of Egypt with them. When you heard them sing, you said, “It is strange that those poor slaves can sing such a jubilant song. Those women, so accustomed to carry heavy burdens of earth, how merrily they dance! How joyfully they strike the timbrels! Israel has certainly become a new race. What a grand choir they make! What singing is theirs! Who would have dreamt that those who cried by reason of their taskmasters would ever sing like that?” Yes, but when they were tried and tested, it was found that the old stuff was still in them—they murmured just as they had often done before when, in the land of Egypt, they had blamed Moses because their burdens were increased.

We, too, have entered quite a new state. Some of you, perhaps, have lately become new creatures in Christ Jesus. Between you and your old sins there rolls a deep, impassable sea—you will never go back to them again. Ah, but do not begin to flatter yourselves that you have left behind you all your old selves! There remains, still, even in the regenerate, the old lusts of the flesh! They have had their heads broken, but they still live! They have been crucified, their hands and feet are fastened to the wood, crucified with Christ—but they live for all that! And they struggle on the Cross and you must not marvel, if, when you are tried and proved, you find that you are like these Israelites at Marah.

Notice, next, that the trial to which Israel was subjected was the Lord’s own test, which is searching and accurate—“He proved them.” We sit down and practice self-examination, which is a very proper thing. Beware, I pray you, of a faith that will not stand self-examination! If you dare not look into your own heart, it must be because there is something rotten there. The tradesman who is afraid to inspect his books, or examine his stock, is going to the bad, rest assured of that. We are bound to examine ourselves very carefully, but, after all, our examinations are very superficial, very partial, and we are very apt to make a mistake. In the case of Israel, the Lord proved them by that thirst in the wilderness and that great agony on finding that the water they looked for was undrinkable. “He proved them.” The Lord may be bringing some of you into deep waters and great trials because He is proving you. When the fan is in His hand, then does He thoroughly purge His floor. When He sits as a Refiner of silver, believe me, it is no child’s play to be in the crucible! The Lord took Israel to those waters on purpose to prove them. Have you never prayed, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts”? The Lord may answer you in a way of which you little dream—He may conduct you to some waters of Marah that He may test you and prove you.

Well, now, under the test, see what happened to Israel. Their faith in God evaporated. That question, “What shall we drink?” has not a trace of faith in it! I hear it shouted, in different tones, by men, women and children—and it all comes to the same thing, “We hoped to quench our thirst here, but we cannot drink this water, and now, what shall we drink?” As if God could not, having dried up the sea, turn the earth into a fountain of water! He that made them a path through the midst of the deep waters could make a path for waters to come to them! There was no trace of faith in the murmurers at Marah. They seemed full of faith at the Red Sea, did they not? Many dancers, but no doubters! Many singers, but no unbelievers! Yet the whole company had not more than a pennyworth of faith among them. Moses was the only one who truly believed God—but as for the faith of the rest of them, it was mere gilt—veneer of faith covering a solid mass of unbelief!

Not only did their faith fail, but their love to God was very feeble. Did you not hear them three days ago? Why, you can almost hear the strain of their jubilant song, “He is my God and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt Him.” Oh, how they love Jehovah, do they not? They were in the love of their espousals! They went after Him into the wilderness. But now the cry is, “What shall we drink?” And they murmured against Moses. Theirs was a cupboard love, like yours and mine often is. They loved God very much for what they got out of Him and if He would not give them water to drink, what cared they for Him? If He would divide the Red Sea for them, then He would be their God and they would prepare Him a habitation. But if He let them suffer the pangs of thirst, there should be no blessings for Him on their lips! Ah, me, how like ourselves were these people! When we test ourselves, we say, “Lord, You know all things, You know that I love You.” And I hope that that is correct. But when the Lord proves us, and we are very sharply tested, we are apt to say, “Nobody was ever tried as we are! Nobody ever had the peculiar difficulties that surround us!” And then we begin murmuring. When we are thinking of how much we love God, it might be more profitable to consider how very little we really love Him, after all.

And see, Brothers and Sisters, these people were ready to break away from their God. They murmured against Moses because Moses was visible in their midst—but the real murmuring was against God, Himself! They might ask, as long as they liked, “What shall we drink?” but they could not get a drop of water by repeating that question a thousand times. Would they go back to Egypt? How would they cross the sea? What would Pharaoh and the Egyptians think of them if they did go back? Could they force their way forward through that terrible wilderness? There they stood, entirely dependent upon God, and yet with scarcely a particle of faith in Him! And their love all shriveled up—and all that within three days! O Israel, it is early days to be falling out with your new Husband! They had just been married to the Lord by a new Covenant and baptized in the cloud and in the sea—yet within three days they are ready to fling it all up and to say, as they did in their hearts—“Would to God that we had remained in the land of Egypt!” Oh, what poor, faithless, treacherous, deceitful creatures we are! It is only Divine Grace that makes us anything worth having. It is a wonder of mercy that the Lord puts up with us.

This, then, was Israel’s examination. “Well,” you say, “did they gain much by that?” Oh, yes! It is always a gain to a man to know the truth about himself. A captain must find his longitude and latitude, that he may know whereabouts his vessel is upon the sea. And this, I believe, is one of the things God would have His people do. The Lord does not wish His children to live in a fool’s paradise and to fancy that they are rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, when they are naked, and poor, and blind, and miserable! He sends us our Marahs, just to blow away our shams and get rid of our pretences, that we may build our house on the Rock, that what is built may be founded on real granite and may endure even to the end.

So much for the examination of the children of Israel at Marah. II. But now, beloved Friends, these people gained much by EXPERIENCE. Experience cannot be the property of the beginner—he must acquire it. Now what did the children of Israel experience?  
First, they learned that the wilderness was the same to them as it was to other people. It is well that young converts should know that this world is an evil world even to the man who is saved by Divine Grace. You are new, but the world is not. You love holiness, but the world neither loves you, nor loves holiness. You are in a wilderness—you are in the enemy’s country—you have not yet come into your rest. If you have not learned this fact, yet, you will have to learn it.  
They were to learn, next, that they were wholly dependent upon God. When they stood at the brink of the Red Sea, they saw that they were so, and that only God could lead them through the sea. But after that, they were just as dependent. They could not live longer without water, they must perish of thirst unless God supplied them. It is a blessed lesson for us to learn that we are entirely dependent upon God for all things, but especially for spiritual things. You will not pray unless He gives you the Spirit of supplication. You will have no tenderness of heart unless He works repentance in you. You will have no more faith unless faith is constantly bestowed by God. We are just like these gaslights—a candle may depend upon its own resources, but this light cannot. Only cut the connection between it and the reservoir of gas and, straightway, out it must go. We depend upon God every instant as much as we did at first and all our old experience, all that we have learned, and known, and taught, will stand us in no stead whatever unless we continue perpetually to receive from God. That was the lesson Israel had to learn.  
They also learned that God and God, alone, would provide. They might have to go very short of supplies at times and they might have a long thirst, but the Lord would not let one of them die of thirst. There is no record that even the tiniest babe in the camp, or even a sheep or goat in that mighty throng, perished for lack of water! God did provide. He does not promise that there shall always be a dinner ready when the dinner bell rings. You have not such an appetite as you would afterwards have if you waited another hour and, sometimes, the Lord may keep you waiting for His supplies that you may enjoy them all the better when they do come. He never is before His time, but He never is behind His time, though He may be behind your time. God will provide. That day Israel began to understand that word of their father Abraham when He said to Isaac, as you remember, “My son, God will provide.” Now it began to come home to the children of the tribes that God would surely provide—and He did provide for them this great necessary gift of water when they were in the wilderness. That is something to learn. Some of you people of God, here, have learned that lesson, for you have been in great straits and you have been fed by the constant provision of God.  
The Israelites were also to learn, in the next place, that God could make their bitters into sweets, and He could do that in a very simple way. But He could do it—and He could bring good out of evil, and satisfy them by that which formerly nauseated them. Have you learned that lesson? Some of you people of God, when you get bitter waters, want to throw them away. Do not throw a drop of it away, for that is the water you have yet to drink. Accept your afflictions! They are a part of your education. Accept your afflictions. When Job could say, “The Lord gave,” it was easy to add, “and blessed be the name of the Lord.” But he also added, “and the Lord has taken away.” That was the bitter water, but he drank it, and it was sweet to his taste, and he blessed the name of the Lord for the taking as well as for the giving! God means to bless some of you by the enemy’s curse. Though you do not know it, you are to be lifted up by those who are trying to pull you down. I noticed some of the papers writing unkindly of our dear friend, John McNeill, and saying all manner of hard things of him—and I rejoiced in my heart! I hoped that they would go ahead at that work. I remember how they did it to me—all the bitterness they could invent, in years gone by. Every form and fashion of abuse was heaped upon me—and what a wonderful advertisement it was! What a kindness they were doing me without intending it! Let them alone and, depend upon it, God will make the wrath of man to praise Him and the remainder of that wrath He will restrain.  
Next, notice, that God works by His own means. The Lord showed Moses a tree and when he cast that tree into the waters, they became sweet. I think, if I had been there, I should have suggested that Moses should use that rod of his. Did he not divide the Red Sea with it? Why not just put his rod into the water and stir it up, and make it sweet? Oh, yes, you know, we are always for running to old methods! But God is a Sovereign and He will work as He pleases. There was a tree growing there, perhaps the wood of it was bitter, certainly it had no efficacy for making bitter water sweet, but God bade Moses cast that tree into the waters—and as soon as it was done the waters were made sweet!  
Now, you have just to believe that God will help you. You do not know how He will do it and, perhaps, He will not help you in the old way. Do not despair because Moses does not bring out his rod, for the Lord can relieve you without that! That dear friend who has helped you so many years is gone. Well, but God is not gone and He is not dependent upon that one person, nor upon any other! Therefore leave God as a King to do as He pleases, for His pleasure is the wisest—and let His pleasure be your pleasure.  
Israel also learned by experience that God Himself was to be looked to, and nobody else. If there were waters beneath their feet, they were of no value until God spoke sweetness into them. If Moses, himself, stood there, he could do nothing but pray to the Lord. God, Himself, must come and, by a miracle, must make the water fit to drink. Brothers and Sisters, it is always a gain to us in our experience when we get farther and farther away from every dependence but the Lord! You may have friends forsaking you and they who used to praise you may now be speaking evil of you. And you may come, at last, to feel that you have nothing but God to depend upon—then is the time that faith really comes into exercise! I could not help laughing when I read the story of a good Christian lady who spoke of our friend, Mr. Hudson Taylor—“Why,” she said, “there is no Society to take care of him! Poor man, he has nobody but God to depend upon!” You may well smile. “Nobody but God to depend upon”—but that is everybody to depend upon! Oh, if we could only be brought to that experience, Marah’s waters would, indeed, be a heavenly tonic to us! The child of God who has learned this Truth of God, experimentally, can say, “My soul is weaned from all the nether springs, but she drinks from the upper spring that flows from beneath the Throne of God, and she finds every drop to have a heavenly sweetness in it.”  
Thus Israel gained by experience as well as by examination.  
III. Now comes the third point—Israel gained by EDUCATION. The Lord was not going to lead a mob of slaves into Canaan to go and behave like slaves there! They had to be tutored. The wilderness was the Oxford and Cambridge for God’s students. There they went to the University and He taught and trained them, and they took their degree before they entered into the promised land. There is no University for a Christian like that of sorrow and trial.  
Now the Israelites were educated by Marah, first, in self-distrust. How could they ever trust themselves, again, when, three days after singing that jubilant song, they caught themselves murmuring against Moses? If they had been intelligent, as they were not, they would, each one, have said to his fellow, “Behold the boastfulness of our evil hearts.” What a terrible drop it is from “I will sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously: the horse and His rider has He thrown into the sea,” to, “What shall we drink?” That is just how you and I come down when we are left to ourselves. Thus Israel learned self-distrust.  
Next, they learned, as I have told you before, daily dependence. They learned that they must depend upon God even for a drop of water. That is the dependence of a Christian. He has nothing and he can do nothing without his God. We have no bread, no water, no anything except as God shall give it to us. A blessed lesson was this for Israel. They were educated well at Marah.  
Next, they learned the power of prayer. Will you kindly fix your eyes upon those two verses, 24 and twenty-five? “And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord.” Moses did not answer them. He did not upbraid them. He did not, even, begin to argue with them. But he cried unto the Lord and, thus, the people learned the power of prayer. They might have gone on murmuring until now if they could have lived so long—and the waters of Marah would have been as bitter as ever. But Moses cried unto the Lord and that prayer did what all the murmuring could not do! Were half the breath we vainly spend in going round to our neighbors, asking their sympathy, spent in going directly to God in prayer, we should sooner get out of our troubles! “Straightforward makes the best runner,” and he that runs straight to God in every time of adversity shall soon find relief.  
Again, at Marah the Israelites began to learn their separateness from Egypt. The Egyptians never drank these bitter waters but the Egyptians had foul diseases and terrible plagues. Now, the Lord tell His people that He will not put upon them any of the diseases of Egypt. God turned the rivers of Egypt into blood, but here He turns the bitter waters into fresh streams. His miracles were for Israel and against Egypt—and they began to clearly perceive that they had nothing to do with the Egyptians. They were a separated people. It is a valuable piece of education for a young Christian to find out that he does not belong to the world. The tendency is to think that, though you are in the Church, you can be in the world, too, and that you belong, in a measure, to both. That will never do! The Lord means to fetch His people right out of the world—and He will have them out! And if any of you try to be like the mouse behind the wainscot and only come out and feed in the dark—I mean that you come to Christ for a little food when nobody sees you and then go and hide away with the world—there will be a black cat after you before long! Some trouble or other will happen to you. That game will never please God and never profit you. Therefore drop it, I pray you, or else some bitter Marah will teach you that you are not of the world.  
Israel had next to learn the position of obedience. Will you kindly notice this? God did not say, “Do this and I will bring you out of Egypt.” No, but after He brought them out, He said, “Hearken to My commandments, and keep My statutes.” Salvation comes first and then obedience! Saved first, brought through the Red Sea with the high hand of God’s gracious power and, after that, become His obedient people! Obedience follows after redemption and deliverance. First the blood of sprinkling on the doorposts and after that you shall give ear unto the voice of the Lord your God, and diligently hearken to Him.  
Israel also learned the nature of obedience. Obedience does not merely do what it knows it should do, but it finds out what it ought to do. Oh, you Christian people, do you make a practice of reading God’s Word to see what He would have you do? I am afraid that there are some who make a point of not seeing some of the duties which are not pleasing to them. There are some who half shun portions of Scripture because they would trouble their consciences. Let it not be so with any of us, but let us listen diligently to the voice of the Lord our God. If you are saved, the kind of obedience that you are bound to render is that of a willing heart, which cries like Saul, “Lord, what will You have me to do?”  
Then, Israel learned the promise made to obedience—“If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord, your God, and will do that which is right in His sight, and will give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon you, which I have brought upon the Egyptians.” For you there shall be no plagues. God may try you, yet it will be not in anger, but in His dear Covenant love. Everything shall be changed for you. If sickness comes, it shall be overruled for your spiritual health. When death comes, it shall only introduce you to eternal life. The Lord will be very gracious to you. He that forgives our sins also heals all our diseases. His name is Jehovah Rophi! What an education it is for us when we feel that the God that healed the waters, heals us, and heals everything that has to do with us! It changes the aspect of all things about us, takes the sting out of the wasp and turns it into a bee. It takes away the venom from the serpent and gives us its wisdom, that we may be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves! Oh, the wonderful cure-alls of God, the heavenly catholicon of the Cross, the universal remedy of a dying Savior! May our experience educate us in the knowledge of that gracious healing!  
The hour has struck and I must, therefore, cease. Only I must say that this is the one lesson of tonight—dear people of God, trust your God. Trust your God not only when your mouth is full of honey, but when it is full of gall. “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him,” for He in whom you trust will bless you. But if you are not trusting Him, then shall plagues, like those of Egypt, come upon you. Darkness and all manner of evils shall waylay you, till, at last, there shall be heard in your house a bitter cry, for the Destroying Angel will overtake you, and plunge his avenging sword into your guilty hearts. God save you from that terrible doom, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON.  
**EXODUS 15; JEREMIAH 7:21-26.**

Exodus 15:1. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spoke, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea. Note, that they were singing, singing a very loud and triumphant song, and you would have thought that they would have kept on singing for the next 40 years! It was such a triumph, such a deliverance, God’s arm was made so bare before their eyes that you would have thought that their jubilation would have lasted throughout a lifetime, at the least. On the contrary, it lasted a very little while. Yet what a song it was that they sang! “I will sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.” What a song of triumph that is which is sung by souls saved from sin, death and Hell by the great atoning Sacrifice of Christ! Oh, when we first realize that we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, we do, indeed, “feel like singing all the time,” for our sins are washed away and we have a notion that we shall always keep on singing till we join in the song of the glorified in Heaven! So it ought to be, but, alas, from sad experience we know that it is not so! However, the song of Moses and the children of Israel goes on.

2. The LORD is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt Him. The heart is prompted by gratitude to think of doing something for God. It thinks of preparing Him a habitation, but what habitation shall we prepare for Him whom the Heaven of heavens cannot contain? All that we can possibly do is too little for the greatness of His Grace and His Glory. “You did well that it was in your heart,” said the Lord to David, though He might not prepare God a habitation. It is well that it is in our heart, today, to do some little thing for the Glory of God. As an old Puritan says we give for love-tokens a cracked sixpence, or a flower that soon fades. It is accepted as a love-token, not for its intrinsic value, but as an emblem of what our heart feels and would do if it could. Even so it is with the Lord and the service His people seek to render to Him. He takes our trifles and makes much of them.

3-5. The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is His name. Pharaoh’s chariots and His host has He cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone. And this is what has happened to all the powers that were against us. Our sins, where are they? Has not the Lord cast them into the depths of the sea? Yes, blessed be His name forever! We, like Israel on the other side of the Red Sea, praise the Lord that we have escaped out of the hand of the oppressor and that Pharaoh holds us as servants no longer. To the Lord, alone, is due the glory of our deliverance.

6-8. Your right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of Your excellence, You have overthrown them that rose up against You: You sent forth Your wrath, which consumed them as stubble. And with the blast of Your nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. What cannot God do? The liquid becomes solid! Nature, itself, changes when the God of Nature puts forth His power. Trust in God and He will do wonders for you, also, as He did for His ancient people Israel.

9. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. How the powers of darkness rage and rave! What a flurry they are in! What big words they speak! What cruel designs they harbor against God’s people. See how still and calm is the Lord amid all their raging!

10. You did blow with Your wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters. God has only to use His breath to blow upon them and away they go, and all their boastings, too! One word from the mouth of God can destroy all our doubts and fears. The breath of His Spirit can sink all our enemies and make us sing for joy of heart at our great deliverance.

11-13. Who is like unto You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? You stretched out Your right hand, the earth swallowed them. You in Your mercy have led forth the people which You have redeemed: You have guided them in Your strength unto Your holy habitation. The song becomes prophetic. All joy gets to be prophetic—at least, the joy of earth when once it is touched with the live coal from off the heavenly altar. We begin to praise God, “for all the Grace we have not tasted yet,” as Israel here does. They praise the Lord for leading His people through the wilderness and bringing them unto His holy habitation, even while they are only at the beginning of their journey.

14. The people—That is, the Canaanites—  
14, 15. Shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. When they hear of the great things that Jehovah has done for His people, they shall feel that the day of their doom is come. Who can stand against so mighty a God? Yet there are some, in our day, whose hearts are stouter and harder than the hearts of the dukes of Edom and the mighty men of Moab. They hear of God’s judgments upon the wicked and of the terrible doom of the ungodly, and yet they dare to defy the Lord and to continue in their evil ways!  
16-18. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of Your arm they shall be as still as a stone; till Your people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which You have purchased. You shall bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which You have made for You to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O LORD, which Your hands have established. The LORD shall reign forever and ever. How grandly that last note must have pealed forth from the hundreds of thousands of male voices! The women must also have sung it with the utmost conceivable joy as they struck their timbrels and danced before the Lord.  
19-22. For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea. And Miriam the Prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing you to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea. So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. At first, they were afraid of too much water, from the waves of the sea. Now they are afraid of too little. Will their songs be over in three days? Ah, yes! At the end of the third day they came to some springs of water, but they were brackish or bitter.  
23, 24. And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured—Ah, these singers had sadly changed their notes! Where are the timbrels now? “The people murmured”  
24-27. Against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them, and said, If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD your God, and will do that which is right in His sight, and will give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon you, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that heals you. And they came to Elim. They did not stay long at Marah, probably only a few hours.  
27. Where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees and they encamped there by the waters. That Elim must have been prepared on purpose for Israel. Twelve springs of water—that was the number of the tribes. Threescore and ten palm trees—that was the number of the elders. I do not wonder that Moses noted these numbers. It must have seemed remarkable that, long before they came there, there were the wells and there were the palm trees all ready for their encampment! It was most significant that these things should have been prepared according to the number of the children of Israel, but everything else is arranged by the same rule. When the Lord divided the people, He set the bounds of the nations according to the number of the children of Israel. It is by this line that He still builds His Church. It is according to His thoughts of His own people that He rules everything in His Providence. There are a few verses in the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, at the seventh chapter, which we will read concerning this subject.  
Jeremiah 7:21, 22. Thus says the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh. For I spoke not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. You have heard what God said to them when they came out of Egypt.  
23-26. But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people: and walk you in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all My servants the Prophets, daily rising up early and sending them: yet they hearkened not unto Me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers. God grant that these words may never be a truthful description of us! Oh, may we keep the Covenant of our God and walk before Him with a holy, reverent fear, and serve Him all our days! Amen.

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MARAH, OR THE BITTER WATERS SWEETENED  
NO. 987

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 23, 1871, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried  
unto the Lord, and the Lord showed  
him a tree, which when he had cast into  
the waters, the waters were made sweet.”  
Exodus 15:23, 24, 25.**

WHAT a sudden change from the sound of the timbrel to the voice of murmuring! You saw the maidens dancing three days ago, and you little dreamed that they would make part of yonder clamorous throng who surround the servant of God, and cry, “What shall we drink?” Such are the changes of our outward conditions and of our inward feelings, so fickle and so mutable is man. What is there that can be rested upon in this mortal life? We say today, “My mountain stands firm, I shall never be moved.” Tomorrow terra firma, there is none—and we are tossed upon a stormy sea. Our life is like an April day—the sunshine alternates with the shower. Or like each day of all the year, the morning and the evening are necessary to complete it.

Quick on the heels of light treads the darkness, followed with equal haste by light again. The sun’s rule, at this golden hour, is but temporary. He must abdicate in favor of the usurping stars, but they, in their turn, must give way before his lordly presence yet again. This world, which is our inn, owns to the sign of the “checkers”—the blacks and whites are everywhere. We can be sure of nothing between here and Heaven of the things which are seen.

But of this we may be certain, that underneath all the outward change there is the immutable love of God towards His people, and that, after all, the change lies only in the seeming things, not in the things which truly are. For the things which are not seen are eternal and changes come not there. It is but in the things which are seen that the change occurs. Let us set the less store by earth, because its fashion abides not. Let us prize Heaven more because it cannot fade.

I. The text directs your attention, first of all, to THE EVILS OF THE WILDERNESS. We need not spend much time in thinking of these evils because they throw themselves in our way often enough. And the tendency of our mind is unduly to exaggerate them. Notice that the perils and trials of the wilderness occur very early in the pilgrim life. It is a notion, I have no doubt, of very young Christians who still have the shell upon their heads and are scarcely hatched, that their trials are over now that they have become winged with faith.

They had far better have reckoned that their trials have begun with tenfold force, now that they are numbered with the servants of the Most High. Whatever else comes not to you, O servant of God, this will surely be fulfilled, “In the world you shall have tribulation.” “What son is he whom the Father chastens not?” Some privileges are not common to all the adopted, but the privilege of chastisement is universal to all true sons. It is the token of illegitimacy if the rod is escaped—but scourging is the sure pledge of paternal love.

I say, however, that these trials come very soon. Israel was no sooner across the Red Sea than they went three days into the wilderness of Shur and found no water. And at the end of the third day, when they arrived at a fountain, they found worse than no water—for it was so brackish, so altogether unfit for drinking—that though they thought they would have drunk anything, they could not possibly drink this!

What? In just three days must they, that sang unto the Lord because He triumphed gloriously, nauseate the water for which their thirst makes them pant? In three days shall they be reduced to such straits that they must drink or die, and yet feel that they should die if they were to drink of such nauseous streams? Ah yes, with some of us our delight at conversion was very great—our exhilaration at finding the Savior was something never to be forgotten!

And yet only a day or so after we were stumbled with great temptation—amazed at the discovery of the evil of our hearts, or tried by the coldness of our fellow Christians, or the cruelty of the outside world— so that we found we had come to Marah. And this was all the severer trial because some of us had found a degree of pleasure in the ways of sin, and now it stumbled us to find sorrow in the ways of God.

When Israel was in Egypt they drank of the river Nile. No ordinary water that. To this day the dwellers on the banks of the Nile assert that the water has a peculiar taste not to be discovered in any other stream, and they prefer the waters of the Nile to all the waters in the world besides. What a change from the sweetness of the Nile to the bitterness of Marah! Did not the suggestion rise in their hearts, “It was better with us in the bondage of Egypt, with water in abundance, than it is now in the liberty of the wilderness with the bitterness of Marah”?

The devil tempted some of us at the very first by saying—“See what you have got by being a Christian? While you were as others are, your mind had mirth. Now that you have come out and followed the Crucified, you have lost the liveliness of your spirits, the brightness of your wit—that which made life worth having is taken away from you.” Young Christian, is that your case today? Be not stumbled, neither believe the enemy!

Man, it were better to die at Marah free, than live a slave by the sweet Nile! Even men that know not the Spirit of God have felt it were better to die free than live as slaves. And truly to be a slave to Satan is so degrading a thing that if this mouth were forever filled with Marah’s bitterness, yet were it better to be so than to be enchanted with the pleasures of sin. Yet these early trials are very severe, and need much Divine Grace lest they cause us great mischief.

Secondly, these evils assume varied shapes. You noticed that for the first three days in the wilderness they found no water. That is one trial. But the next day, or at the end of the third day, they found water. Now they thought their trial was over—alas, it had only changed its shape. They found water, but it was too bitter to drink. Do not be in a hurry to change your trials, dear Friends. We have heard of some who have repined that they had no children, and, like Rachel, their cry was, “Give me children, or else I die.”

Before long they have had children who proved to be far worse than none. Better no son than an Absalom. We have known those who were in good health but discontented because they had no wealth. They have gained wealth at last, but with an injured constitution they have had no power to enjoy it. If we could choose our trials, we might well remember the wisdom of the old philosopher who told the people oppressed by a tyrant to be content with his tyranny, “for,” said he, “it is with oppressors as with mosquitoes—let those suck which are now upon you, for if you drive those off, the fresh ones which will succeed them will be hungrier than those that are there now—better be content with the tyranny you have, than seek a new one.”

It is much the same with the trials we now feel—you will get used to them by degrees—they will spend their force. Desire for a change of trials may only be a wish for a worse affliction, for which was the worse—to have no water—or to have the water and to find it so bitter that you could not drink it? Yet when God changes the trial be well satisfied that it should be changed. You may anticipate, Christian, that you will have your trial changed—indeed, you must reckon that it is so. I mean that if today it is smooth sailing with you, though yesterday waves rolled as high as the mountains, it is only a change of trial.

You are now tried by prosperity, which may prove to be a more severe test for you than adversity. Is the wind balmy? Does it blow from the south? It is but another trial for you, be sure of that, for they who have withstood the northern blast and grown the ruddier and stronger for its influence have often grown faint and weary under softer airs. Watch in all things—your trials are with you constantly—the crucible is changed, the fire still burns.

Note again that as the trials of the wilderness came soon, and assumed various shapes, so often do the trials of the Christian touch very vital matters. They found no water, or finding it, it was bitter. It is not said they found no wine—a small trial, indeed. It is not said they found no milk, yet might the infant children have been sorely troubled by such a want. But they found no drinkable water. Here was a denial of an essential of life. They must have water, it was no luxury, it was a necessity.

With the hot burning sand beneath them reflecting the fierce heat of a cruel sun, not to have water in the wilderness is to feel an urgent necessity producing a terrible pain. God may touch us, and probably has done so or will, in points most vital. To be tried in the loss of some of your superfluities, my Brethren, is but little. But to lose even the little that you had to live upon. To be brought to straitness of bread—this is real tribulation. To have the hand put forth to touch your bone and your flesh—this is affliction. Believe me, our virtues and Graces look very fine, and we think much of them until they undergo that ordeal!

But that test often takes from them their gloss and beauty. We find how great our weakness is when the very marrow of our bones seems to be a den in which pains, like robbers, hide themselves. God may touch you in the most beloved object of your heart. It is not one child that is taken out of many, but the only one. It is not a friend, or distant relative, but the partner of your bosom is laid low. Do not wonder if the trial affects you greatly, and comes home to your soul and heart. It is one of God’s determinations that trials shall not be mock trials with His servants, and the Grace given shall not be imaginary, but true.

God never plays at chastening His children. No trial for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous. By the blueness of the wound the heart is made better. If it does not bruise, it does not benefit. Very much in proportion to the bitterness felt will be the benefit that will come of it. They found no water. O my God, to what straits do you reduce Your own people? Your own people who carry with them the title-deeds of a land that flows with milk and honey! Jordan and Kishon are theirs, and yet they find only Marah to drink while they are here!

Your own people for whom You have appointed that they shall dwell in a land of brooks and rivers of water! Where they shall sit, every man, under his vine and fig tree. These, Your darlings, whom You have brought out with a high hand and an outstretched arm, are brought to the extreme of poverty! And the little that they have has often a bitter taste infused into it.

Notice, once again, there is a reason why the earthly mercies which supply our necessities must be more or less bitter. When Israel received water out of the rock it was not bitter, but this water came out of the sand. To this day in the desert water is found in different places, but where it oozes up from a sandy bed it is almost, without exception, so brackish and bitter, by reason of the sand, that it is not fit for human drinking. And even the camels, unless they are sore pressed, turn away from it with great aversion. The sand has tainted it, the flavor of earth has got into the blessing.

So it is with most of our blessings—by reason of our sin and infirmity too much of the flavor of earth enters into the gifts of Heaven. Our common mercies, when we receive them directly from Heaven as God gives them, are mercies, indeed—cool, flowing streams that gush from the rock of His favor. But we are apt to trace them to the creature, so ready to look upon them as derived from earth instead of coming from Heaven. And just in that proportion may we expect to find bitterness in them.

What can you hope for in a wilderness, but productions congruous to it? Canaan! Who looks for bitterness there? Is it not the land that flows with milk and honey? Sweet land, when shall we reach you? Your sweetness is but congruous to yourself—but here, in this wilderness, where we have no continuing city—who looks for the streams of Lebanon? Who hopes to find Canaan’s fruits in the wilderness of Sin? As well seek to gather from the briny sea the sweet fruits of the palm or the luscious clusters of the vine as hope to find, amidst these changing scenes, comforts that shall be all comfortable and joys that shall be all joyous.

No, there will be comforts, but they will be often embittered. They will be somewhat joyous, but the earthy flavor in them will make us remember that this is not our rest. I know not that I ought to detain you longer with these evils of the wilderness. I do not feel it is wrong to speak of them, for we do not mention them with any view of discouraging those who have set out on pilgrimage. We are not like those who hold up their hands and say, “The lions, the giants, the dragons! Young Pilgrim, you will never reach the land of promise.”

But yet we would imitate the Savior, who said to the follower who thought he could follow Him wherever He might go, “Sit down, and count the cost.” There are trials for you, you followers of Christ, if there are none for others. Peculiar trials for you—peculiar joys ten thousand times outweighing them—but yet peculiar griefs, new griefs of a new life of which it will be a blessed thing to have been a participant. But there they are, and we will not deceive you. For you there will be Marahs that others may not know.

And for you there will be long thirsts where others drink to the full. Nevertheless, we will take Christ and His reproach, Christ and His Marah, rather than the world with its sweetness—for with every drawback that is supposable to Christ Jesus, He is better than the world with all the additions that can be invented by the sons of mirth.

II. Thus much on the first point, the evils of the wilderness. Now, secondly, THE TENDENCY OF HUMAN NATURE. The people murmured against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?” Do not say “human nature,” says one—say, “the tendency of Jewish nature.” Ah, but if anything, I would prefer the people in the wilderness to any other—rest assured that they were no worse than we are. They are an example to us of what our heart is. And whatever we see in them we have but to watch a little, and we shall see it all in ourselves.

It was not Jewish nature that God proved in the wilderness so much as human nature at its very best estate. Assuredly, the tendency of human nature is to murmur. They murmured, complained, found fault. A very easy thing, for the very word “murmur,” how simple it is, made up of two infantile sounds—mur mur. No sense in it, no wit in it, no thought in it—it is the cry rather of a brute than of a man—murmur—just a double groan. Easy is it for us to kick against the dispensations of God, to give utterance to our griefs—and what is worse—to the inference we draw from them that God has forgotten to be gracious.

To murmur is our tendency. But, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, do we mean to let the tendencies of the old nature rule us? Will we murmur? O that we might have Grace rather to say with Job, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him!” Shall a living man complain? Have we not received so much good from the hands of the Lord that we may well receive evil without rebellion? Will we not disappoint Satan, and overrule the tendency of the flesh by saying in the might of God’s Spirit, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord”?

I know we are apt to say, “Well, that is human nature,” and when we have said it is human nature, we suppose we have given a very excellent excuse for doing it. But is human nature to rule the Divine Nature? You, Believer, profess to be a partaker of the Divine Nature. Let the superior force govern. Let that which comes from above be uppermost, and put the lower nature down. Let us eschew murmurings and complaining—and

magnify and adore the God who lays our comforts low.

Observe—and this is worthy of note—that the murmuring was not ostensibly against God. They murmured against Moses. And have you ever noticed how the most of us, when we are in a murmuring vein, are not honest enough to murmur distinctly against God. No—the child is dead, and we form a conjecture that there was some wrong treatment on the part of a nurse, or the surgeon, or ourselves. We lay our hold on that for which there may not be a shadow of proof, and the murmuring is upon that point.

Or we have lost money, and have been brought down from opulence to almost poverty. Then some one person was dishonest—a certain party betrayed us in a transaction by failing to fulfill his part. All the murmuring is heaped on that person. We deny, perhaps indignantly, that we murmur against God—and to prove it we double the zeal with which we murmur against Moses!

To complain of the second cause is about as sensible as the conduct of the dog, which bites the stick with which it is beaten. It owes no anger to the stick, but to the person who uses it. Is there evil in the city and the Lord has not done it? Whoever is the instrument, the Lord overrules. In our heart of hearts our rebellion is against the Lord Himself. We have not quite honesty enough to rail against God openly and avowedly, and so we hypocritically cover up our repining against Him by murmuring against some person, occasion, or event.

“If I had not happened to go out on such an occasion I might not have had that cold and been laid aside.” Thus we blame an accidental circumstance as if it were not part of the Divine arrangement. Is this complaining of the second cause better than railing against God? I think not, for, in very deed, it is railing against God, and it is, in addition, an injustice to the second cause so made a butt of. When Pharaoh bade the Israelites make bricks, and gave them no straw, there was injustice.

But when the Israelites gathered around Moses and virtually told him that he ought to supply them with water, it was much the same thing. Why should this man have water to give them to drink? How could he sweeten Marah? They knew right well that it was not possible for him to open a well for them in the wilderness. They complained, I say, in their hearts, really, against God—but they added to this the hypocrisy and the injustice of veiling their murmuring against the Most High by an unjust and clamorous complaint against His servant Moses.

Stop your tongue, my Brother—cease your caviling against this and that, against him or her. For be sure that you are doing injustice to your fellow man as well as a wrong to your God. Once more, while we speak of this tendency in human nature, I want you to observe how they betrayed an utter unbelief of God. They said unto Moses, “What shall we drink?” They meant by it, “By what means can God supply our want of water?” What a question!

They were at the Red Sea, and God cleft the intervening gulf in two— and through the depths they marched dry shod. There is Marah’s water— shall it be more difficult for God to purify than to divide? To sweeten a fountain—is that more difficult than to cleanse a sea? Is anything too hard for the Lord? A great miracle had been worked. Had they but considered it, and exercised even the lowest degree of faith, they must have seen that he who could work such a miracle as they had seen could work yet another.

And they might joyously have stood at Marah’s brink, and have sung, “He who cast Pharaoh and his chosen captains into the Red Sea, and delivered His people, can give His chosen drink. Therefore we sing, Spring up, O well, and let your waters be sweet and clean.” O that they had faith in God but as a grain of mustard seed and they would have seen great things and glorified His name! Do you blame them? Do so—blame them much, but include yourselves in the censure. How often has it been so with us? We have said, “I will never distrust my God after this memorable deliverance, this singular display of His power has slain my unbelief.”

Yet a new trial has occurred, and our faith—where is it? Had the Son of Man Himself been on the earth with those quick eyes to discern the faith which He Himself creates, could He find faith in us in the hour of tribulation? Be humbled as you see yourselves in this mirror. Behold your instability, which is as water. How like to reeds shaken with the wind are we! Or like meteors, which flash across the brow of night to leave the darkness denser than before. How soon is the glory of our confidence spent, and the excellence of our faith withered! Hold You our feet in life, great God, or we shall soon be silent in darkness!

III. Now, thirdly—and may Divine help, the help of the Holy Spirit be given me—I will speak upon THE REMEDY OF GRACE. I have shown you the evils of the wilderness and the tendency of nature—it is delightful to behold the remedy of Grace. First, if you would have Marah’s bitterness healed, take the case in prayer to God. God begins by making us begin. The people complained to Moses. Moses took the complaint to his Master. In all trials, the surest way to a remedy is prayer.

In heavenly pharmacy, prayer is a catholicon. It heals all things. Prayer, which overcomes Heaven, will certainly never be overmatched on earth. Neither men nor devils can stand against prayer—it smites them hip and thigh like another Samson. The bow of prayer returns not empty. It is swifter than an eagle, it is stronger than a lion. Take your case to God, O Heir of trouble—unroll Rabshakeh’s letter before the Host High—and the Lord will silence his reviling. Half the work is done when it is brought before God in supplication.

Note, next, that as soon as we have a prayer God has a remedy. The remedy is near at hand. But we do not perceive it till it is shown us. “The Lord showed him a tree.” The tree had been growing for years on purpose to be used. God has a remedy for all our troubles before they happen. A delightful employment it is to notice how God forestalls Himself—how long before we reach the encampment, if there is the bitter well—there is also the healing tree. All is ready between here and Heaven. He that has gone to prepare a place for us by His Presence, has prepared the way to that place for us by His Providence.

But, Brethren, though for every trouble in this mortal life there is a remedy, you and I do not always discern it. “The Lord showed him a tree.” I am persuaded that for every lock in Doubting Castle there is a key. But the promises are often in great confusion to our minds so that we are perplexed. If a blacksmith should bring you his great bundle of picklocks,

you would have to turn them over, and over, and over. And try half of them, perhaps two-thirds—before you would find the right one—yes, and perhaps the right one would be left to the last. It is always a blessing to remember that for every affliction there is a promise in the Word of God. A promise which meets the case, and was made on purpose for it.

But you may not be always able to find it—no, you may go fumbling over the Scriptures long before you get the true word. But when the Lord shows it to you, when it comes with power to the soul, when the heart can grasp it, and cry, “Yes, that is the word, my Master! Indeed, and of a truth that is the precious Truth of God which can sweeten my sad discomforts,” oh, what a bliss it is! All glory be unto the Holy Spirit who to this day is ready to show unto His praying servants the sweetening tree when they come to the bitter streams.

Now that remedy for the healing of Marah’s water was a very strange one. Why should a tree sweeten the waters? I do not suppose there was any natural efficacy in the tree, although that would not be altogether impossible, since there are trees, so travelers tell us, which have been used in the sweetening of waters. There is in South Africa a certain river which water cannot be drunk until branches of a certain tree are placed in it. And only then the bitterness which is in the stream is deposited at the bottom, and the water becomes drinkable.

The thing is not unnatural nor altogether necessarily supernatural, though I think in this case it was supernatural, for there are no trees found now in the wilderness of Shur that would have the effect of sweetening brackish waters. This was no doubt a miraculous incident, and it was also meant to teach us something. The fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was eaten by our first parents and embittered all. There is a Tree of Life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations.

Blessed is he that eats of this Tree of Life. It shall take away from him the bitterness which the first forbidden fruit brought into the world. A tree is a living thing—may we not learn that there are living principles in true religion which will sweeten our adversities? Mere doctrines may not, but living principles will. These cast into our troubles will lessen our grief. Best of all, may not this tree cut down be an emblem of the Savior? A glorious Tree, indeed, was He, with spreading branches and top reaching to Heaven—but He must suffer the axe for our sakes.

And now, today, contemplating His atoning sacrifice, and by faith resting in Him, the troubles of life and the troubles of death are sweetened by His dear Cross, which, though it is a bitter tree in itself, is the antidote for all the bitterness that comes upon us here and hereafter. That remedy was most effective. When they cut down the tree, and put it into the water, it turned the water sweet—they could drink it!

And let me assure you that in the case of our trouble the Cross is a most effective sweetener. Shall I put the tree into the water for a minute, and then ask you to drink? Have you been suffering pain, or any other form of tribulation? I will let the Cross soak in it for a minute, and your first reflection will be—“In all this that I am called to suffer there is not even a single particle of punishment for my sin! God has punished Christ. Consequently He cannot punish me—to punish two for one offense would be unjust—therefore there is nothing penal in all that I am suffering.”

I do not know of any reflection more consoling than this, that my sorrow is not laid on me by a judge, nor inflicted on me as the result of Divine anger. There is not a drop of wrath in a river full of a Believer’s grief. Does not that take the bitterness out of affliction and make it sweet? And then the reflection goes further. Since Christ has died for me, I am God’s dear child. And now if I suffer, all my suffering comes from my Father’s hand—no, more—from my Father’s heart!

He loves me, and therefore makes me suffer—not because He does not love—but because He does love does He thus afflict me. In every stripe I see another token of paternal love. This it is to sweeten Marah’s waters, indeed! Then will come the next reflection—that a Father’s love is joined with infinite wisdom, and that, therefore, every ingredient in the bitter cup is measured out drop by drop, and grain by grain, and there is not one pang too many ever suffered by an heir of Heaven.

The Cross is not only weighed to the pound but to the ounce—yes, to the lowest conceivable grain. You shall not have one half a drop of grief more than is absolutely necessary for your good and God’s Glory. And does not this also sweeten the Cross, that it is laid on us by infinite wisdom, and by a Father’s hand? Ravishing, indeed, is the reflection in the midst of all our grief and suffering, that Jesus Christ suffers with us! In all your affliction, O member of the body, the Head is still a sharer. Deep are the sympathies of the Redeemer—acute, certain, quick, infallible. He never forgets His saints.

All the while the Lord lays His chastening hand upon His servants they may be cheered by this reflection—that in this He is making them conformable unto Christ. What should they know of Gethsemane if they had no sweat of pain? What should they know of the passion if they never had to cry, “I thirst,” or, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?” They were poor scholars in the school of Christ’s sufferings if they endured no sufferings themselves. And it is a blessed thing, a sweet thing to drink of His cup, and to be baptized with His Baptism.

Moreover, when the child of God is in his right state, it is always enough for him that his condition is the result of his Father’s will. Is it God’s will? Is it Christ’s will? Then it is my will. How could I dare to wish anything to be otherwise than Divine love appoints? I do not know but what it will become sometimes to the Christian a subject of joy that Marah is bitter. For suppose Marah had been sweet, then Moses had not prayed to God, and then the tree had not been cut down and they had never known the power of God to sweeten bitter waters!

It must be an awful thing to live an unafflicted life on earth. You say it must be a very delightful thing? I have no doubt it may be from some aspects. But a person who has had no sickness, how can he have a sympathetic heart? What service can he render in cheering the people of God? If you never had any trials I should suppose, unless something very extraordinary happened, that you would become harsh, and untender. I am afraid some would grow brutal, coarse, hard of heart. Who wishes, where others have to suffer, to claim an immunity from a blessing which brings rich consolations with it—and works eternal benefits?

Beloved, this is ever one thing that sweetens Marah—that it afterwards brings forth the comfortable fruits of righteousness. Our trials are not sent to us alone and by themselves—there is Grace sent with them—by which they are made available as means to sanctify us, and make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. I will not keep you much longer upon this point. But I must notice that while I have shown you that the remedy is very efficacious, it is something more than efficacious—it is transcendent.

The water was bitter, but it became absolutely sweet. The same water that was bitter became sweet, and the Grace of God, by leading us into contemplations that spring out of the Cross of Christ can make our trials, themselves, to become pleasant to us. It is a triumph of Grace in the heart when we not only acquiesce in trouble, but even rejoice in it. “We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation works patience.” It is a grand thing when we can truly say that as to the rod of the Covenant we would not escape it if we might. It becomes in the judgment of wisdom so good a thing to be tried that though we would not seek it, yet we accept it with something more than readiness, and the bitter thing becomes sweet to us.

Let me say, and have done with this part of the subject, that the remedy which is suggested to us by a spiritualizing of text is efficacious for all trials, and will be found especially so for the bitter waters of death at the last. With all that can be said about death it is not a pleasant subject for contemplation—and must to be viewed in connection with Covenant consolations. Certain Brethren buoy themselves up with the hope of escaping death by the second Advent. I am not certain that they are wiser than David who did not hope to omit the valley of the shadow of death, but trusted that he should fear no evil there because the rod and staff would be his stay.

The death of Christ robs death of its terrors. The prospect of the Resurrection and the certainty of immortality make us say, “Surely the bitterness of death is past!” Be it remembered that if the Cross avails to sweeten all the bitterness of our mortal life, and even the last bitterness of death, it is assuredly available this morning to sweeten the bitterness of our present sorrow. Did you drink the quassia-cup this morning before you came here? Do you feel desponding at this moment, my Brother, my Sister?

Go to your Savior at once! View Him suffering on your behalf. Behold the completion of your reconciliation to God. Mark the security of your soul through the finished work of your glorious Surety. Take down your harps from the willows, put away your ashes—ask the Lord to anoint you with the oil of joy instead of mourning—and even at the waters of Marah lift up your song again, and let the timbrel still be heard. “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously: Marah’s bitterness has He turned to sweetness. He has cut down the mighty Tree which He gave for us, and which yielded itself to the axe for us. And into the bitter stream the Tree is cast, and now from now on, O Marah, you are sweet, indeed.”

Did you come here this morning as Naomi when she returned to her city and said, “Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me”? Ah, when she dandled on her knee and held in her fond bosom the child of Ruth and Boaz, the joy of her old age, she was glad to think the neighbors had not changed her name, and she was willing enough to be called Naomi still! Call not yourself Marah, but remember the new name which the Lord has named upon you. The bitter pool itself—call it not Marah. Be not so ready to affix names of sad memorials. Your griefs are apt enough to gall your memory—do not aid them to sting you. Call the well by another name! Forget Marah, and remember Jehovah Rophi, the Lord that heals both you and the waters. Record the mercy rather than the sorrow, and give thanks unto the Most High!

Now, in closing, somebody will say, “This is a very curious missionary sermon.” Yes, but you see I did not appoint the missionary sermon for today—my Brethren did that, and certainly I did not arrange my own sickness, so as to make it fall on this day. How can I dance to the sound of the timbrel when I am feeble and sad?

If I had the choosing of my own state of health and mind, I would have the choosing of my own texts, and make them always suitable to the occasions as they arise. But I am obliged to preach what I can preach, and as I know pretty well the flavor of Marah, and a little about the sweetness which the healing Tree can give it, I can only tell you what I know by experience. But it is a good missionary sermon for all that. Let us show you how.

Here is A SUGGESTION OF COMPASSION. Brethren, all the world over the heathen have trials, bitterness, woes. I said that Christians have peculiar woes, but the dark places of the earth have direr sorrows. Some nations are devastated with war. Others are tormented with diabolical customs and rites—their actions even towards themselves through their superstition are brutal. I may well liken the world that lies in darkness to a thirsty caravan gathered around Marah’s well where the water is too bitter to drink.

Oh, the woes, the woes of mankind! High are the Andes, lofty the Himalayas, but the woes of the sons of Adam are higher! The Ganges and the Indus and other mighty streams pour their floods into the ocean. But what mighty deep could contain the torrents of human grief? A very deluge is the sorrow as well as the sin of man. And, my Brethren, the heathen know nothing of the healing Tree, the Tree cut down of old which still has power to sweeten mortal misery.

You know it. You have your trials and you surmount them by the appeals you make to your Lord, and by the power of His consolations. But alas, these sons of darkness have your same griefs, and more, but they have not your Comforter. For them the deluge, but not the Ark. For them the tempest, but not the Refuge. And you are so sure that you have that which would cheer them—no doubt passes across your mind as to the Gospel.

These are wavering times in which some professors, and even some teachers, almost believe that the Gospel is but one theory of many and will have to stand its test. And, they believe, in all probability will fail as many human systems of thought have done. You think not so. You believe that God’s Gospel is a verity, a Revelation of Jehovah. Heaven and earth may pass away, but not His Word, His Christ, His Decrees, His Covenant.

You know that you have a Tree that can heal the bitter fountains. No doubt comes across your mind as to that—what then?

By common humanity, much more by the tender movements of the Grace of God upon your souls, I conjure you present this remedy to those who need it, and who need it so much. Will anything suffice as a substitute for it? Is there anywhere on earth another healing Tree beside that which fell beneath the axe at Calvary? Are there other leaves for the healing of the nations? On the seven-hilled city of Rome—grows there a tree that can heal man’s diseases? No. It is a deadly upas. Cut it down, and burn the very roots of it!

Among the fancies of idolatry are there any inventions of man that can cool his fevered brow and sooth his griefs? Does Mohammedanism offer hopes for eternity that can light up the grave to an awakened sinner? Are there thoughts of bliss in idolatry calculated to cheer the sepulcher? All religions answer, “Comforts are not in us.” It is only at the Cross! It is only by Jesus crucified that the world can be healed! Up to now little has been accomplished compared with our desires. And in contrast to our ambitions, next to nothing. But Faith, darting beyond the things that are seen, flying into the Presence God, can behold Him writing with the eternal pen, “All flesh shall see the salvation of God.” And she is sure that the Tree will sweeten the waters yet.

Come, Brethren, let your faith prove itself by your works. Help today— today, by your gifts! Help tomorrow—tomorrow, by your prayers. Help, some of you, by consecrating yourselves to mission labor. There is a prayer I mean to continue to offer until it is answered—that God would pour out on this Church a missionary spirit. I want to see our young men devoting themselves to the work—some that will not be afraid to venture and preach Jesus Christ in the regions beyond. I have not much faith in missionary societies. It gets less, I must admit, each year.

Yet we must never put aside one instrumentality until we have a better one ready. If the Lord would send the Living Fire through the Churches of England. If He would send from on high a Divine impulse, we should see starting up here and there men who would say—“Here are we—send us!” The Spirit of God will say, “Separate me Paul and Barnabas for the work,” and when this is done I look to see far happier days.

We have sweetened the waters a little—no more the living sacrifices burn. The African is free. The slave ship crosses no more the deep. In some regions exterminating wars have ceased. The white dove of peace flies where the raven of war was seen. Glory be to God! A few leaves cast into the waters have done this. Let us bear a whole Christ and a whole Gospel among the nations, and lay the tree in this Marah until at last the whole world shall drink of the sweet waters of Divine Love, and God shall be All in All. God bless you, Beloved, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Exodus 15. Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1664 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“JEHOVAH-ROPHI”  
NO. 1664

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 11, 1882, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“I am the Lord who heals you.”  
Exodus 15:26.**

WE shall consider this passage in its context, for I have no doubt that the miracle at Marah was intended to be a very instructive illustration of the glorious title which is here claimed by the Covenant God of Israel— “I am Jehovah-Rophi, the Lord that heals you.” The illustration introduces the sermon of which this verse is the text. The healing of the bitter waters is the parable of which the line before us is the lesson. How different is the Lord to His foes and to His friends! His Presence is light to Israel and darkness to Egypt. Egypt only knew Jehovah as the Lord that plagues and destroys those who refuse to obey Him. Is not this the Lord’s memorial in Egypt, that He cut Rahab and wounded the dragon? He overthrew their armies at the Red Sea and drowned their hosts beneath the waves! But to His own people, in themselves but very little superior to the Egyptians, God is not the terrible Avenger consuming His adversaries, but, “Jehovah that heals you.”

Their mental and moral diseases were almost as great as those of the Egyptians whom the Lord cut off from before Him, but He spared His chosen for His Covenant’s sake. He bared the sword of Justice against rebellious Pharaoh and then He turned His tender, healing hand out to His own people, to exercise towards them the heavenly surgery of His Grace. Israel knew Him as the Lord that heals and Egypt knew Him as the Lord that smites! Let us adore the Grace which makes so wide a difference—the Sovereign Grace which brings salvation unto Israel—and let us confess our own personal obligations to the mercy which has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities!

Again, how differently does God deal with His own people from what we should have expected. He is a God of surprises! He does things which we looked not for. God deals with us not according to our conception of His ways, but according to His own wisdom and prudence, for as the heavens are high above the earth, so high are His thoughts above our thoughts. You would not have supposed that a people for whom God had given Egypt as a ransom would have been led into the wilderness of Shur— neither would you have guessed that a people so near to Him that He cleft the sea and made them walk between two glassy walls dry shod—would have been left for three days without water!

You naturally expect to see the chosen tribes brought right speedily into a condition of comfort, or, if there must be a journey before they reach the land that flows with milk and honey, you look at once for the smitten rock and the flowing stream, the manna and the quails and all the other things which they can desire. How singular it seems that after having done such a great marvel for them, the Lord should cause them to thirst beneath a burning sky and, that, too, when they were quite unprepared for it, being quite new to desert privations, having lived so long by the river of Egypt where they drank of sweet water without stint.

We read at other times, “You, Lord, did send a plenteous rain, whereby You did refresh Your inheritance when it was weary.” But here we meet with no showers! No brooks gushed forth below and no rain dropped from above. Three days without water is a severe trial when the burning sand is below and the blazing sky is above! Yet the Lord’s people, in some way or other, are sure to be tried—theirs is no holiday parade—but a stern march by a way which flesh and blood would never have chosen. The Egyptians found enough water and even too much of it, for they were drowned in the sea, but the well-beloved Israelites had no water at all! So is it with the wicked man—he often has enough of wealth and too much of it—till he is drowned in sensual delights and perishes in floods of prosperity. He has his portion in this life and in that portion he is lost, like Pharaoh, in the proud waters.

Full often the Lord’s people are made to know the pinch of poverty. Their lives are made wretched by sore bondage and they faint for a morsel of bread—they drink from a bitter fountain which fills their inward parts with gall and wormwood. They are afflicted many times, almost to the breaking of their hearts. One of them said, “All the day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning.” They lie at the rich man’s gate full of sores, while the ungodly man is clothed in scarlet and fares sumptuously every day. This is God’s strange way of dealing with His own people. He Himself has said, “As many as I love I rebuke and chasten.” “He scourges every son whom He receives.” Thus He made His people know that the wilderness was not their rest, nor their home—for they could not even find such a common necessity as water with which to quench their thirst!

He made them understand that the promised brooks that flowed with milk and honey were not in the wilderness, but must be found on the other side of Jordan, in the land which God had given to their fathers— and they must journey there with weary feet. “This is not your rest,” was the lesson of their parched lips in the three-day march. You know what teaching there is in all this, for your experience answers to it. Do not marvel, Beloved, if with all your joy over your vanquished sin, which shall be seen by you no more, you yet have to lament your present grievous needs. The children of Israel cried, “What shall we drink?” This was a wretched sequel to, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.” Have you never made the same descent? If you are in poverty you are, no doubt, tempted to put that trinity of questions, “What shall we eat? What shall we drink? And with what shall we be clothed?”

You are not the first to whom this temptation has happened. Do not marvel at all if up from the triumph of the Red Sea, with a song in your mouth and a timbrel in your hand, you ascend into the great and terrible wilderness and enter upon the land of drought! This way lies Canaan and this way you must go. Through much tribulation we must enter the Kingdom of God and, therefore, let us set our minds to it. By this grievous test the Lord was proving His people and causing them to see what was in their hearts. They would have known no wilderness outside if there had not been a wilderness within—neither had there been a drought of water for their mouths if the Lord had not seen a drought of Grace in their souls. We are fine birds till our feathers are ruffled—and then what a poor figure we cut! We are a mass of diseases and a bundle of disorders and, unless Grace prevents, we are the sure prey of death. O Lord, we pray to be proven, but we little know what it means!

Let this suffice for an introduction and then let our text come in with comfort to our hearts, “I am the Lord that heals you.” It was to illustrate this great name of God that the tribes were brought into so painful a condition! And, indeed, all the experience of a Believer is meant to glorify God, that the Believer, himself, may see more of God and that the world outside may also behold the Glory of the Lord. Therefore the Lord leads His people up and down in the wilderness and, therefore, He makes them cry out because there is no water—all to make them behold His power, His goodness and His wisdom. Our lives are the canvas upon which the Lord paints His own Character.

We shall try, this morning, to set forth before you, by the help of the Divine Spirit, this grand Character of God, that He is the God that heals us. First, we shall notice the healing of our circumstances, dwelling upon that in order the better to set forth the greater fact, “I am the Lord that heals you.” Secondly, we shall remember the healing of our bodies which is here promised to obedient Israel and we shall set forth that Truth of God, in order to bring out our third point, which is the healing of our souls. “I am the Lord that heals you”—not your circumstances, only, nor your bodily diseases, only, but yourself, your soul, your truest self—for there is the worst bitterness, there is the sorest disease and there shall the grandest power of God be shown to you and to all who know you.

I. THE GLORIOUS JEHOVAH SHOWS HIS HEALING POWER UPON OUR CIRCUMSTANCES. The fainting Israelites thought that when they came to Marah they should slake their thirst. Often enough the mirage had mocked them as it does all thirsty travelers—they thought that they saw before them flowing rivers and palm trees—but as they rushed forward, they found nothing but sand, for the mirage was deluding them. At last, however, the waters of Marah were fairly within sight and they were not a delusion! Here was real water and they were sure of it. No doubt they rushed forward, helter-skelter, each man eager to drink—and what must have been their disappointment when they found that they could not endure it!

A thirsty man will drink almost anything, but this water was so bitter that it was impossible for them to receive it. I do not read that they had murmured all the three days of their thirsty march, but this disappointment was too much for them. The relief which seemed so near was snatched away! The cup was dashed from their lips and they began to murmur against Moses and so, in truth, against God. Here was the proof of their imperfection—they were impatient and unbelieving. Have we not, too often, fallen into the same sin? Brethren, let your conscience answer! When you have felt a sharp affliction and it has continued a long time and you have been wearied out with it, you have, at last, seen a prospect of escape, but that prospect has completely failed you. What woe is this!

When the friend you so surely relied upon tells you that he can do nothing. When the physician upon whom you put such reliance informs you that his medicine has not touched the malady. When the last expedient that you could adopt to save yourself from bankruptcy—the last arrow in your quiver has missed the mark—how your spirit has sunk within you in dire despair! Then your heart has begun to wound itself, like the scorpion, with its own sting. You have felt as if you were utterly spent and ready for the grave. The last trial was too much for you! You could bear up no longer. Happy have you been if under such conditions you have not been left to give way to murmuring against God.

These poor Israelites were in a very pitiable condition. There was the water before them, but its horrible flavor made them shrink from a second taste. Have you not experienced the same? You have obtained that which you thought would deliver you, but it has not helped you. You looked for light and beheld darkness; for refreshment and beheld an aggravated grief. The springs of earth are brackish until Jehovah heals them—they increase the thirst of the man who too eagerly drinks of them. “Cursed is he that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm.” Now, dear Friends, in answer to prayer, God has often healed your bitter waters and made them sweet. I am about to appeal to your personal experience, you that are truly pilgrims under the guidance of your heavenly Lord.

Has it not been so with you? I should have no difficulty in refreshing your memories about Marah, for very likely its bitterness is in your mouth, even now, and you cannot forget your sorrow. But just now I wish to refresh your memories about what came of that sorrow. Did not God deliver you? Did He not, when you cried to Him, come to your rescue? I appeal to facts which may be stubborn things, but they are also rich encouragements. Has not the Lord oftentimes made our bitter waters sweet by changing our circumstances altogether? When the poor in heart have been oppressed, God has taken away the oppressor, or else taken the heart away from the oppression. When you have been in great straits and could not see which way to steer, has not the Lord Jesus seemed to open before you a wider channel, or Himself to steer your vessel through all the intricacies of the narrow river and bring you where you would come?

Have you not noticed in your lives that most remarkable changes have taken place at times when anguish took hold upon you? I can bear my witness, if you cannot, that the Lord has great healing power in the matter of our trials and griefs. He has changed my circumstances in Providence and in many ways altered the whole aspect of affairs. On other occasions the Lord has not removed the circumstances and yet He has turned sorrow into joy, for He has put into them a new ingredient which has acted as an antidote to the acrid flavor of your affliction. You were not allowed to leave the shop, but there came a fresh manager who shielded you from persecution! You were not permitted to quit your business, but there came a wonderful improvement in your trade and this reconciled you to the long hours! You were not made to be perfectly healthy, but you were helped to a medicine which much lessened the sharpness of the pain— thus has your Marah been sweetened. Have you not found it so?

The weight of your affliction was exceedingly great, but the Lord found a counterbalance and, by placing a weight of holy joy in the other scale, He lifted up your load and its weight was virtually taken away! You have been at Marah, but even there you have been able to drink, for a something has been put into the waters of afflictive Providence which has made them endurable. And where this has not been done, the Lord has, by a heavenly art, made your bitter waters sweet by giving you more satisfaction with the Divine will, more submission, more acquiescence in what the Lord has ordained. After all, this is the most effectual remedy. If I cannot bring my circumstances to my mind, yet if God helps me to bring my mind to my circumstances, the matter is made right.

There is a degree of sweetness about pain, poverty and shame when once you feel, “The loving Lord ordained all this for me—my tribulation is of His appointing.” Then the soul, feeling that the affliction comes from a Father’s hand, accepts it and kicks against the pricks no longer. Surely, then, the bitterness of life or of death will be past when the mind is subdued to the Eternal will! These people said, “What shall we drink?” and they would have concluded that Moses was mocking them if he had answered, “You shall drink the bitter water.” They would have said, “We cannot bear it! We remember the sweet water of the Nile and we cannot endure this nauseous stuff.” But Moses would have said, “Yes, you will drink this and nothing else but this and it will become to you all that you need.” Even so, Beloved, you may have quarreled with your circumstances and said, “I must have a change! I can no longer bear this trial.”

Has not the Lord of His Grace changed your mind and so influenced your will that you have really found comfort in that which was uncomfortable and content in that which made you discontented? Have you never said, when under tribulation, “I could not have believed it. I am perfectly happy under my trial and yet when I looked ahead to it, I dreaded it beyond measure. I said it would be the death of me, but now I find that by these things men live and in all this is the life of my spirit.” We exclaim with Jacob, “All these things are against me,” but the Lord gives us more Grace and we see that all things work together for good—and we bless the Lord for His afflicting hand! So you see the Lord Jehovah heals our bitter waters and makes our circumstances endurable to our sanctified minds.

Brothers and Sisters, all this which you have experienced should be to you a proof of God’s power to make everything that is bitter, sweet. The depravity of your nature will yet yield to the operations of His Grace! The corruptions that are within you will yet be subdued and you shall enter into the fullest communion with God in Christ Jesus! I know you shall, because the Lord is unchangeable in power and what He has done in one direction He can and will do in another. Your circumstances were so terrible and yet God helped you—and now your sins, your inbred sins, which are so dreadful—He will help you against them and give you power over them. You shall overcome the power of evil! By His Grace you shall be sanctified and you shall manifest the sweetness of holiness instead of the bitterness of self! Can you believe it? Does not God’s power exhibited in Providence around you prove that He has power enough to do great things within you by His Grace?

Moreover, should not this healing of your circumstances be to you a pledge that God will heal you as to your inner spirit? He that brought you through the sea and drowned your enemies will, also, drown your sins, till you shall sing, “The depths have covered them! There is not one of them left.” He that turned your Marah into sweetness will yet turn all your sense of sin into a sense of pardon! All the bitterness of your regret and the sharpness of your repentance shall yet be turned into the joy of faith and you shall be full of delight in the perfect reconciliation which comes by the precious blood of Christ! Sustaining Providences are to the saints sure pledges of Divine Grace! The sweetened water is a picture of a sweetened nature—I almost said it is a type of it! God binds Himself by the gracious deliverances of His Providence to give you equal deliverances of Grace. It is joyous to say, “He is the Lord that healed my circumstances,” but how much better to sing of His name as “The Lord that heals you”?

Do not be contented till you reach to that! But do be confident that He who healed Marah will heal you—He that has helped you to rejoice in Him in all your times of trouble will sustain you in all your struggles with sin till you shall more sweetly and more loudly praise His blessed name!

II. Let us now proceed a step further. As we have spoken of God’s healing our circumstances, so now we have to think of THE LORD’S HEALING OUR BODIES. Why are diseases and pains left in the bodies of God’s people? Our bodies are redeemed, for Christ has redeemed our entire manhood, but if Christ is in us, the body is still dead because of sin, even though the spirit is alive because of righteousness. It is not till the Resurrection that we shall enjoy the full result of the redemption of the body. Resurrection will accomplish for our bodies what regeneration has done for our souls. We were born again. Yes, but that Divine work was exercised only upon our spiritual nature—our bodies were not born again— therefore they still abide under the liability of disease, decay and death, though even these evils have been turned into blessings.

This frail, sensitive and earthly frame, which Paul calls, “this vile body,” grows weary and worn and, by-and-by, it will fade away and die unless the Lord shall come. And even if He should come, this feeble fabric must be totally changed, for flesh and blood, as they now are, cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. Neither can corruption dwell with incorruption. Even to this day the body is under death because of sin and is left so on purpose to remind us of the effects of sin—that we may feel within ourselves what sin has done—and may the better guess at what sin would have done if we had remained under it, for the pains of Hell would have been ours forever. These griefs of body are meant, I say, to make us remember what we owe to the redemption of our Lord Jesus, and so to keep us humble and grateful.

Aches and pains are also sent to keep us on the wing for Heaven, even as thorns in the nest drive the bird from its sloth. They make us long for the land where the inhabitant shall no more say, “I am sick.” Yet the Lord does heal our bodies. First He heals them by preventing sickness. A prevention is better than cure. The text says, “If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord, your God, and will do that which is right in His sight, and will give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon you, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that heals you.”

It is concerning this same healing Lord that we read, “You shall not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flies by day; nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness; nor for the destruction that wastes at noonday. A thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you. Only with your eyes shall you behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because you have made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, your habitation; there shall no evil befall you, neither shall any plague come near your dwelling.” Do we sufficiently praise God for guarding us from disease? I am afraid that His preserving care is often forgotten.

Men will go 30 or 40 years, almost, without an illness, and forget the Lord, in consequence. That which should secure gratitude creates indifference! When we have been ill, we come up to the House of the Lord and desire to return thanks because of our recovery. Ought we not to give thanks when we are not ill and do not need to be recovered? Should it not be to you healthy folks a daily cause of gratitude to God that He keeps away those pains which would keep you awake all night and wards off those sicknesses which would cause your beauty to consume away like the moth? But we see this healing hand of the Lord more conspicuously when, like Hezekiah, we have been sick and have been restored.

Sometimes we lie helpless and hopeless like dust ready to return to its fellow dust. We are incapable of exertion and ready to be dissolved. Then if the Lord renews our youth and takes away our sickness, we praise His name—and so we ought! It is not the doctor; it is not the medicine—these are but the outward means—it is the Lord who is the true Physician and unto Jehovah-Rophi be the praise! “I am the Lord that heals you.” Let those of us that have been laid aside and have been again allowed to walk abroad, lift up our hearts and our voices in thanksgiving to the Lord who forgives all our iniquities, who heals all our diseases!

According to the analogy of the healing of Marah, the Lord does this by means, for He cast a tree into the water. Those who will use no medicine, whatever, certainly have no Scriptural warrant for their conduct. Even where cures are given to faith, yet the Apostle says, “Is any sick? Let him send for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.” The anointing with oil was the proper medicine of the day and, possibly, a great deal better medicine than some of the drugs which are used nowadays. To the use of this anointing the promise is given, “and the prayer of faith shall raise the sick.” Hezekiah was miraculously healed, but the Lord said, “Take a lump of figs and lay it upon the sore.”

God could have spoken a word and turned Marah sweet, but He did not choose to do so! He would exercise the faith and obedience of His people by bidding them cast a tree into the waters. The use of means is not to hinder faith, but to try it. Still, it is the Lord who works the cure and this is the point which is so often forgotten. Oh, come, let us sing unto Jehovah who has said—“I am the Lord that heals you”! Do not attribute to secondary means that which ought to be ascribed to God! His fresh air, warm sun, or bracing wind and refreshing showers do more for our healing than we dream of, or if medicine is used, it is He who gives virtue to the drugs and so, by His own Almighty hands, works out our cure. As one who has felt His restoring hand, I will personally sing unto Him who is the health of my countenance and my God.

Note this, that in every healing of which we are the subjects, we have a pledge of the Resurrection. Every time a man who is near the gates of death rises up, again, he enjoys a kind of rehearsal of that grand rising when from beds of dust and silent clay the perfect saints shall rise at the sound of the trumpet of the archangel and the voice of God! We ought to gather from our restorations from serious and perilous sickness a proof that the God who brings us back from the gates of the grave can also bring us back from the grave, itself, whenever it shall be His time to do so! This should also be a further proof to us that if He can heal our bodies, the Lord can heal our souls! If this poor worm’s meat, which so readily decays, can be revived, so can the soul which is united to Christ and quickened with His life! And if the Almighty Lord can cast out evils from this poor dust and ashes which must ultimately be dissolved, much more can He cast out all manner of evils from that immaterial spirit which is yet to shine in the brightness of the Glory of God!

Therefore, both from His healing your souls and from His healing your bodies, gather power to believe in the fact that He will heal your mental, moral and spiritual diseases! Lift up your hearts with joy as you sing of Jehovah-Rophi, “The Lord that heals YOU.”—

*“Sinners of old, You did receive,  
With comfortable words and kind,  
Their sorrows cheer, their needs relieve,  
Heal the diseased and cure the blind.  
And are You not the Savior still,  
In every place and age the same?  
Have You forgot Your gracious skill,  
Or lost the virtue of Your name?  
Faith in Your changeless name I have;  
The good, the kind Physician, You  
Are able now our souls to save,  
Are willing to restore them now.  
Though eighteen hundred years are past  
Since You did in the flesh appear,  
Your tender mercies ever last;  
And still Your healing power is here!  
Would You the body’s health restore,  
And not regard the sin-sick soul?  
The sin-sick soul You love much more,  
And surely You shall make it whole.”*

The healing of Marah and the healing of the body are placed before the text and they shed a light upon it. They place this name of the Lord in a golden frame and cause us to look upon it with the greater interest.

III. Now we come to THE HEALING OF OUR SOULS. The Lord our God will heal our spirits and He will do it in somewhat the same manner as that in which He healed Marah. How was that? First, He made the people know how bitter Marah was. There was no healing for that water till they had tasted it and discovered that it was too brackish to be endured! But after they knew its bitterness, then the Lord made it sweet for them. So is it with your sin, my Brothers and Sisters! It must become more and more bitter to you. You will have to cry out, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?” You will have to feel that you cannot live upon anything that is within yourself. The creature must be made distasteful to you and all trusts that come of it, for God’s way is first to kill and then to make alive—first to wound and then to heal. He begins by making Marah to be Marah and afterwards He makes it sweet!

What next? The next thing was there was prayer offered. I do not know whether any of the people possessed faith in God, but if so, they had a prayerless faith, and God does not work in answer to prayerless faith. “Oh,” says one, “I am perfectly sanctified.” How do you know? “Because I believe I am.” That will never do! Is a man rich because he believes he is? Will sickness vanish if I believe myself to be well? Some even think it useless to pray because they feel sure of having the blessing. That putting aside of prayer is a dangerous piece of business! If there is not the cry to God for the blessing, yes—and the daily cry for keeping and for sanctification—the mercy will not come. Again, I say, healing comes not to a prayerless faith. You may believe what you like, but God will only hear you when you pray. Faith must pour itself out in prayer before the blessing will be poured into the soul. Moses cried and he obtained the blessing—the people did not cry and they would have been in an evil case had it not been for Moses. We must come to crying and praying before we shall receive sanctification, which is the making whole of our spirits.

Marah became sweet through the introduction of something outside of itself—a tree. I know not of what kind. The rabbis say that it was a bitter tree and naturally would tend to make the water more bitter, still. However that may be, I cannot imagine any tree in all the world, bitter or sweet, which could have power to sweeten such a quantity of water as must have been at Marah! The transaction was miraculous and the tree was used merely as the instrument and no further. But I do know a tree which, if put into the soul, will sweeten all its thoughts and desires— Jesus knew that tree, that tree whereon He died and shed His blood as a victim for our sin!

If the merit of the Cross is imputed to us and the spirit of the Cross is introduced into our nature. If we trust the Lord Jesus and rest upon Him. Yes, if we become Cross-bearers and our soul is crucified to the world— then we shall find a marvelous change of our entire nature! Whereas we were full of vice, the Crucified One will make us full of virtue! And whereas we were bitter towards God, we shall be sweet to Him and even Christ will be refreshed as He drinks of our love; as He drinks of our trust; as He drinks of our joy in Him! Where all was acrid, sharp and poisonous, everything shall become pure, delicious and refreshing! But we must first experience a sense of bitterness—then cry out to the Lord in prayer and then yield an obedient faith which puts the unlikely tree into the stream— then the Divine power shall be put forth upon us by Him who says, “I am the Lord that heals you.” The inner healing is set forth as in a picture in the sweetening of the bitter pools of Marah. I know I am right in saying so, because we are told of Moses, “There he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them.”

Again, the task of turning Marah sweet was a very difficult one. No human power could have achieved it and, even so, the task of changing our nature is not only difficult, but impossible to us. We must be born again, not of the will of man, nor of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God. There was no turning Marah sweet by any means within the reach of Moses or the myriads that came up with him out of Egypt. This wonder must come from Jehovah’s hands. So is the change of our nature a thing beyond all human might. Who can make his own heart clean? God must work this marvel! We must be born again from above, or else we shall remain in the gall of bitterness even unto the end.

But yet the work was very easy for God. How simple a thing it was just to take a tree and cast it into the bitter water and find it sweet at once! Even so it is an easy thing for God to make us a new heart and a right spirit and so to incline us to everything that is right and good. What a blessing is this! If I had to make myself holy, I must despair! And if I had to make myself perfect, and keep myself so, it would never be done! But the Lord Jehovah can do it and has already begun to do it! Things which I once hated I now love—all things have become new. Simple faith in Jesus Christ and the putting of the Cross into the stream does it all, and does it at once, too! And does it so effectually that there is no return of the bitterness, but the heart remains sweet and pure before the living God.

The task was completely accomplished. The people came and drank of Marah just as freely as they afterwards drank of Elim or of the water that leaped from the smitten rock. So God can and will complete in us the change of our nature. Paul says, “I am persuaded that He that has begun a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ.” The Lord has not begun to sweeten us a little with the intent of leaving us in a half-healed condition, but He will continue the process till we are without trace of defilement and made pure and right in His sight. This work is one which greatly glorifies God. If the change of Marah’s water made the people praise God, much more will the change of nature make us adore Him forever and ever! We are going to be exalted, Brethren, by-and-by, to the highest place in the universe—next to God! Man, poor, sinful man, is to be so changed as to be able to stand side by side with Christ, who has, for that very purpose, taken upon Himself human nature. We are to be above the angels! The highest seraphim shall be less privileged than the heirs of salvation!

Now, the tendency to pride would be very strong upon us, only that we shall always remember what we used to be and what power it was that has made us what we are. This will make it safe for God to glorify His people. There will be no fear of our sullying God’s honor, or setting ourselves up in opposition to Him, as did Lucifer of old. It shall never be said of any spirit washed in the precious blood of Jesus, “How are you fallen from Heaven, O son of the morning!” for the process through which we shall pass in turning our bitterness to sweetness will fill us with perpetual adoration and with constant reverence of the unspeakably mighty Grace of God! Will it not be so, Brethren? Do not your impulses even now lead you to feel that, when you gain your promised crowns, the first thing you will joyfully do will be to cast them at the feet of Jesus, and say, “Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Your name be Glory forever and ever”?

That sweetened Marah was all of God—our renewed nature shall be all of God. We shall not be able to take the slightest particle of credit to ourselves, nor shall we wish to do so. Brothers and Sisters, the Lord will do it! He will be sure to do it because it will glorify His name. Let us draw comfort from this fact—there will be no interfering with the Lord by a rival claimant to honor! There will be no idolatry in us taking away part of His praises! Therefore He will do it and change our bitterness into perfect sweetness. Blessed be His name, He can do it—nothing will baffle the skill of “the Lord that heals you.”

Whenever I am cast down under a sense of corruption, I always like to get a hold of this Divine name, “The Lord that heals you.” “Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” “Faithful is He that has called you, who also will do it,” says the Apostle. He has not undertaken what He will fail to perform. Jehovah, who made Heaven and earth, has undertaken to make us perfect and to effectually heal us— therefore let us be confident that it will assuredly be accomplished and we shall be presented without spot before God! He who heals us is a God so glorious that He will certainly perform the work. There is none like unto the Omnipotent One! He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. His wisdom, power and Grace can so work upon us that where sin abounded Grace shall much more abound—

*“You can overcome this heart of mine!  
You will victorious prove,  
For everlasting strength is Yours  
And everlasting love.  
Your powerful Spirit shall subdue*

*Unconquerable sin;  
Cleanse this foul heart, and make it new, And write Your Law within.”*

He is a God who loves us so and makes us so precious in His sight that He gave Egypt for our ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for us! A God so loving will surely perfect that which concerns us.

Moreover, a God so fond of purity, a God who hates sin so intensely and who loves righteousness so fervently will surely cleanse the blood of His own children! He must and will make His own family pure! “This people have I formed for Myself: they shall show forth My praise.” The devil cannot hinder that decree. “They shall,” says God, and they shall, too—no matter what shall stand in their way! They must and they shall show forth God’s praise.

Now, as you have believed in God for your justification and found it in Christ, so believe in God for your sanctification, that He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure! Believe that He will exterminate in you the very roots of sin—that He will make you like Himself, without taint or speck, and that, as surely as you are trusting in Christ, you shall be whiter than snow, pure as the infinite Jehovah—and you shall stand with His First-Born, accepted in the Beloved! My soul seems to grasp this and to hold it all the more firmly because the Lord has turned my bitter circumstances into sweetness and has healed the sickness of my body.

Because of these former mercies, I know that He will heal the sickness of my spirit, and I shall be whole, that is to say, holy, without spot or trace of sin and so shall I be forever with the Lord. “Therefore comfort one another with these words.” Brothers and Sisters, if the Lord has taken you into His hospital and healed you, do not forget other sick folk! Freely you have received, freely give! Give today to the hospitals in which so many of the poor are cared for and relieved. Do it for Jesus’ sake and may the Lord accept your offerings!

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LESSONS FROM THE MANNA  
NO. 2332

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, OCTOBER 29, 1893. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 12, 1889.

**“Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from Heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in My Law, or no.” Exodus 16:4.**

IT seems to us that it must have been a very difficult thing to supply food for the hundreds of thousands, I shall not be incorrect if I say the millions who were in the wilderness. But, difficult as that was, the commissariat was not so difficult as the education. To train that mob of slaves into a nation under discipline—to lift up those who had been in bondage and make them fit to enjoy national privileges—this was the Herculean task that Moses had to perform. And their God, who loved the children of Israel and chose them—and determined to make them a peculiar people unto Himself, undertook to teach them—and He used their food as part of the means of their education. Animals are often taught through their food. When they cannot be reached in any other way, they have been instructed by their hunger, by their thirst and by their feeding. And the Lord, who knew of what a coarse nature Israel was composed, and how the people had degenerated from the old stock during their long bondage, took care to teach them by every means, not only by the higher and the more spiritual, by the typical and symbolical, but He also taught them by their hunger and by their thirst, by the supply of water from the Rock and by the manna which He rained from Heaven.

We will try to see, tonight, what the Lord taught them, but we will do more than that—we will try to learn what they learned and somewhat more. May the Holy Spirit, Himself, be our Teacher and as He has often taught us the most Divine lessons by the bread and wine, preaching to our very hearts by what seemed the lowly ministry of food and drink, so may He, tonight, teach us by that angels’ bread which with Israel was fed in the wilderness long years ago!

First, I invite you to consider how the Lord taught these people by His gift. And next, how He taught them by making this gift a test to them. Thirdly, I shall have to show how He teaches its lessons as to temporal things. And lastly, how He instructs us as to our spiritual food.

I. First, then, dear Friends, let us Consider HOW THE LORD TAUGHT THESE PEOPLE BY HIS GIFT.  
He wanted them to know Him. His great desire was that they should know Jehovah, their God. If they knew God, they would know all else, for, after all, “the proper study of mankind” is God. And when man knows his God, he knows himself. But if he thinks that he knows himself while he knows not his God, he is greatly mistaken.  
God desired, then, to teach them, Himself, by the gift of the manna. And He taught them, first, His care over them, that He was their God, and that they were His people and that He would lay Himself out to provide for them. Think of the care that God had over them, over each one of them, for each man had his own omer of manna. No woman, no child was forgotten. Every morning there was sufficient quantity for every man, according to his needs for that day. There was no more and there was never any less, so carefully did God watch over each individual. The individuality of the Divine Love is a great part of the sweetness of it. God thinks of every separate child of His as much as if He had only that one. The multiplicity of His elect does not divide the loaf of His affection. He has an infinite affection for each one and He will take care of the details of each chosen life. He will see your omer filled, precisely, to the ounce! He will give you all you can possibly need, but He will give you nothing that you can lay by to minister to your pride.  
And this care was shown every day. The Lord taught them the continuity of His remembrance by its coming every day. If He had sent one great rain of liberalities to refresh His inheritance and had told them gather up the vast store and carry it with them in all their journeying, they could not so well have learned His care as when He sent it fresh every morning. Besides, they would have had the burden of carrying it and they were free from that, for the heavenly supplies were always close at hand, exactly at the spot where they pitched their tents and tarried. Every morning, there was the manna precisely where they needed it, and that without any man’s shoulder being made raw by carrying his food in his kneadingtrough. The Lord teaches you and me in the same way, that He not only cares for each one, but cares for each one each day and each moment, tracking our footsteps and meting out the full supply of the hour according as the peculiar necessity arises. “He is always thoughtful, always thoughtful of me,” you may say of your Lord—“always thoughtful of all the brotherhood, of the whole company of the redeemed, but none the less thoughtful of each one because there are so many myriads to be cared for every moment of every day.” Was not that a sweet lesson for the children of Israel to learn as they gathered their daily bread?  
But Jehovah taught them, next, His greatness. He had taught them that in Egypt by His mighty plagues and, at the Red Sea, when He branded the breast of the waters with His mighty rod. But now He gently taught them His greatness, His exceeding greatness, first, by the quantity of the manna. There was enough for them all. How much it required, I leave arithmeticians to calculate—I cannot go into that question tonight. And remember, that quantity fell every morning for 40 years! What a great God is He who could feed the canvas city of His chosen people for 40 years at a stretch and yet without His stores being ever drained! His greatness was also seen by the mode in which He fed these myriads. Usually our bread springs up from the soil, but these people were in a waste land—a howling wilderness! Wonder of wonders, their bread came down from the sky! Shall men live on air? Will you sustain a population on mist, cloud and dew? Yet out of a seeming vacuum came a constant plenty! Every morning the earth was covered with the heaped-up food of all that multitude and they had nothing to do but to go out and gather it. What a God is this whose marching through the wilderness were so marvelous! Jehovah, Your paths drop fatness! Wherever You place your feet, the wilderness and the solitary place are glad! If You lead Your people through a desert, it is no desert to them! The heavens supply what the earth denies. Behold, the greatness of your God, you who are fed by His care!  
And, next, they learned His liberality combined with His greatness, for everyday they were fed, but not fed as Joseph supplied the people in Egypt, when he took from them all their stores to buy the corn and, at last, took themselves to be bondsmen unto Pharaoh—and their lands to be Pharaoh’s freehold that they might live. No, there was never a pretense of paying for that daily bread. The richest man had his omer filled, but he paid not a penny for it. And the poorest man had his omer just as full at the same price! There was “nothing to pay”—no manna-tax was ever exacted of the Israelite’s hand. Oh, the liberality of God! His cry is, “Ho, everyone that thirsts, come to the waters, and he that has no money; come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk.” Do you notice how Jehovah’s invitation grows? He says at first, “Come to the waters,” but He corrects Himself before He gets through with it, and says, “Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” The Lord is infinitely good, essentially. He is growingly good, experimentally. The more we trust Him, the more we discover of His liberality! He “gives liberally and upbraids not.” He scarcely upbraided Israel despite their frequent murmuring and the manna fell continually—and the abundance of it must always have struck the people. God’s liberality never stinted them. Oh, yes, I have no doubt that it is quite right to weigh out the bread and to weigh out the meat—so much bone and so much fat to be allowed to every prisoner in the jail— and possibly to every pauper in the poor house! But that is not God’s way of going to work. Though we deserve to be in prison and though we are, all of us, pensioners on His bounty, yet He gives each one his omer full. If a man has a large appetite, he may eat as much as he likes and the manna seems to grow while he is eating. And if he has a small appetite, though he may have gathered much, yet he will still have nothing left over. God supplied the manna bountifully, yet exactly according to the capacity of the receiver.  
This brings me to say that the children of Israel also learned God’s Immutability, for they had been fed with manna all through the wilderness. Some old man may have said, “I remember going out the first time to gather my omerful. I was astonished at it! And my neighbors kept calling out, ‘Man-hu? Man-hu? Man-hu?’ They were all wonderstruck! They did not know what to call it, so they asked, ‘What is it?’ They called it, ‘Manhu?’ And now,” he said, “I have been out all these years. Thank God, I have never had a swollen foot so that I could not go out to gather it! It has always been just as white and just as round and just as plentiful and just as near my tent as at the first! I used to live over on the left side of the camp and I moved to the right, but I always found that the manna was equally plentiful in every direction wherever I went. And it is so now,” the old man would say, “it is so now and it is just as sweet, and just as plentiful, and just as freely to be had for nothing by every man who chooses to go out and gather it. Blessed be God, He changes not and, therefore, we sons of Jacob are not consumed! If He had changed, the manna would have failed us and we would have been consumed with hunger.”  
Jehovah still lives, O child of God! You have just buried one very dear to you, but the Lord still lives—He never fails. It may be that your income is getting shorter—the Brook Cherith is drying up and the ravens have not been with the bread and meat lately. Jehovah still lives—and there is a widow over at Zarephath who will have her commission to take care of the Lord’s servant. Jehovah lives! His eyes are not dim, His ears are not heavy, His arms are not short! Therefore trust in the unchanging God and be not afraid! The manna shall fall from Heaven till you shall eat the old corn in Canaan!  
Do you not think, Beloved, that from this gift the children of Israel also learned God’s wisdom? If they were not sensible enough to know it, He had given them the best food that He could give them. In that hot climate, if they had eaten meat continually, they would often have been ill. When the Lord did allow them quail in answer to their cravings, while the meat was yet in their months they were taken with deadly sickness. It was unwholesome for them to have meat—this manna from on high was the best thing for people living in tents, journeying from place to place, over a burning sand, beneath a scorching sky. The Lord had adapted the food to the people, yet they said, “Our soul loathes this light bread.” The very name they gave to it showed that it was just the right sort of food for them, easy of digestion. God had adapted their food to their position in the wilderness—no doctor could have drawn up a dietary table that was equal in wisdom to the one prepared by God for His people while they were in that condition!  
And He showed His wisdom, too, in the quantity provided—it was always the right measure. “He that gathered much had nothing over.” The manna seemed to shrink to the right quantity. “He that gathered little had no lack.” The manna seemed to swell and increase so that there was exactly enough to an ounce for all those multitudes. Oh, the infinite wisdom of God! How I have often admired His promptness to a moment, His exactness to a drachma, for with Him there are no more small mistakes than great ones! He never errs in any sense or way, but He hits the mark precisely in all that He does!  
And then, once more, the Israelites must have learned His goodness because He had not supplied them with tasteless food. According to the Apocrypha, which is not to be received as Scripture, but still is often valuable in some respects, each man tasted the manna according to his own liking. There was something about it that enabled the mouth to give its own flavor to it. And their marching through the wilderness, their weariness,

would often add a sauce to it that made it exceedingly sweet to them. It was like wafers made with honey, not at all unpalatable. It was, as I have already told you, like fresh oil, by no means disagreeable to an Eastern. God did not give them beggar’s food, spare scraps and broken victuals. He had said, “I will rain bread from Heaven for you,” and He kept His Word. The least bit of Heaven’s bread must be delicious to the taste. “Man did eat angels’ food,” said the Psalmist, and that cannot be bad food which falls from the table of cherubim and seraphim, such food as spirits might partake of if they might partake of any—light, and pure, and ethereal, and spiritual—as far removed from the grosser forms of materialism as food well could be! It was a godlike food for a godlike race if they had but been worthy of their destiny and had been willing to learn what God was so ready to teach them.  
II. Notice, dear Friends, in the second place, HOW THE LORD TAUGHT THESE PEOPLE BY MAKING THIS MANNA A TEST TO THEM.  
Their position was, in many respects, a very pleasant one. They had not to work for daily bread—they had only to go out and gather it. There it was, but here is the point for us to observe. It was given every day—they never had any store. A man who gathered manna for 20 years might say, in language that I have often heard, “I ain’t a bit forwarder. I am just where I was 20 years ago,” as if it were not getting forwarder to be 20 years older and to have had 20 years of mercy! Yet there was no store of manna—all up and down the wilderness there was not a single bank in which people could put their money! There was no such thing as a dividend to be received by anybody and nobody could be laying up anything. Each Israelite had what he needed for the day—he kept on having just so much and no more—and this was a test. Could he endure that test?  
And then, again, as there was no store for the whole of them, and they did not get any richer, so there was no opportunity for greed, for it was given to every man. He who thrust out his two hands to rake up the manna, when he returned to his tent, had an omerful for himself, his wife and his eight children, but he had not any more. He thought the next day, perhaps, that he would sweep away by the half-hour together if he could, as long as the dew was remaining, and get an extra quantity—but when he examined it, he had exactly as much as he and his family could eat and no more! The rest was all gone, evaporated, and nothing was left over and above what he needed. And his poor palsied neighbor, who could only get a little together in his basin with his one good hand, found that, somehow, he had enough, for God made it to grow in the basin! And when he looked at it, there was just enough for the day’s supply.  
“Oh,” says one, “I would like that.” Well, I agree with you. I would like that, too. But how long would you like it? I dare say about as long as these Israelites did and you would begin grumbling, just as they did. Here was God’s test of them—every day and no store—every man and no greed! It is so with Grace—God gives us as much Grace as we need, but there is nobody here who has any Grace laid up. Oh, yes, I heard one person say that she had so much Divine Grace that she had not sinned for months. Ugh! I thought I smelt something! I did not say anything, but I remembered what manna does when it is kept and there I left the subject. I hope none of you think that you have more Grace than you need, because you have not! You may, possibly, have as much Grace as will last you through today, but you will need as much as that tomorrow morning, if not more. Oh, yes, I know that you have an iron safe and you go and rattle your keys and you say, “Look here! I have Grace enough locked up for the next six weeks.”  
Go again and you will be glad to run away from the stench, for you will find that you have locked up so much pride, and nothing else! We do not need dying Grace till we come to die! Be satisfied to have living Grace while you live! You do not need Grace to preach, tonight, dear Friends— you need Grace to sit and listen. That may, perhaps, require as much Grace as I need for preaching, but do not ask for my Grace, as I will not ask for yours. Eat your own manna! Eat it—do not lay it up—it is not meant to be stored up, it must be eaten. This gift of the manna, everyday for every man, was a test by which the Lord taught the children of Israel.  
So was that Friday storing, when they said to themselves, “We get into the habit of gathering our food every morning, but here comes this Friday, when we have to gather twice as much.” I do like consistency, always doing the same thing, but here is a command to do twice as much, once a week—here is a law that shifts a bit. I like systematic theology, but here is a sliding seat. Here is a double supply for Friday and I have to store half of it up. So one man did not store it up when he was told to do so and another man tried to store it up when he was told not to do so. Thus the Lord tested and tried them. It is a wonderful thing, that testing to which God puts us! Sometimes, when we think that we have such a surplus of faith in Him, He just tests us and we find that we have not any! The most grand life is a life of dependence upon God, for that is true independence! If you wholly depend upon God, then you have risen to independence. He who has nothing but what God gives him, day by day, has a competence. He is the man who has saved most who has least, for he is saved from the worry of taking care of it! If he is still dependent upon God’s Providence and faith can keep her hold, he is the best off man after all!  
You said that you envied the Israelites. Ah, well, you may, but you need faith, or else what might be a theme of envy becomes a subject of discontent. So I leave that point.  
III. My time has pretty well gone, so I will only hint at what I would have said had there been time. Observe, HOW THE LORD TEACHES US BY THIS MANNA AS TO TEMPORAL THINGS.  
First, He teaches us that our supplies depend upon Him. Where did all the manna come from? It all came from God. Child of God, all your supplies must come from God! Learn that. Whatever the second causes, whatever the intermediary sources, all you are to have will come when all you have had has come, namely, from God.  
Learn, next, that our supplies are sure to faith. If the manna did not fail for 40 years, neither will the Lord fail to supply your needs. Your God will give you your livery if you are His servant. He will give you your daily rations, also, if you serve Him. “Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” He who carves for himself will cut his fingers and get an empty plate. But he who waits for the great Host of all the chosen family to carve for him shall have enough and that of the best. “My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.”  
But learn from the children of Israel that our supplies will have to be gathered and prepared by ourselves. God sent the manna from Heaven, but the people had to go out every morning and get it—and when they had gathered it—we read that they used to beat it in mortars, or grind it in mills, bake it in pans and make it into cakes. God is not the patron of idleness. He will have His people work and His rule is, “If any man will not work, neither shall he eat,” a rule He often carries out with those who are idlers. But, Beloved, we thank God for opportunities for diligence. Though labor came at first as a curse, God has turned it into a blessing.  
And, once more, our supplies ought to content us, for the children of Israel had enough for all their needs. They had no superfluities, but they had all-sufficiency. They had no luxuries, but yet, if they chose to think so, their daily mercies became luxuries to them. Oh, that God might teach us to trust Him as to temporals!  
IV. Now for my last point and I beg your patience for a few minutes only. HOW THE LORD TEACHES US BY THIS MANNA AS TO OUR SPIRITUAL FOOD. Here, also, I will only give you hints.  
Every day you and I ought to go forth and find food for our spiritual life. Ah, but have you all received spiritual life? Some of you, it may be, are dead while you live—without God and without Christ. May the Lord quicken you by His life-giving Spirit!  
But if you have spiritual life, you must feed it, and God will give you manna from Heaven, that is, Christ, Himself, with which to feed your soul! He is that Bread of Life which came down from Heaven and you must feed on Him. Take care that you go diligently to work to get this spiritual food. The Israelites were up to gather the manna which fell morning by morning. Be not idlers with the Word of God—search it. Got up early in the morning to read your Bible if you cannot do it at other times. Steal from your sleep a happy hour to read the Scriptures. Diligently and earnestly seek the Lord, for He has said, “They that seek Me early shall find Me.”  
Then, as I hinted in the reading, the manna was always encased in dew. They took care to gather this, for then it became sweet dew to them. May the Word of the Lord always have a dew upon it to you! The critic takes God’s Word and he treats it as the sun did the manna—he pours a dry heat upon it—and it evaporates, and it is gone. Oh, those critics! What a mass of manna they have altogether evaporated! But the child of God takes care that he loses nothing of what God has revealed. Every Word is precious to him, yes, every jot and tittle and, under the bedewing influences of the Holy Spirit, he constantly gathers Christ fresh, always new, and he finds His flesh to be meat, indeed, and His blood to be drink, indeed!  
Again, the manna was to be continually sought. So must your spiritual food. Do not try to live on last year’s manna. Stale experiences are poor food. I know no dish that is worse than cold experience—you need to have a daily realization of the things of God. Hourly feed on Christ, for the food of years past will be of small account to you. Continually go about the meadows and feed, sheep of the Lord! Go again and again to the still waters, drink and be satisfied.

In the case of this manna, the gatherers were pleased with little. It was a small, round thing, like coriander seed, or like the hoarfrost. So be very thankful to get a little bit out of God’s Word. If you only find one new thought, one fresh idea, pick it up and put it in the omer. A great many of these precious little things will make rare food for a hungry spirit. Get the food for your soul, little by little. You can imagine how they probably had to gather it. I suppose that they went down on their knees to get it, for it was always down low, just on the hoarfrost that lay on the desert sand. Look at them all stooping down to gather it up! And the bulk of them, I think, were on their knees gathering it. That is the way to get the heavenly food—gather it on your knees! Stoop low with humility! Bond to the very ground in prayerfulness and so gather up the coriander seed—no, I mean the heavenly manna—and go your way rejoicing!

And it was always for immediate consumption. Whenever you get a Divine promise, go and pray over it and use it at once. Whenever you see a duty, do it. Do not leave one single part of God’s Word to lie void. If anything in the Word of God is impressed upon your mind, let it get into your very soul and let it be carried out in your practice. Eat the manna as soon as you get it and use, to God’s glory, the strength derived from it.

Lastly, like the Israelites, sometimes you will get double supplies. There is a difference between us and the children of Israel, for we generally get a double supply on the Sabbath. Oh, how we ought to thank God for our Sabbaths, when the Lord is with us, or when He makes the manna to lie on the dew and we come up to His House, and go away with our omers full! Happy Sabbaths! They become the marked days of the week and we go from Sunday to Monday, and Monday to Thursday, and Thursday to Sunday, again, thanking God that the heavenly bread still comes down to meet our rising prayers and thanksgivings!

God bless you, dear Friends! May He make His Word sweeter to us every day we live! May we have good appetites to feed on it! As for you who have never known the flavor of the heavenly food, I say again, as I said a few minutes ago, may the Lord quicken you by His own life-giving Spirit, for Jesus’ sake! Amen!

EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON: **EXODUS 16:1-5, 11-36; NUMBERS 11:1-10.**

Exodus 16:1, 2. And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. They have been only about six weeks in the wilderness and already they are up in arms against their leaders. Remember that we have the same kind of people to deal with as Moses and Aaron had. The children of Israel were no better than any other nation and I do not think they were any worse. We may take them as a fair average of human nature, which is a discontented, rebellious thing in the best of circumstances.

3. And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hands of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for you have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger. They forgot all about the brick-making, the whips and the iron bondage. They remembered nothing but the fleshpots of Egypt. Ah, me, how soon, when we escape from a great trial, we forget it! The present much smaller one seems far heavier than that which is past.

4. Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from Heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in My Law, or no. See God’s answer to man’s murmuring? They send up their complaint and He promises to rain bread down from above! It is a blessed story on God’s part all along—a rain of mercy for a smoke of complaining.

5. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. Now let us read at the 11th verse.

11, 12. And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel. “I have heard them.” God always hears. Oh, His wonderful patience! If He took no notice of the murmurers, or punished them for their wickedness, we would have no cause for wonder, but He is long-suffering, even to those who do not deserve His pity.

12. Speak unto them, saying, At even you shall eat flesh, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God. “There shall be no mistake about who I am. I will work this miracle in such a Godlike style and on such a Divine scale, that you shall know that I am Jehovah your God.”

13-16. And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoarfrost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said, one to another, It is manna: for they knew not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. This is the thing which the LORD has commanded, gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man. About two pints and a half, I think. But according to some calculations, two quarts, or thereabouts. There would be more sustenance in it than in a half-quartern loaf of bread per diem—“An omer for every man.”

16-18. According to the number of your persons; take you every man for them which are in his tents. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. And when they did measure it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating. God meant it to be so. Not every man according to his avarice, that he might save any of it, but “every man according to his eating.” God took care that neither should feebleness be stinted, nor should greed have any excess.

19-22. And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning and it bred worms and stank: and Moses was angry with them. And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted. And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. He had told them that it would be so, but they evidently did not accept the message that he had delivered to them as the very Word of Jehovah, their God, so that, when it was fulfilled, it struck them with wonder—and they “came and told Moses.”

23. And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD has said. How often could that answer be made to us! God hears our prayer and we run and say, “What a wonderful thing! God has heard my prayer!” “This is that which the Lord has said.” Is it a strange thing that what Jehovah has said is proved to be true? And is it a subject for surprise that He should keep His promise? You dishonor God when you talk after this fashion!

23. Tomorrow is the rest of the Holy Sabbath unto the LORD. And yet the Sabbath had not been instituted according to the Law of God, which proves that its foundation lay deeper and earlier than the promulgation of the Ten Commandments! It is bound up with the essential arrangement of time since the creation—“This is that which the Lord has said, Tomorrow is the rest of the Holy Sabbath unto the Lord.”

23-27. Bake that which you will bake today, and churn that you will churn, and that which remains over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses said and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that today for today is a Sabbath unto the LORD: today you shall not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out, some of the people, on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. They might have expected it to be so, but they would not believe, and as they would not believe, they must put the Word of God to the test. But it endures the trial—it is always true! Oh, that men would, in a believing spirit, test the Word of God, instead of doing it after this skeptical fashion!

28-31. And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse you to keep My Commandments and My Laws? See, for that the LORD has given you the Sabbath, therefore He gives you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide you every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day. And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna. Or, “What is it?” It was something too amazing to be understood and they kept the expression of their wonderment as the name of their Bread from Heaven. When they first saw it, they exclaimed, “Man-hu?” “Manhu?” “What is it?” “What is it?” Thus it received its Hebrew name, Manna, but God called it, “Bread from Heaven.”

31-33. And it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commands, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread where with I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations. This production, which would not keep a single day under ordinary circumstances, would keep for two days to supply the needs of the Sabbath—and it would keep for generations as a memorial of God’s goodness to His chosen people during their 40 years’ wanderings through the wilderness. We may be quite sure that Aaron would not have kept a stinking thing laid up before the Lord.

34-36. As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan. Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah. Now I want you to read in the Book of Numbers. Further on in the history of the children of Israel, when the people had long been in the wilderness—the same kind of thing happened again.

Numbers 11:1. And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD. Interpreters cannot make out what they had to complain of. The curse of labor had been removed. They did not earn their bread with the sweat of their face, for it fell from Heaven every day. They were at no expense for clothing and though they journeyed, their feet did not swell. I suppose that they complained of the weather. It was too cold. It was too hot. It was too wet. It was too dry. They complained when they stood still—they were much too long in a place. They complained when they marched—they moved too often. In fact, they were very like ourselves! They often complained most when they had least to complain of. Discontent is chronic to our humanity and I do not believe that the poorest are the most discontented. It is often the very reverse. When a man is put in a place where he has nothing to complain of, especially if he is an Englishman, he feels quite out of place. He must have something to grumble at, something or other to be a grievance or else he is not happy. “When the people complained, it displeased the Lord.”

1. And the LORD heard it; and His anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp. He could hear their first murmuring, as they were new to the wilderness—they were hungry, they were thirsty—and the Lord pitied them. But now, when there was no reason for their complaining, His fire in terrible judgment visited His people on account of their rebellion and murmuring against the goodness of God.

2-4. And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched. And he called the name of the place Taberah: because the fire of the LORD burnt among them. And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting. All evil seems to begin there, among “the mixed multitude,” as it does among those church members who are unconverted, and among those people who try to hold with the hare and run with the hounds—those who want to be Christians and worldlings, too!

4. And the children of Israel also wept, again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? Even the true people of God caught the infection of the scum that was mixed with them and they fell a-weeping and said—

5. We remember the fish which we did freely eat in Egypt; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic. Fine stuff to remember! “Why,” you say, “you have read something before very much like that.” I am reading another record, but there is no originality in grumbling—it is always the same old thing over again. You might well suppose that I was reading in the Book of Exodus, but I am not—there are many years in between. He who sits down with a discontented hand to paint a picture will paint the same picture that he painted before. There is no originality in the murmuring, although they put in a few new touches. Before, it was the flesh pots that they remembered—now, in addition to the flesh, there are these savory vegetables—“the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic.”

6. But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all beside this manna before our eyes. Here they pour contempt upon the bread of angels, upon the Food of Heaven, upon the benison of God! Oh, what will men not complain of?

7. And the manna was as coriander seed, and the color thereof as the color of bdellium. A fine white color, like a pearl.  
8. And the people went about and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil. At first they thought it was like wafers made with honey. Getting more used to it, they, perhaps, described it quite as accurately, but not quite so sweetly—they said it was like fresh oil, and there is no better taste than that. Oil, by the time it comes to us, has usually a rank and rancid taste, but in the oil countries it is delicious, and he who has bread and a drop or two of oil will find himself not ill supplied with a dinner—  
**“The taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil.”**  
9. And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it. God took care to preserve His precious gift, encasing each single particle of it within a drop of dew, which gave it freshness. And when the Grace of God comes to us encased in the dew of the Spirit, how sweet is its taste! May it be so to us whenever we feed on Christ!  
10. Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased. And no wonder! Meek man as he was, they vexed his gracious spirit by their perpetual murmuring. As we read this sad story, let us, as in a glass, see ourselves—and let us deeply repent of our murmuring and complaining, and henceforth sing—  
*“I will praise You every day!  
Now Your anger’s turned away.”*  
Perhaps our next hymn (Number 697) will help us that way.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #712 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

WAR WITH AMALEK

NO. 712

**DELIVERED SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 23, 1866, BY C. H. SPURGEON**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.” Exodus 17:8.**

THERE were two great trials which the children of Israel had to endure in passing onward to the promised rest—their needs and their enemies. But I must add a third, which sprang out of these two by reason of the unbelief of their hearts. That third evil, far worse than the other two, was their sins. Probably, my Brothers and Sisters, you have found out by now that you could contentedly endure your needs, and could courageously contend with your foes if you were not weakened and hampered by your sins. A man’s worst foes are those of his own household.

As for Israel’s needs, I think Israel may be congratulated in having known them. For suppose they could have brought with them enough provision from Goshen, or could have been supplied by trading purveyors? They would never have been honored to feed upon the manna which dropped from Heaven! And suppose a canal had been dug for them to flow at the edge of the whole road of their march? Or that they could have found a succession of wells hard by the spots where they pitched their tents? Then they never would have drank of that marvelous Rock whose flints gushed with water, of which the Apostle tells us that it was Christ, or an eminent type of Christ.

They were gentlemen-commoners upon the bounty of Heaven— courtiers fed from the table of the King of kings! They were lifted up to eat angels’ food—they were satisfied with royal dainties. In this light, they are to be congratulated for their needs, for, if they had not known hunger, nor thirst, neither had they eaten manna, nor had they drank the water from the Rock. And you, Beloved, are much in the same case. The day will come when in clearer light than this you will thank God for your needs, and be of the same mind as the Apostle, who said, “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” And again, “For when I am weak, then am I strong.”

You will thank God that your needs were the platform for His Providence to display its care upon. That the very wilderness was a gift to you because He prepared a table for you in the midst of it, and might have left you to prepare one for yourself if it had not been a desert place. As for the enemies which beset the children of Israel, I was about to say they might almost be congratulated on account of them—for, fierce as they were—they could never have had victories if they had not known battles! The enemies of Israel were but so many sheaves for Israel’s victorious sword to reap—as the wild beasts of the wood yield food to the hunter—so were the haters of Israel as a prey unto their valiant men.

Over every enemy of His people the right hand of the Lord was gloriously exalted. You, too, Brethren, you, too, will have reason to thank God for all your enemies! If your life were one of perpetual peace it is clear there could be no triumphs. If there were not campaigns of warfare, there would be no shouts of them that triumph, no trophies to hang up in the halls of memory. Oh, if we can be kept from sins! If we can be preserved from their power we may be thankful for needs and even thankful for foes when we look at them in the light of the fiery pillar of God’s promised Presence. But our sins! Our sins! Our sins! What shall we do with them? If it were not for the victorious blood by which we conquer, we might lie down in despair—for who among us is, alone and unaided, a match for his sins?

This morning we thought of considering the war with Amalek as a typical representation of the experience of God’s people. Our prayer is that we may speak so that those who are greatly troubled and afflicted may derive some comfort from the Truth of God advanced—and that lagging saints may be stimulated to fight the battles of their Master, lest the curse go out against them—“because they came not up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”

We shall use the text three ways. First, as a picture of the experience of each individual Christian. Secondly, as a representation of the history of each separate Church. And thirdly, as a very excellent description of the history of the entire Church of the living God, from its first day even till its close.

I. First, then, we have here THE EXPERIENCE OF EVERY INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN. Observe the children of Israel were emancipated from bondage, and had left Egypt behind even as you and I have been rescued from our natural estate and are no longer the servants of sin. They had been redeemed by blood sprinkled upon the door posts and upon the lintel, and we, too, have had redemption applied to our souls, and have seen that God has looked upon the blood and has passed over us.

They had feasted upon the paschal lamb as we have done, for Jesus has become to us our meat and our drink, and our soul is satisfied with Him. They had been pursued by their enemies, even as we were pursued by our old sins, and they had seen these furious foes all drowned in the Red Sea, which they had passed through dry-shod. And we, too, have seen our past sins forever buried in the Red Sea of atoning blood. Our iniquities, which threatened to drive us back into the Egypt of despair, are gone forever! They sank like lead in the mighty waters, the depths have covered them—there is not one of them left.

Israel sung a new song upon the other side of the sea, and we, too, have rejoiced in God. Like Miriam we have sounded the loud timbrel of exultation and have danced with holy joy while our lips have chanted the hymn of victory—“Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.” Many of us are now free from the yoke of sin and Satan, and as the Lord’s freemen we glorify His name. Oh that all of us were in such a happy state! The children of Israel were probably anticipating ease, forgetting that the promised land was yet many days’ journey beyond them. Inexperience and childishness made them expect a continuance of uninterrupted song and feasting, and there was a time when we indulged the same foolish hopes.

We said to ourselves, “Let us be at peace, for the warfare is over. Now may we take our ease. Pharaoh is drowned, the horses and the chariots have sunk like lead in the mighty waters. No whips of the taskmaster, now, no bricks to make without straw. No more shall we be trod down by a cruel people and worn out with the labors of the brick kiln. With a high hand and a mighty arm have we been brought forth! Let us rejoice and be merry. Let us be glad all our days, and dance the desert through.” That was the voice of our inexperience and folly. How soon were our budding hopes nipped by an unexpected frost! For, like Israel, we soon experienced tribulations.

Suddenly there came upon us the thirst and the hunger which only Heaven’s love could supply! And when we least dreamed of it, the fierce Amalek of temptation came down like a wolf on the fold. Young Christian, do not dream that as soon as you are converted your struggle is over, but conclude that your conflict has but just begun! Some persons look upon regeneration as being the change of the old nature into a new. Experience teaches us that this is a very false description of the new birth. Conversion and regeneration do not change the old nature—that remains still the same—but we have at our new birth infused into us a new nature, a new principle.

And this new principle at once begins a contest with the old principle— therefore the Apostle tells us of the old man and of the new man—he speaks of the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit striving against the flesh. I do not care what the doctrinal statement of any man may be upon the subject—I am sure that the experience of the most of us will prove to a demonstration that there are two natures within us—that only a complex description can describe us at all. We find a company of two armies within us, and the fight goes on, and, if anything, waxes hotter every day. We do trust that the right principle grows stronger, and we hope that through Divine Grace the evil principle is weakened and mortified. But, at present, it is with most of us a very sharp contest, and were it not for Divine strength we might throw down our weapons in hopelessness.

Young Christian, you have begun a life of warfare, rest assured of that! You would never be told to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ if it were not so. You must not put that sword up into its scabbard, but rather grind it sharp and hold it always ready in your hand. Watch constantly, and pray without ceasing, for, till you get your foot upon the golden pavement of the New Jerusalem, you must wear a warrior’s harness and bear a warrior’s toils. Indeed, dear Friends, there was that in the camp of the children of Israel which ought to have taught them to expect trouble, for was there not a voice heard among the murmuring host, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

That croaking voice of unbelief foreboded ill. How could they expect to know peace when they doubted the God of peace? “There is no peace, says my God, to the wicked.” And in proportion as the righteous are at all like the wicked, in that proportion they lose peace. The cry of unbelief in your beam and mine, when it says, “Is the Lord among us or not?” ought to warn us that we are not yet in the land of rest, but shall have to fight with many an enemy before the banner may be furled. Besides, Israel ought to have remembered that there was an ancient feud between the children of Esau and the children of Jacob, for had not Esau been supplanted by his brother?

Amalek, Duke Amalek as he was called, was a descendant of Esau and treasured up all his father’s hatred and enmity towards the house of Israel. Did Israel expect to journey near to Edom and not be attacked? And do you expect, Christian, that sin shall be round about you and not assault you?—

*“Is this vain world a friend to Divine Grace,*

*To help you on to God?”*  
If you look for friendship from a sinful world you are grievously mistaken! There is a deadly hereditary feud between the Christian and the powers of darkness. It sprang up in the Garden, in the day when God said, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her Seed,” and it continues still. You must fight if you would win the crown, and your pathway to the other side of Jordan must be the pathway of an armed crusader who has to contend for every inch of the way if he is to win it.

In proceeding with the narrative we notice that they found opposition from an unexpected quarter. Ignorance may have made them reckon upon the friendliness of Amalek, for they evidently journeyed at their ease without proper precaution, presuming upon the relationship and peaceableness of the dwellers in the land. It is just where we feel most safe that we should be most cautious. “A man’s foes are they of his own household.” I do not think the Christian has so much to fear from open and avowed enemies as from those deceitful foes who claim to be his friends. Sin is never so much a Jezebel as when it paints its face with daubs of respectability and patches of innocence.

Things dubious are more dangerous than things distinctly evil. The border land between right and wrong is thronged with thieves and robbers. Beware of cutthroats, you who journey there! Even right things may easily become wrong when they carry away our hearts, and therefore we must guard against their attractions. Many people need not be much afraid of being led into drunkenness and blasphemy, for we are not likely to give way to these grosser evils—but we have far more reason to watch against worldliness and pride—for these are enemies which select the godly as their special object of attack. Take heed to your virtues, Christian, for these, when exaggerated, become your vices! Take care of the good things in which you boast, for they may furnish heat for the hatching of the vipers’ eggs of pride and self-satisfaction.

Israel was assailed in a quarter which was unguarded because unlikely to be attacked. In the Book of Deuteronomy, the fifteenth chapter and the seventeenth and eighteenth verses, we find that Amalek fell upon the rear of the host. The hindmost must have seemed, to themselves, to be the most secure, for Pharaoh’s host had been destroyed, and what further was there to fear? The weak and feeble came slowly on, at perfect ease, never so much as suspecting the existence of a foe. The van, I have no doubt, was kept well protected, for they knew not what hands might interrupt their onward march. But the rear, they thought, might be left exposed—and there it was the foe attacked them.

Christian, wherever you diminish your caution there will the foe be upon you! When you say to yourself, “My mountain stands firm, I shall never be moved,” concerning such-and-such a thing, it is there that you are most likely to fall. We are strongest usually when we fancy ourselves weakest because we take the matter to God—and weakest where we dream that we are strongest because we refrain from prayer. It will be observed, I think, in most Christians’ experience, that God has left them to see their weakness where they themselves reckoned that no weakness could have been perceptible. Let us, then, set a watch all around and ask the Lord to be a wall of fire around us, and a glory in the midst.

This attack of Amalek was rendered the more dangerous because it was all of a sudden. It seems that Amalek caught them in ambush and fell upon them without notice. There was no regular proclamation of war, no pitching of the battle, no sending out of skirmishers and scouts. The enemy fell upon them all of a sudden like a gang of bandits. Just so will sin do with you and me. If the devil would send me a notice when he means to tempt me, I might readily contend with him and defeat him—but this he will never do. He will not tell you whether or not tomorrow he will tempt you in your business—this is not his way of hunting for his game: “Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird.”

He will, if possible, take you unawares, and before you can put on your armor his arrows will sorely wound you. We are not ignorant of his devices. Well did the Master say, “What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch!” And oh, with what vigilance, what holy diligence must you and I watch against the winding and twisting of the old serpent, who will, if possible, bite our heels or insinuate his venom into our hearts! I think I must not omit to say that this attack of Amalek, though designed for the greatest mischief, did not occur without Divine arrangement and overruling. We may be thankful that though Satan selected the most suitable season for himself, yet the Lord made his devices of no effect.

Amalek fell upon them when they were faint and weary, but the manna and the flowing Rock soon changed the face of affairs, and the novelty of this gracious supply inspired the host with unusual courage. Fresh from the feast, they had good stomach for the fray and found congenial occupation for their renewed vigor in hewing down their assailants! Satan may beset us at our weakest point—but God has a way of making us all of a sudden strong—so that in the end the attack comes at a time when we are most fitted to repel it.

Have you not observed this? If your present trial had come at another time you could not have borne it. If your present temptation had presented itself but a day before, you would have fallen a victim to it. But it came just after you had enjoyed such communion with Christ that sin had no influence over you—the charms of Jesus made you blind to all other beauties. You had had your mouth so filled with manna that you were made strong in the strength of God to put to rout the host of your foes! Brothers and Sisters, be cautious always, but be confident in God! Watch against the foe, but be thankful that there is another Watcher who foresees all the devices of the devil and who will not deliver you into his hands nor suffer you to perish.

When the assault was made, the people were commanded to exert themselves. The message was given, “Go, choose out men, and fight with Amalek.” Israel never fought with Egypt. God fought for them, and they held their peace. When we are in our natural state under the bondage of sin, it is of very little use for us to fight against it—the only way of escape from the reigning power of sin is through the precious blood and the working of Divine Grace. But this was a different case. The children of Israel were not under the power of Amalek—they were free men—and so are we no longer under the power of sin! The yoke of sin has been broken, by God’s Grace, from off our necks, and now we have to fight, not as slaves against a master, but as free men against a foe.

Moses never said to the children of Israel while they were in Egypt, “Go, fight with Pharaoh.” Not at all—it is God’s work to bring us out of Egypt and make us His people. But when we are delivered from bondage, although it is God’s work to help us, we must be active in our cause. Now that we are alive from the dead we must wrestle with principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness if we are to overcome. “Go fight,” is the command. Do not many Christians act as if the sin would be driven out of them through their sleeping soundly? Let them be sure that a slumbering spirit is the best friend that sin can find!

If your lusts are to be destroyed, they must be cut up root and branch by sheer force of personal exertion through Divine Grace—they are not to be blown away by languid wishes and sleepy desires. God will not relieve us of our sins as sometimes persons have diseased limbs removed while under the influence of chloroform. We shall see our sins die while our minds are thoroughly active against them and resolutely bent upon their destruction. “Go, fight with Amalek.” Greatly to be deplored is the way in which some Christians say, “Ah, well, it is my besetting sin,” or, “It is my natural temperament,” or, “It is my constitution.” Shame on you, Christian! What if it is so? Do you mean to say to your Father’s face that you have so great a love for the sin which He hates that you will harbor it and invent hiding places for it?

Why, when a sin does so easily beset you, you must muster your whole force and cry to Heaven for strength that the dangerous foe may be overcome! One sin harbored in the soul will ruin you! One sin really loved and indulged will become damning evidence against you and prove that you really do not love the Savior—for if you did you would hate every false way. We must fight if we would overcome our sins! Spiritual fighting must be conducted on most earnest and prudent principles.

They were to choose out men. So we must choose out our ways of contending with sin. The best part of a man should be engaged in warfare with his sins. Certain sins can only be fought by the understanding. We ought, then, to sit down and deliberately look at the evil, and learn its wickedness by deliberately judging and considering its motives and its consequences. Perhaps when we clearly see what the sin is, Mr. Understanding, as Bunyan calls it, may be able to knock the brains out of it! One peculiar order of sins is only to be overcome by a speedy flight like that of the chaste Joseph. Sins of the flesh are never to be reasoned or parleyed with. There is no more reasoning with them than with the winds—understanding is nonplussed—for lust, like a hurricane of sand, blinds the eyes. We must flee! It is true valor in such a case to turn the back. “Resist the devil,” says Paul. But he does not say resist lust! He puts it thus—“Flee youthful lusts.”

When warring with the legions of unrighteousness we shall need all the best powers of our renewed nature for the conflict will be stern. Oh, Believer, you will need to bring your veterans, your pick and choice thoughts into the fight with Amalek! The faith which has endured the storm must face the foe! The love which endures all things must march to the war! It is no child’s-play to fight with sin! It needed all a Savior’s strength to tread it in the winepress when He was here on earth, and it will need all your might and more to overcome it—you will only overcome it, indeed, through the blood of the Lamb.

This makes me notice that though the men of Israel were to fight, and the chosen men were to be selected, yet they were to fight under the command of Joshua, that is, Jesus, the Savior. There is no fighting sin except under the leadership of Christ. We must fight sin with His weapons. We must see its sinfulness by the light of His sufferings—see its mischief in the sorrows of His death—see its destruction in the triumphs of His Resurrection. We must flee to the strong for strength, and seek help where God has laid it, namely, on Him that is mighty! When Jesus leads we need not be afraid. Promptly to follow Jesus is to secure a victory! His very name puts His enemies to rout! Who can withstand the terrors of His arm?

The narrative points out to us that effort, alone, is not enough. Three men are seen wending their way up the steep sides of the hill, solemnly walking along as if they had most weighty business on hand. They are seeking a point of advantage from which to gall the foe with the artillery of prayer. So mighty was the prayer of Moses that all depended upon it! The petitions of Moses defeated the enemy more than the fighting of Joshua. The edge of Moses’ prayer was more powerful than the edge of Joshua’s sword. It matters not how loudly Joshua shouts to his men unless Moses fervently cries to his God! The young soldier would as soon have left the field if the old commander had left the closet. Force and fervor, decision and devotion, valor and vehemence must join their forces—and all will be well.

You must wrestle with your sin, but the major part of the wrestling must be done alone in private with God. Prayer, like Moses, holds up the token of the Covenant before the Lord. The rod was the emblem of God’s working with Moses, the symbol of God’s government in Israel. Learn, O pleading Saint, to hold up the promise and the oath of God before Him! He cannot deny His own declarations. Hold up the rod of promise, and have what you will. Moses grew weary, and then his friends assisted him. When at any time your prayer flags, let faith support one hand, and let holy hope uplift the other. And prayer, seating itself upon the stone of Israel, the Rock of our salvation, will continue and prevail!

Beware of faintness in devotion! If Moses felt it who can escape? It is far easier to fight with sin in public than to pray against it in private. It is remarked that Joshua never grew weary in the fighting, but Moses did grow weary in the praying. The more spiritual an exercise, the more difficult it is for flesh and blood to maintain it. Let us cry, then, for special strength, and may the Spirit of God who helps our infirmities, as He allowed help to Moses, enable us like he to continue with our hands steady till the going down of the sun.

It is not praying today nor yet tomorrow that will win life’s battle—it is praying till the going down of the sun! It is not pleading for a month, and then ceasing supplication, Christian—it is, “till the going down of the sun,” till the evening of life is over! Until you shall come to the rising of a better sun, or to the land where they need no sun, you must continue to pray—

*“Long as they live should Christians pray, For only while they pray they live.”*  
Let us learn, then, that there is to be action, but there must be

supplication. We cannot expect to conquer Amalek without a combination of the two.

I will not detain you much longer over this point, only remark that where holy activity is joined with earnest supplication, the result as to our sins is absolutely sure—the enemy must be defeated. We shall put our feet upon the necks of all our sins. There is no fear of their overcoming us if we do but lay hold on Divine strength. And, if ever we overcome sin once, it should be the signal for proclaiming a general war against all sin. The fight and victory over Amalek brought from God’s mouth the solemn declaration that there should be war with Amalek forever and ever. So must it be with you. Have you mastered one sin? Slay the next, and the next, and the next! Can you curb your temper now? Now smite your pride! Is your pride humbled? Now drive an arrow through the very liver of your sloth! And is your sloth overcome? Now seek, by Divine Grace, to strike through the neck of the next temptation.

Onward to the total destruction of every Amalekite must the child of Israel go! But notice that in the whole business the glory was given to God. No pillar was erected on that field of Israel’s warfare in commemoration of Joshua, but an altar as a memorial to Jehovah. That day Israel did not lift on high the banner of Joshua, and sing of him as of the victorious Maccabaeus—

*“See, the conquering hero comes!*

*Sound the trumpets, beat the drums!”*  
but that day it was said, “Jehovah Nissi,” the Lord is our banner, for they ascribed the glory and honor unto Him whose right hand alone had gotten to Him the victory! So must we do in all our successes, for if we overcome a sin and then boast of ourselves, we are overcome by sin. If looking back upon the past we say with congratulation, “God, I thank You that I am not as other men are. I thank You for this and that,” but all the while are thinking that we have much more reason to thank ourselves, we show that we are still with the fetters upon our wrists dragged in captivity.

I leave the point hoping that some young Christian may have received a lesson in experience. And yet I fear that we must all learn experience for ourselves, and that what is told us by others is but an idle tale. I pray that you who are beginning a new generation may not be as your father’s were, a stiff-necked people, but that you may walk before the Lord with greater holiness and smite Amalek with sterner determination than your fathers have done, that so the victory may be unto God through you.

II. In the second place, the whole narrative may be interpreted AS THE HISTORY OF ANY ONE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. I draw a distinction between the general Church and any one particular Church. In the olden times the Churches of our Lord Jesus Christ, though acknowledging one another and recognizing their unity, were distinct organizations managing their own affairs.

And here I will digress so far as to say that the only Christian unity which you and I may ever expect to see and to seek after is not the amalgamation of all Churches into one colossal scheme of government, but the spiritual union of all the Churches in working for the Lord—each Church exercising its discipline within its own bounds, and carrying out Christ’s commands within its own walls—but at the same time recognizing all other truly Christian Churches as being parts of the one body of Christ.

Instead of attempting to destroy all these separate Churches in order to create unity, we should build up the walls of each house so that the whole city may be compact together. Even the names which describe the varieties of our conscientious convictions are useful, and are only caviled at by a party who under the cloak of being unsectarian are more sectarian than the worst of us could even slanderously be said to be. Suppose that all the livery companies in London should give up their distinctive names, so that there should be no Goldsmiths’ Company, nor Cloth Workers, nor Merchant Tailors, nor Fishmongers, but that all should be called citizens? It would be a wonderful piece of policy and would singularly unite the citizens of London, would it not?

We believe that the reverse would be the case! The existence of the separate corporations, each with its peculiar interests to maintain, but all bound up with the prosperity of the city, help to create unity. And so the unity of the Savior’s body is preserved rather than destroyed by each Believer carrying out his convictions of the Lord’s will, and not refusing to identify himself with those who think with him, nor refusing to wear the name which describes them. Certain sectaries cry out, “We are called Christians.” “Yes, I say, and are we not?” Are they Brethren? So are we. Are they Christians? So are we. Do they seek to be followers of Christ? So do we.

There is the less need for some to parade the name of Christians when they know that they are Christians. Let us try to live out our Christianity rather than blazon it upon our doorposts! I am not making an unscriptural distinction when I say, first of all, I am going to regard the narrative as a picture of a Church, and then afterwards as a picture of the whole Church. In any one Church there will be—there must be, if it is a Church of God—earnest contention for the Truth of God and against error. We, as a Church have, I trust, been brought up out of Egypt and are bound together by a common deliverance. We have to fight with Amalek.

For the defense of those doctrines which we have learned and which we believe to be the Truth as it is in Jesus, we are called to fight. We are not merely to hold them as the unfaithful servant wrapped his talent in a napkin, but we are to publish what we believe to be true, and, if any contravene, we are to hold our own, or rather, hold the Master’s Truth with a firm hand, and not be afraid to contend for it at all hazards! Our chief war must always be with sin—with sin in ourselves, with sin in others—with sin everywhere! This is the great point in the Christian’s contention, and from this war the Believer must never cease. Attack sin in every place, and for this reason, if for no other, sin and error will always attack us!

In this particular Church I know there are many errors that are always falling upon us, and smiting some of the hindmost, the weakest and the feeblest. One opens one’s eyes with astonishment, sometimes, to see what strange errors people are falling into who should know better. But when you come to remember how hindmost they were, and how much the weakest they were, it is not quite so great a marvel that they should be struck by the foe. The fact is that in such an age as this if we do not attack error, error will eat us up! And it comes to this—we must either fight sin, or sin as a fretting moth and a devouring canker will utterly devour us!

If there is not an earnest contention for the Truth of God amidst all the Church members, there will soon be defalcations on this side and defalcations on the other side. Each Church should teach its own distinctive principles with a vigorous, earnest, Scriptural dogmatism. If we do, indeed, hold the very Truth as it is in Jesus, we must fight for it valiantly, for if we do not fight Amalek, Amalek will certainly fight us and the hindmost will always be suffering and the weakest go to the wall. It is on behalf of the weaker Brethren, who are easily perverted, that we must watch and fight perpetually. To all Christian effort in every Church must be added unceasing intercession. The Christian pastor is, in some respects, comparable to Moses, for he is set apart as a leader in the band of Brethren—and as such, his business is not only to teach the people but to plead for them with God.

I wish that some of our pastors were sustained as they should be by their Aarons and their Hurs. Alas, I know many a fainting Brother whose hands are hanging down, who finds an Aaron to pull them lower still, and a Hur to depress his spirits yet more! I would take up a mourning, a lamentation, for my Brothers who toil in honorable but obscure spheres where cold neglect and chill indifference are their portion. Alas for others, in the midst of Churches torn apart with schism and polluted with heresy, whose life is one perpetual burden unto them! I would God it were far otherwise with them! I have to thank God, and under God to thank you, that so many of you act the part of Aaron and of Hur, and are willing to hold up the pastor’s hands and the hands of all my other fellow laborers— the workers for Christ Jesus.

But some of you do not do it. Some of you neglect prayer in the closet for the Church’s work. I hope you are not neglecting prayer on your own account—but you do not pray as you should for the Lord to advance the interests of Truth in the world. You neglect Prayer Meetings, and absent yourselves from the week-day means of Divine Grace! Brothers and Sisters, these things ought not to be! If you cannot be Moses you may be Aaron. If you cannot fight and assist Joshua, you may climb the hill and succor Moses. If you can neither teach in the classes or in the Sunday school, nor preach in the streets and so fight, you can at least be much in the closet and much in prayer!

Oh the untold benefits that come to a Christian Church from the quiet prayerful members—least known on earth but best known in Heaven! Let us have both at work. May the Lord Jesus help us to advance from strength to strength in earnest effort of every kind, and may He at the same time be our strength upon the mountain while we draw near to God’s Throne in prayer.

III. But lastly, THE HISTORY OF THE WHOLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IS HERE BEFORE US AS IN A PICTURE. The sacramental host of God’s elect is warring, still, on earth—Jesus Christ being the Captain of their salvation. He has said, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.” Though this is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, yet is it not incorrect to say that the Lord Jesus Christ is still at the head of His people? Hark to the shouts of war! Onward come the bands of priest-craft, hooded monks, and shaven priests with an allied host of England’s silly clergy arrayed in gaudy vestments and tricked out with childish ornaments!

A fierce effort is making to restore the Romish Antichrist to his ancient seat. Now let the people of God stand fast in their ranks and let no man’s heart fail him. It is true that just now in England the battle is turned against us, and unless the Lord Jesus and the eternal Joshua shall lift His sword, I know not what may become of the Church of God in this land. But let us be of good courage, and play the man!

There never was a day when Protestantism seemed to tremble more in the scales than now. The way to Rome and so the way to Hell, is paved (I suppose with good intentions) by those Anglican clergy whose vocation it seems to be to show the long-suffering patience of a Protestant country. Here we have a national Church which has become the jackal for the lion of Rome, and we greatly need a bold voice and a strong hand to preach and publish the Old Gospel for which martyrs bled and confessors died. The Savior is, by His Spirit, still on earth! Let this cheer us! He is ever in the midst of the fight, and therefore the battle is not doubtful.

Meanwhile, what a sweet satisfaction it is to see our Lord Jesus, like a greater Moses upon the hill yonder, prevalently pleading for His people! He is better than Moses, for His hands never grow feeble. And if the prophetic hand of Jesus should grow weak, there is His priestly office, like Aaron, to bear up one hand, and His princely office, like Hur, a Prince, to bear up the other! And so the three together, Prophet, Priest, and King! He bears aloft the wonder-working rod—Israel wins the day, and Amalek is struck. O anxious Gazer! Look not at the battle so much below, for there you shall be enshrouded in smoke and amazed with garments rolled in blood. But lift your eyes up yonder where your Savior lives and pleads—for while He intercedes the cause of God is safe.

Let us fight as if it all depended upon us, but let us look up and know that all depends upon Him. Now by the lilies of Christian purity and by the roses of the Savior’s Atonement—by the roes and by the hinds of the field—we charge you who are lovers of Jesus to do valiantly in the Holy War! For truth and righteousness, for the kingdom and crown jewels of your Master—against the harlot of Rome and the many-headed beast on which she rides—charge with dauntless courage! Those who gave your fathers to the flames and cast your grandfathers to rot in prisons—let them know that the spirit of your grandfathers still lives in you!

Let them see that there is a seed still upon earth in whose breast the Truth of God still finds a tabernacle—men who can suffer for the Truth of God—and can boldly declare it in the midst of foes! Never become cowardly and mean! Never despair! How can you? Christ at your head like Joshua, and Christ in Heaven like Moses—Christ here with the holy Gospel in His hand like a two-edged sword—and Christ there with His atoning merits like a wonder-working rod! Be strong and very courageous, and by His help, Who does valiantly, you shall yet send up the shout Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns. The Lord bless you all for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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BOTH SIDES OF THE SHIELD  
NO. 2233

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, DECEMBER 6, 1891,  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 14, 1891.

**“Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill  
with the rod of God in my hand.”  
Exodus 17:8, 9.**

IN trying to understand the Truth of God we are in great danger of being one-sided. One man catches at part of a Truth of God and says, “That is it and that is the whole of it.” Another man lays hold of another side of the Truth of God and he says, “This is the whole of it” and, straightaway, there arises a contention between them. They are like the men who quarreled as to the material of which a certain shield was made. One of them said that it was a golden shield. The other was equally sure that it was a silver one, whereas it so happened that it was gold on one side and silver on the other. So they fiercely wrangled when they might very well have been agreed if they had known a little more. Most Truths of God have two sides and it is well to try to see both of them. Nearly every doctrine in the Word of God is balanced by some other doctrine and many of the differences among the people of God have arisen from the undue stress which has been laid on one aspect of the Truth while the other side has been altogether neglected. This danger very frequently besets us.

For instance, some see the Sovereignty of God and are so carried away with that sublime Truth, that they deny the responsibility of man! They thus both wrest the doctrine they do know and fight against the doctrine they do not know. Others can see the universality of the Gospel invitation and, with large hearts can urge all men to turn unto God and live—but they have never seen the specialty of this redemptive work of Christ and so fail to understand the eternal purpose of God to save His chosen people. Running away with half a Truth, they are like men that go through the wilderness wearing only one shoe—they become lame in one foot—and that makes them limp all over. It does not matter which foot it is that is lame—the man is a cripple if either foot is thus afflicted.

It is essential for us to hold our minds ready to receive whatever the Holy Spirit teaches—and frequently to accept Truths of God which we cannot harmonize. I have long ago given up all attempts to reconcile what God has revealed in one part of the Bible with what He has made known in another part. If I find, in God’s Word, doctrines which appear to me to be at variance with the teaching in other passages, I say to myself, “God knows where these things harmonize and if He had wanted me to know it, He would have told me. As He has not told me, why should I worry myself about the matter? I am not going to speculate and theorize as to where these Truths meet. Nor will I cast a bridge of gossamer across the deep gulf which I fancy I see and then trust myself to a thread that cannot bear my weight! “The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed, belong unto us and to our children forever.”

One said to me, the other day, concerning two great doctrines, “How do you make these two agree?” I answered by first asking another question, “How do I make two things agree that never fell out? There is no need for me to attempt anything of the kind. These two Truths are perfectly reconcilable and as they come from God’s mouth, it would be as difficult for you to show that they do not agree as it is for me to show that they do agree.” God does not say, “Yes,” and “No.” The Lord does not blow hot and cold. If He reveals two doctrines which apparently contradict each other, yet are they both true, since both are spoken by the God who cannot lie! And if I cannot see how they can both be true, it comforts me to think that I am not asked to see it—I am expected to believe it—and God’s Grace gives me the faith to do even that. In fact, I rather like a difficulty, for then there is an opportunity for the exercise of faith. It is glorious, when one is sailing, to come right up under the lee of a great rock and to be compelled to say, “Well, I cannot proceed any further this way.” What then? Why, just let your anchor down and make a harbor of the rock, and lie there at rest while stormy winds blow.

That is what you should do with difficult doctrines—make a quiet haven of the mysterious Truth of God and let it shelter you in time of doubt or despondency! When the storm is passed, you will find that there are other ways for you to go where it is perfectly plain sailing. Seeing that the Revelation is Divine, there must be mysteries which mortals cannot understand at present. Let us comfort ourselves with our Savior’s words, “What you know not now, you shall know hereafter.” Some day the way will be made plain before us, but meanwhile our attitude should be that of trustful children who believe implicitly whatever their loving father tells them, whether they comprehend it or not.

In the present discourse I am going to take up two sets of Truths which are rather varied and yet are very practical. My range of thought will be extensive, but I will not wander from the incident before us. There are four things which have been suggested to my mind while meditating upon this text and its surroundings, each of which may be viewed from two standpoints. First, in this assault of Amalek on the people of God, we see persecution in its double aspect. Secondly, in the rod of Moses we behold instrumentality in its double relation. Thirdly, in the battle we observe prudence in its double activity. And lastly, in the leaders of the people we are reminded of Christ in His double capacity as He pleads for us yonder and fights for us here.

I. First, let us look at PERSECUTION IN ITS DOUBLE ASPECT. On the one hand, notice that this attack upon Israel was Amalek’s great sin, on account of which the nation was doomed to be extirpated. Because of this, God said, “I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under Heaven.” But, on the other hand, this assault was the result of Israel’s sin, for it is significantly put after the strife of Massah and Meribah, “Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.” The point is this— persecution may come to you from evil men, distinctly from them—and it may be their wicked free will which makes them assail you. But, at the same time, it may be your sin which lies at the bottom of it, and because you have erred, they have been permitted and even appointed, to bring trouble upon you. Let us think of these two things.

Notice well that assaults upon us may arise from the sins of others. It is right that we should recognize this, lest in the dark day we should become unduly discouraged. Persecution often arises because we come into conflict with wicked men, but God will judge our adversaries—He will remember His Covenant with His people and deliver us from the hand of all our enemies.

These Amalekites attacked Israel and greatly sinned in so doing, for they were the first that made war against God’s people. He who had so graciously chosen and kept them, who, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm had brought them through the Red Sea, had espoused their cause, and His Word, “Touch not My anointed, and do My Prophets no harm,” had been a kind of shield to Israel in her earliest days. Though Abraham and others had, at times, gone forth to battle, nobody had fought with Israel since she had become a nation and, by mighty signs and wonders, had been delivered from the hand of Pharaoh and the bondage of Egypt. But Amalek was the first among the nations which dared to assail the chosen people of God and, therefore, a stern doom was decreed against him. He had heard what great things God had done for His people and yet he presumed to fight against them! And in so doing, he impiously lifted up his hand against Jehovah, Himself! He became the leader in this particular form of evil and thus assumed a fearful responsibility—and assured to himself a terrible judgment.

But the impiety was still worse, for Amalek went out of his way to attack Israel. The people had not come into his territory—they were a good way from it and were passing quietly by—but we read, “Then came Amalek.” His envy was stirred up so much that he came away from his own region to fight with Israel without any provocation. Amalek was a descendant of Esau and the hate of Esau towards Jacob so burned in the breast of Amalek towards Israel that he came a long journey in order that he might at once, without proclaiming war, fall suddenly upon the hosts of Israel. Because the attack was thus wanton, he had to suffer the stern judgment of God. Let not wicked men imagine that because God is in Heaven and they are upon the earth they can, with impunity, oppose His people. “He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.” Woe be to the man who wantonly attacks the saints of the Most High God! Be not disquieted, O child of God, if this is your case! “Fret not yourself because of evildoers, neither be you envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb.”

Moreover, Amalek in this act went forth to fight against God, Himself. It was not with Israel, alone, that he warred—he also battled with Jehovah, the God of Israel. In the words of the 16th verse, as some translate them, Amalek had laid his hands upon the Throne of God and, therefore, God laid His own hand upon the Throne and swore by His Throne that He would uproot Amalek from among the nations. It was because the opposition to the Israelites was distinctly on account of God, Himself, that, therefore, Amalek had to be cut off. Dear Brothers and Sisters, you and I may be assailed by wicked men and we may distinctly trace the whole of it to their malice and to their enmity against God, Himself, but though that may be all true, yet we must not, therefore, be, ourselves, malicious towards them. Neither must we be proud, as though we were innocent and they, alone, were guilty.

Wicked men nailed our Savior to the Cross, but His prayer for them was, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” Dearly Beloved, if the ungodly hate you and persecute you, avenge not yourselves, but rather give way to wrath, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, says the Lord.” When you are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, the Lord takes notice of it. “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” was the word which came from the excellent Glory to him who journeyed to Damascus, “breathing out threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.” When he persecuted them, he was really persecuting their Master! Be not, then, troubled if men revile you, persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for Christ’s sake, but rather, “Rejoice and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.” Leave the issue with the Lord—the battle is His and He will, in His own time and way, overthrow all His and your adversaries.

Let us now turn our thoughts to the other aspect of this subject. The guilt of ungodly men in persecuting God’s people is not inconsistent with my next statement, that assaults upon us may also arise from our own sins. We may have brought the evil upon ourselves and we had better look to it that there is not a sin of our own that lies at the root of what we suffer, for it was so with these people. When they had chided with Moses and murmured against God, “Then came Amalek.”

Israel had been quarrelling with God. Do you wonder, then, that other people quarreled with them? You may often read your sin in its punishment and, if you had prophetic eye enough, you might see your chastening in your offense. Many a time our severity to others is the reason for God’s apparent severity with us. If we have withheld from the poor, we need not wonder if God withholds from us. And if we have been slow to forgive, we need not marvel if we do not soon get a sense of forgiveness for ourselves. We often urge people to do unto others as we would that they should do unto us. Let me reverently say another thing—do unto God as you would that God should do unto you, for, “with the froward God will show Himself froward.” That ink with which we wrote the ill word, God will use in the writing down of our sentence. It was so in this case—Israel quarreled with God—and now Amalek quarrels with Israel.

They put a question about God, “Is the Lord among us, or not?”—a horrible question, since it involved a doubt as to the veracity of Moses and as to the reality of all the great wonders which were worked in Egypt and in the wilderness! And, because they questioned God, God makes it a serious question between them and Amalek—a question which, for a while, seemed to be answered favorably, for Israel prevailed. But soon it was answered unfavorably, for Amalek prevailed. The conflicting hosts sway to and fro on the battlefield—first victors, then vanquished—again conquering, then once more conquered! How will the terrible struggle end? No wonder that God puts the issue in question, when they had put Him in question! If you question God, He will soon leave you to question yourselves. I do not wonder that men say, “Have I any faith?” when they begin to doubt the very Inspiration of Scripture! What is the good of having any faith when there is nothing left for you to believe? You may well fear to build upon that Scripture whose very foundations you have undermined! If we question God, God will make our safety a question—and we shall have a stern fight for it.

Moreover, we find that Israel had uttered threats against Moses, so that he said, “They are almost ready to stone me.” Now, if they would stone the man of God, is it at all amazing that the men of the world were ready to kill them? If you go against Moses, God will send Amalek against you, for remember that God chastens His people! Though He forgives, He chastens. And He chastens all the more because He forgives. He condemns us in our consciences, that He may not condemn us at the Judgement Seat. He afflicts us here, that we may not be destroyed with the world at the end! Now is the day of the Believer’s chastisement for his benefit. By-andby will be the time of the unbeliever’s punishment which shall bring him no benefit, but shall be the just reward of his evil deeds. Child of God, do you wish to receive chastisement? You have only to go into sin and you may rest assured that you will not escape the rod! If you are a bastard, you may, perhaps, sin and prosper, but if you are a true-born child of God, you cannot sin without smarting for it—

*“Did I meet no trials here,  
No chastisement by the way,  
Might I not, with reason, fear  
I should prove a castaway?  
Bastards may escape the rod,  
Sunk in earthly vain delight;  
But the true-born child of God  
Must not, would not if he might.”*

So there is our first point. We may sometimes justly charge our afflictions upon the evil intent of ungodly men and yet, at the same time, we may have to also charge them upon ourselves. It may be equally true that we have procured them by our own slips and stumbling in the ways of the Lord, as that evil men have wickedly raised their hands against us. So, when attacks are made upon us, let us be more careful to search our own hearts and examine our own lives, than to condemn the faults of other men. To their God they will have to render their own account.

II. In the second place, let us think of INSTRUMENTALITY IN ITS DOUBLE RELATION. Here, again, another contrast is to be found in the text and its connection. If you will notice, in the fifth verse, God says to Moses, “Take with you of the elders of Israel; and your rod, with which you smote the river.” But when Moses talks about the rod, in the ninth verse, which forms our text, he says, “Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.” In both verses it is the same rod which is spoken of. God calls it the rod of Moses. Moses calls it the rod of God and both these expressions are true. I want you to remember that. The first is true—it is the rod of Moses—that is the human side. And in this connection it is sometimes called the rod of Moses and sometimes the rod of Aaron. But the Divine side is just as noticeable and then it is called the rod of God. With reference to the instrumentality which God is pleased to use, we must thus remember its twofold nature and look on both sides of the shield.

One side is that God calls it the rod of Moses and so honors Moses. Wherever there is an opportunity of doing honor to the faith of His own servants, God is never slow to use it! He is a King who delights to give glory to His warriors when they behave themselves bravely in the heat of battle. It gives Him pleasure to knight them on the field and let them know that they have done well. At the end He will say to those who have been valiant for His cause, “Well done, good and faithful servants.” Even here He gives His chosen a foretaste of that full approval which will make their Heaven complete. God is not afraid of spoiling His people by saying a good word about them. You remember the story of the man who had a good wife and one said to him, “Why, she is worth her weight in gold.” “Yes,” he said, “she is worth a Gibraltar rock in gold, but I never tell her that. You know that it is necessary to maintain discipline and if I were to tell her how much I really value her, she would not know herself.”

Well, now, that is wrong! It does people good to be told how highly we value them. There is many a Christian man and woman who would do better if, now and then, someone would speak a kindly word to them and let them know that they had done well. God Himself gives us an example of this, for He, here, puts honor on His servant, by saying to Moses, “Your rod, with which you smote the river, take in your hand, and go.” Moses was the instrument whom God used against Pharaoh and though his rod was, in itself, only a common stick, yet it was Moses who used the rod and it was really that rod with which he smote the river. God actually did use him and it is not God’s way to use a man and then say nothing about it. God ascribes to Moses what Moses really did! We must never despise the instrumentality which God uses. The tendency of our nature is to run to the other extreme and to rest in instrumentality. We often need to remember that word, “Cursed be the man that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord.” But in trying to avoid that rock, we must not run on the other and slight all instrumentality. God will have His servants esteemed and, if He puts honor upon them, we cannot be wrong if He also honors them.

Moreover, it really was the rod of Moses and would not so well have fitted any other hand. God does not put into a position of influence a man unfit for the post. Even Moses did not work wonders with the rod until he had renounced the riches of Egypt and borne the burden of life in the wilderness. There was a fitness in the fact of the rod being in the hand of such a man. He had no rod when, in his fleshly energy, he slew the Egyptian whom he found oppressing the Hebrew slave. Had it then been in his hand, what sad havoc he might have made! But now he used it as God directed. In fact, the rod was the symbol of his authority and that authority was not bestowed upon him until he was qualified to exercise it! Thus, in a very real sense, it was the rod of Moses. In addition to this, it was the faith of Moses which gave power to his rod—he, himself, was the conductor of the Divine energy. Had the rod been wielded by another man, selfappointed and lacking the confidence which Moses had come to possess in God, it would have been simply a powerless stick. But because of his authority and because of his faith, it was right to call it, “the rod of Moses.” When a man is evidently used of God, let us be quick to recognize the special qualities which render him worthy to be used, and let us esteem him very highly in love for his work’s sake. Thus we see that God calls the almond branch, which did such wonders in Egypt and at the Red Sea, the rod of Moses.

On the other hand, Moses calls it the rod of God and so honors God. He whom God uses, gives God the praise, for God is always the source of our strength. And if any work is done that is worth doing, unto Him must be ascribed all the glory! It was not in his own might that Moses turned the waters of the Nile into blood and caused the fish to die. It was not by any power inherent in himself that he made the dust of Egypt to live and become a terrible plague to the people. It was not by any human magic that Moses divided the Red Sea and made a way for the ransomed nation to march through its depths. No one knew better than he that the instrument that branded the breast of the Red Sea and left a dry mark where it fell, was the rod of God, not man’s! It is He, alone, that does great wonders, and unto His name be all the praise! “Non nobis, Domine,” must always be our Psalm of adoration unto Jehovah—“Not unto us, O Lord; not unto us, but unto Your name, give glory.”

Let us learn, from these words of Moses, that instrumentality is not to be decried or despised, for God uses it. But the instrument must never be allowed to usurp the place of God, for it must be always remembered that it is God who uses it. The axe must not exalt itself against him that cuts with it, but, when there are trees to be felled, it would be folly to throw the axe away! The net must not be made a god that we may sacrifice to it, but it would be idle to go fishing without a net! Use your agencies and your instrumentalities to the very fullest extent, but understand that it is God that works in you, and God that works by you, if anything is accomplished that is worthy of record.

Thus I have given you two sets of things in which it is easy enough to blunder if you shut one of your eyes, or if you only look at them in one light—first, the persecution of God’s people and, secondly, the instrumentality used in God’s service.

III. And now, for a third thing. Behold, in this incident, PRUDENCE IN ITS DOUBLE ACTIVITY. You have that in the text. Moses said unto Joshua, “Choose us out men and go out, fight with Amalek.” To which Joshua might have replied, “Yes, I will gladly do that, and you will go, too, Moses, and fight, will you not?” No, no, he will not! “Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.” You see, as Oliver Cromwell would have put it, prudence trusts in God and keeps its powder dry. Prudence prays with Moses while it fights with Joshua. In like manner, in the activities of our holy faith, we must learn to balance work and worship, prayer for victory and conflict with the enemy. In the case before us, we see that the means are not neglected. Moses did not call all the people to pray when it was time for fighting! He prayed, but at the same time he set the battle in array. This is true wisdom, for, “faith without works is dead.” We cannot expect to have souls saved if we pray and never preach! We cannot expect to have our children saved if we only pray for them night and morning, and never speak to them about eternal matters, and do not instruct them in the things of God. The means must not be neglected!

Observe how Moses prepared to fight the Amalekites. He said to Joshua, “Choose us out men.” He did not lose sight of the necessity of having the most fit warriors because his trust was in God. If someone, seeing only one side of the question, had come to him, and said, “The battle is the Lord’s, why do you want to pick out men? Will not one man do as well as another?” Moses would probably have replied, “These Amalekites are mighty warriors. Take chosen men—men that are able-bodied—men that are expert in war, the choicest men you can find, and go to war with Amalek. We shall need our best men to overcome such a foe. Choose us out men.”

This is a rule without exception when you go to work for Christ—bring forth the best of everything that you have—your best thought, your best knowledge, your best ability! Let the Church always see to it that she tries to get the best men she can to fight the battles of the Lord. It is a mistake to suppose that just anybody will do for Christian work. Christ may use whom He wills, even the weakest things and the things that are despised—but as for us, we must always look to that which is most adapted to the work, most suitable for it, always hearkening to the words of Moses to Joshua, “Choose us out men.”

The leader was also chosen—“Moses said unto Joshua.” He did not pick up the first youth that he met and say to him, “Go and fight these Amalekites,” but he took the man whom God had fitted for the post of leader in the war, even Joshua, and said to him, “Go out and fight with Amalek.” It is well for us, in carrying on the work and warfare for God, to rally round those whom God has qualified to be leaders. Means are not to be neglected, nor may God’s work be done in a slovenly style. Choose you out men and let the leader of them be a choice man, the man of God’s choice.

The time for the battle was also chosen. “ Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill.” Why not tonight, Moses? These Amalekites have just been falling upon you. Why not fight them at once? Well, because the people were not ready. It would take a little time to get the fighting men in order. Tomorrow was quite soon enough. Besides, Moses felt by instinct that he would fight these children of the wilderness best when he could see them—not by night, when they knew the way better than he did—but by daylight. To those of you who earnestly desire to serve God, I would say— Do not be in too great a hurry, lest your indiscreet zeal should bring disaster upon you. “He that believes shall not make haste.” Choose the best time! Serve God wisely. Go about the work as if all depended upon you— and then trust in God, knowing that all depends upon Him! Use the same foresight, the same judgment, the same care that you would use if it were solely your own work. And then, when you have done that, fall back upon God, feeling that all your care and all your foresight will be in vain unless He stretches forth His hand to help and to ensure success!

Note, again, that the battle was most real. Moses did not say, “Choose you out men and go and drive Amalek away like a flock of sheep.” No, but, “Go out and fight with Amalek.” Believe me, Brothers and Sisters, we make a great mistake if we think that this world is to be conquered for Christ without mighty efforts. Some talk as if the expenditure of a few pounds and the going forth of a few men will end the whole war. It will do nothing of the sort! If nations are to be subdued to Christ, His Church must exert all her power. All her power without Him is nothing, but if He chooses to use her power, He will have the whole of it brought into use before He gives the blessing! “Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek.” When the battle began, it was no child’s play! It was a hand-tohand conflict, a struggle for life or death, and the end of it was that, “Joshua vanquished Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.” Not merely by praying, but, “with the edge of the sword.” Moses on the hilltop is doing his part by holding up the rod—but you must have Joshua down below with the sharp edge of the sword, or else Amalek will laugh at the prayers of Moses! I should like to have this rule written on every man’s mind, that if he is to serve God, and get a blessing from God, he must have both the prayer of Moses and the sword of Joshua!

But, on the other hand, in this battle, reliance on God is not neglected. Moses ascends the hill holding up his banner—and that banner is the rod of God. The staff on which God’s servant had been accustomed to lean, God had blessed, and made it to be a scepter, the sign of His royal Presence and a wonder-working thing in the land! Moses holds this up. The banner is the rod of God and the banner-bearer is the chosen servant of God. Everything on Israel’s side is of God—Moses and Joshua are ordained of God and the rod chosen of Moses is, at the same time, the rod of God! This is held up where all the people can see it and every warrior, as he turns his eyes, can behold that rod of God which had worked such wonders before, still held aloft above the conflicting armies! When Moses’ hands are heavy, the symbol of God’s Presence need not be lowered, for Aaron and Hur are at hand to hold up his arms. Israel is continually reminded of the interest of God in the battle against Amalek. The rod in the hand of Moses seems to say, “God is fighting for you! God’s servant is holding up the appointed standard!” Undoubtedly that assurance must have largely aided them to go through the battle with a brave heart. The meaning of it would be clear—“Fight, but trust. War with Amalek with the edge of the sword, but prevail over Amalek by prevailing with God in prayer.”

Unfortunately, in our work for God, we generally fall into one of two blunders. Either we get a lot of machinery and think that we shall accomplish everything by that, or else we are like some whom I have known, who have confided so much in prayer that they have done nothing but pray! Prayer is a downright mockery if it does not lead us into the practical use of means likely to promote the ends for which we pray. I have known friends take medicine when they have been ill and never pray about their sickness. There are some others who pray about their sickness, but never take the proper medicine. They are both wrong! You must have Joshua and you must have Moses, too, in the time of trial! Go before God with your sickness, but if there is an appointed means that has been made useful to others, use it, for God will bless you by the use of means.

Try to see two sides of a thing. Do not trust exclusively to either one or the other. It is a very heinous fault to trust the means without God, but, though it is a much smaller fault to trust in God and not use the means, yet still it is a fault. Practical prudence will lead you to do both. It gives to Joshua his sword, that he may make it red with the blood of the enemy and it gives to Moses his rod, that he may go with it up to the top of the hill and hold it up there in the sight of the people—that all may know that the battle is the Lord’s—and that He will deliver the enemy into their hands. God make you wise in these things and enable you to use both the rod of God and the sword of man!

IV. I have to speak of one other Truth and then I am done. Behold here, in a wondrous type, CHRIST IN HIS TWOFOLD CAPACITY. Christ is represented to us here as Moses on the hill, pleading, and as Joshua in the valley, fighting!

Learn, first, that Christ is pleading for us. He is not here. He is risen and He has ascended to the right hand of God, even the Father, and there He is making intercession for His people. It is because He intercedes for us that we win the victory! Cannot your faith’s eyes see Him now, on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in His hand, with all power given to Him in Heaven and in earth, pleading with authority before the great Throne of Jehovah? Here is the secret of our strength! He never fails. He never needs to sit down upon a stone, nor does He need any to hold up His hands because they grow weary. No, blessed be His name, He pleads and prevails from generation to generation—and will continue to do so until He shall descend from Heaven a second time to complete the victory of His people! In His mediation is our confidence.

But, then, do not forget that He is also warring for us. He is here, though I have just said that He is not here. In one sense He is gone and in another sense He remains. On the very eve of His departure, He said, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” And His promise is forever true, “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” So, though He has gone into Glory, He is yet here in a spiritual sense by the Holy Spirit—He is His Lieutenant, who takes the Kingdom and presides over it, and works in it on behalf of King Jesus. He is that “other Comforter” whom the Lord Jesus promised to send to His disciples. And so, though Christ has ascended, that blessed Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, has taken His place and, by the Holy Spirit, Christ is still here! We need not pray for the Holy Spirit to be poured out. He never will be poured out, again, since He was once poured out at Pentecost and is still here! You may very properly ask to be baptized into the Holy Spirit if you desire to know His power to the fullest and you may go down into His influences till you are immersed therein, but how can we ask that the Spirit should again be poured out, when He has not gone back to Heaven? He came down once and here He stays. “He shall abide with you forever.” This is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit and, in Him, Christ is always with us, our greater Joshua, fighting for the people whom He will one day lead into the Promised Land, the heavenly Canaan!

I think that I see our Joshua now, sword in hand, chasing our adversaries. And I turn my eyes upward and see our Moses, rod in hand, pleading for His people. Let us see Him in both capacities and thank God that Christ is All—not one type of the Law, but all the types—not one of the ceremonials, but all the ceremonials, and all the shadows melting into one great substance! Glory be to His name! Believe in Christ in Heaven and trust Him with your prayers! Believe in Christ on earth—range yourself on His side and rest assured that no foe will be able to stand against Him! He is on the battlefield, today, and in the thickest of the fray! When His own people are driven back and His adversaries begin to rejoice, friends and foes, alike, shall yet prove the power of His almighty arm! “Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O most Mighty, with Your glory and Your majesty; and in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and Your right hand shall teach You terrible things.”—

*“Fight for Yourself, O Jesus, fight,  
The travail of Your soul regain.”*

So, you see that though two things may look contradictory, they are often both really true, and are both different sides of one shield. Try, then, to always see both sides of every Truth of God revealed in the Scriptures. Divine Truths often resemble tramcars which travel upon two lines of iron, and yet the two lines make but one tramway. The lines are parallel and do not touch each other. How could the car travel if they did? This is the Truth of God—it is but one Truth—but it has two sides which run parallel to each other. Do not try to join them, nor take them up and make them cross each other, but travel along them till you come to the great terminus above.

God bless you, if you are His people! If not, all is wrong. Oh, may you now trust the living Christ! He is here, ready to hear your cry for mercy! He is there in Glory, ready to plead your cause. He waits to be gracious to sinners here below. He waits in Heaven till His enemies shall be made His footstool. May you bow before the silver scepter of His mercy, that you may not be broken in pieces by the iron rod of His justice—and may the Lord be with you all! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Exodus 17.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—686, 665, 664.

TO THE READERS OF MY SERMONS:  
DEAR FRIENDS—I had much enjoyment in preaching the sermon of this week and I trust the same will be the case with its readers. The lessons are rather wide in their range, but they serve as illustrations of the great fact that there are two sides to most questions, and that progress in the Truth of God is along two fixed lines which cannot be made to meet according to human judgment, but are, nevertheless, each of them laid down by Revelation upon the same basis. We believe in the Sovereignty of God and in the responsibility of man—and while we conceive that everything is fixed by Divine decree, we perceive that man is a free and selfcontained moral agent! We no longer ask, “How can these things be?”—we make inscrutable mysteries into footstools for faith to kneel upon!

The hour of your friend’s death is appointed and the length of his illness—and yet you will pray for the prolonging of his life and the restoration of his health—and your prayer will be answered!

May the Lord deal graciously with all my readers! So prays Your hearty friend,  
*C. H. Spurgeon,*

Mentone, November 28, 1891.  
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THE WAR OF TRUTH  
NO. 112

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 11, 1857, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hands.”  
Exodus 17:9.**

THE children of Israel were led out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. They were conducted into the vast howling wilderness where there were few, if any, permanent abodes of men. For some time they pursued their march in solitude, discovering wells and other traces of a nomadic population but not meeting with any to disturb their loneliness. But it appears that then, as now, there were wandering tribes who, like the Bedouin Arabs, wandered to and fro through that very country which the people of Israel were now treading with their feet. These people, excited by the hope of spoil, fell suddenly upon the rear of the children of Israel, smote the hindmost of them in a most cowardly manner, took their spoil and then swiftly retreated. Gathering strength and courage from this successful foray, they then dared to attack the whole host of Israel which at that time must have amounted to two or three millions souls who had been brought out of Egypt and fed by miracle in the wilderness. This time Israel was not to be surprised, for Moses had said unto Joshua—“Choose us out men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.” Moses proposed leading with God in order that every blow struck with the sword might be made doubly powerful by the mighty assistance of God. We are told that a great victory was achieved. The Amalekites were put to the rout and because of their unprovoked attack upon the children of Israel, they were condemned to extermination, for we find it written thus—“Write this for a memorial in a book and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under Heaven. And Moses built an altar and called the name of it Jehovah Nissi. For he said, Because the Lord has sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

Now, Beloved, this scene of warfare is not recorded in Scripture as an interesting circumstance to amuse the lover of history—it is written for our edification. For we remember the text which says—“Whatever things were written aforetime, were written for our profit.” There is some profit to be derived from this—and we believe a peculiar profit, too, since God was pleased to make this the first writing commanded by Divine authority as a record for generations to come. We think that the journeys of the children of Israel furnish us with many emblems of the journey of God’s Church through the world. And we believe that this fight with Amalek is a metaphor and an emblem of that constant and daily fight which all God’s people must carry on with sins without and sins within. This morning I shall more particularly confine myself to sin without. I shall speak of the great battle which at the present moment is being waged for God and for His Truth against the enemies of the Cross of Christ. I shall endeavor, first, to make a few remarks upon the war itself. Then to review the authorized method of warfare, which is twofold—hard blows and hard prayers. And then I shall finish by stirring up God’s Church to great and earnest diligence in the warfare for God and for His Truth.

I. First, then, we shall make some remarks upon THE GREAT WARFARE which we think is typified by the contest between the children of Israel and Amalek.

First of all, note that this crusade, this sacred, holy war of which I speak, is not with men but with Satan and with error. “We wrestle not with flesh and blood.” Christians are not at war with any man that walks the earth. We are at war with infidelity, but the persons of infidels we love and pray for. We are at warfare with any heresy, but we have no enmity against heretics. We are opposed to and cry war to the knife with everything that opposes God and His Truth—but towards every man we would still endeavor to carry out the holy maxim, “Love your enemies, do good to them who hate you.” The Christian soldier has no gun and no sword, for he fights not with men. It is with “spiritual wickedness in high places” that he fights and with other principalities and powers than with those that sit on thrones and hold scepters in their hands. I have marked, however, that some Christians—and it is a feeling to which all of us are prone—are very apt to make Christ’s war a war of flesh and blood instead of a war with wrong and spiritual wickedness. Have you ever noticed in religious controversies how men will become bitter with each other? Have you noticed that they make personal remarks and abuse each other? What is that but forgetting what Christ’s war is? We are not fighting against men! We are fighting for men rather than against them. We are fighting for God and His Truth against error and against sin—but not against men. Woe, woe, to the Christian who forgets this sacred canon of warfare! Touch not the persons of men but smite their sin with a stout heart and with strong arm. Slay both the little ones and the great! Let nothing be spared that is against God and His Truth—but we have no war with the persons of poor mistaken men! We hate Rome even as we abhor Hell, yet for her votaries we always pray! Idolatry and infidelity we fiercely denounce, but the men who debase themselves by either of them are the objects not of wrath, but pity! We fight not against the men, but against the things which we consider in God’s sight to be wrong! Let us always make that distinction, otherwise the conflict with Christ’s Church will be degraded into a mere battle of brute force and garments rolled in blood. And so the world will again be an Aceldama—a field of blood. It is this mistake which has nailed martyrs to the stake and cast confessors into prison—because their opponents could not distinguish between the imaginary error and the man, while they spoke stoutly against the seeming error. In their ignorant bigotry, they felt that they must also persecute the man, which they need not and ought not to have done. I will never be afraid to speak my mind with all the Saxon words I can get together—I am not afraid of saying hard things against the devil and against what the devil teaches. But with every man in the wide world I am friends—nor is there one living with whom I am at enmity for a moment any more than with the babe that has just been brought into the world! We must hate error. We must abhor falsehood. But we must not hate men, for God’s warfare is against SIN. May God help us to always make that distinction!

But now let us observe that the warfare which the Christian carries on, may be said for his encouragement, to be a most righteous warfare. In every other conflict in which men have engaged, there have been two opinions. Some have said the war was right and some have said it was wrong. But in regard to the sacred war in which all Believers have been engaged, there has been only one opinion among right-minded men. When the ancient priest stirred up the Crusaders to the fight, he made them shout Deus vulte—God wills it. And we may far more truly say the same. A war against falsehood, a war against sin is God’s war! It is a war which commends itself to every Christian, seeing he is quite certain that he has the seal of God’s approval when he goes to wage war against God’s enemies. Beloved, we have no doubt whatever, when we lift up our voices like a trumpet against sin, that our warfare is justified by the eternal laws of God’s Justice. Would to God that every war had so just and true an excuse as the war which God wages with Amalek—with sin in the world!

Let us remember, again, that it is a war of the greatest importance. In other wars it is sometimes said—“Britons! Fight for your hearths and your homes, for your wives and for your children—fight and repel the foe!” But in this war it is not merely for our hearths and for our homes, for our wives and for our children—it is for something more than this! It is not against them that kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. But it is a fight for souls, for eternity—against those who would plunge man into eternal Hell! It is a fight for God, for the deliverance of men’s souls from wrath to come. It is a war which ought, indeed, to be commenced—to be followed up and carried out in spirit by the whole army of God’s elect—seeing that no war can be more important! The instrumental salvation of men is above all things—the highest objective to which we can attain! And the routing of the foes of the Truth of God is a victory beyond all things to be desired! Religion must be the foundation of every blessing which society can hope to enjoy. Little as men think it, religion has much to do with our liberty, our happiness and our comfort. England would not have been what it now is if it had not been for her religion. And in that hour when she shall forsake her God, her glory shall have fallen and “Ichabod” shall be written upon her banners!

In that day when the Gospel shall be silenced, when our ministers shall cease to preach, when the Bible shall be chained. In that day—God forbid it should ever come to pass—in that day England may write herself among the dead, for she will have fallen since God will have forsaken her! In that day she will have cast off her allegiance to Him. Christians, in this fight for right you are fighting for your nation, for your liberties, your happiness and your peace! For unless religion—the religion of Heaven—is maintained, these will most certainly be destroyed!

Let us reflect, in the next place, that we are fighting with insidious and very powerful foes in this great warfare for God and Christ. Let me again make the remark that while speaking of certain characters I am not speaking of the men but of their errors. At this time we have peculiar difficulties in the great contest for Truth—peculiar because very few appreciate them. We have enemies of all classes and all of them far wider awake than we are. The infidel has his eyes wide open—he is spreading his doctrines everywhere. And while we think—good easy men, that surely our greatness is ripening—frost is nipping many of our fair shoots. Unless we awaken, God help us! In almost every place infidelity seems to have a great sway. Not the bold bragging infidelity of Tom Payne, but a more polite and moderate infidelity. Not that which slays religion with a bludgeon, but that which seeks to poison it with a small dose and goes its way and says it has not hurt public morals. Everywhere this is increasing. I fear that the great mass of our population are imbued with an infidel spirit. Then we have more to fear than some of us suppose, from Rome. Not from Rome openly, from that we have little to fear. God has given to the people of England such a bold Protestant spirit that any open innovation from the Pope of Rome would be instantly repelled! But I mean the Romanism that has crept into the Church of England under the name of Puseyism. That has increased everywhere! They are beginning to light candles on the altar, which is only a prelude to those greater lights with which they would consume our Protestantism. Oh, that there were men who would unmask them! We have much to fear from them.

But I would not care one whit for that if it were not for something which is even worse. We have to deal with a spirit—I know not what to call it—unless I call it a spirit of moderatism in the pulpits of Protestant Churches! Men have begun to rub off the rough edges of the Truth of God, to give up the Doctrines of Luther and Zwingli and Calvin and to endeavor to accommodate them to polished tastes. You might go into a Roman Catholic Chapel, nowadays, and hear as good a sermon from a Popish priest as you hear in many cases from a Protestant minister— because he does not touch disputed points, or bring out the angular parts of our Protestant religion! Mark, too—in the great majority of our books, what a dislike there is to sound Doctrine! The writers seem to fancy that the Truth of God is of no more value than error—that as for the Doctrines we preach, it cannot matter what they are. They still hold that—

*“He can’t be wrong whose life is in the right.”* There is creeping into the pulpits of Baptists and every other denomination a lethargy and coldness and with that a sort of nullification of all the Truth of God! While they, for the most part, preach but little notable error, the Truth itself is uttered in so minute a form, that no one detects it and in so ambiguous a style, that no one is struck with it. So far as man can do it, God’s arrows are blunted and the edge of His sword is turned in the day of battle! Men do not hear the Truth as they used to. The velvet mouth is succeeding to the velvet cushion and the organ is the only thing in the building which gives forth a certain sound. From all such things, “good Lord deliver us!” May Heaven put an end to all this moderatism. We want and need out-and-out Truth in these perilous days! We want and need a man to speak as God tells him and care for nobody’ opinions. Oh, if we had some of the old Scotch preachers! Those Scotch preachers made kings tremble. They were no men’s servants. They were very lords, wherever they went, because each of them said, “God has given me a message. My brow is like adamant against men. I will speak what God bids me.” Like Micah, they said, “As the Lord my God lives, whatever my God says unto me, that will I speak.” Heroes of the Truth! Soldiers of Christ, awake! Even now there are enemies. Think not that the fight is over. The great warfare of Truth waxes more hot and fierce than ever. Oh, soldiers of Christ! Take your swords from your scabbards! Stand up for God and for His Truth lest a Free Grace Gospel should be forgotten!

Let me just say, once more, concerning this war, that it is one that is to be of perpetual duration. Let us remember, my Beloved, that this war between right and wrong must be continued and never must cease until Truth has the victory. If you suppose that our forefathers did enough for Truth and for God and that you may be idle, you have made a great mistake! Until that day when the might with the right and the right with the might shall be, we must never sheathe our swords! Until that happy hour when Christ shall reign, when He shall be Master of all lands, when “swords shall be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks” and men shall not learn war any more—until that day the conflict is to be kept up! Let no man think we are in such a position that we have no need for watchfulness—terrible as the war has been before, it is as terrible now, though in another manner. We have not now to resist unto blood striving against sin, but we have need of as stern a power of resistance as ever was possessed by martyrs and confessors in days gone by. Brothers and Sisters, we must awake! The army must be alerted. The soldiers of the Lord must be quickened to a consciousness of their position. Now! Now, we blow the trumpet! Rush to the fight, you slumbering soldiers! Up, up, up! Let your banners wave and let your swords be taken from your scabbards. It is a day of fight—a day of war and contention!

I cannot, however, conclude this section of my discourse without remarking that it is not merely error in religion with which we have to fight, but error in practice. Oh Beloved, this world is still a wicked world. London is still an abominable city! We have a fine gloss everywhere—a fair exterior but, alas, within the hidden parts, sin is still dominant! This is the great city of pretense, the gaudy house of sham, the foul home of pollution! Our streets are lined with fair houses. But what have we behind them? What have we there, in the very vitals of our city? This city is a colossal culprit! It is a behemoth sinner and everywhere there are those who live in the vilest of vices and yet go unchecked and unreproved. We live in a time when it is unfashionable to tell men of their sins and there are few who have the spirit to speak out plainly of men’s sins. When we consider the mass of female profligacy which number its votaries by tens of thousands, are we not driven to conclude that the same sin must be rife enough with men? And ah, that there should be need to utter it! Are not the men who ensnare and seduce the poor unfortunates, allowed to enter society as respectable and moral? What is this but abominable hypocrisy? We are greater sinners in London than many suppose! Everything is painted over. But do you think that you can deceive God in this way? Sin is stalking through the land at a horrid pace. Iniquity still runs down our streets—covered up, it is true—not open sin, but still offensive alike to God and to good men. Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, the world is not yet good! It is filmed over, but all the while the loathsome disease lurks within! Up, again, I say, soldiers of Christ! The war against sin is not finished—it is scarcely begun!

II. But now, secondly, we have to notice, briefly, the APPOINTED MEANS OF WARFARE. When Amalek came out against Israel, God appointed two means of combating them. If He had chosen, He could have sent a wind and driven them away, or have cut off their hosts by the blast of the pestilence. But it did not so please Him, for He would put honor upon human effort and, therefore, He said to Joshua, “Choose out your men and go fight with Amalek.” It is true Joshua might, by God’s strength, have overcome the foe. But says God, “While I honor human effort, I will still make men see that God does all. Moses! Go up to yonder hill. Stand there in prayer. Hold up your rod and while the soldiers of Joshua rush into the fight, you shall plead and you shall be unitedly successful. Your prayer, O Moses, without the sword of Joshua, shall not prosper. And the sword of Joshua, without the rod of Moses, shall not be effectual.” The two ways of fighting sin are these—hard blows and hard prayers!

First, the Church must employ hard blows and hard fighting against sin. It is of no use for you to shut yourselves up in your houses and pray to God to stop sin unless you go and do something yourselves. If you pray till you are dumb, you shall never have a blessing unless you exert yourselves. Let the farmer pray for a harvest—will he ever have it unless he plows the field and then sows his seed? Let the warrior pray for victory and let his soldiers stand peacefully to be shot at—will he gain a triumph? No, there must be an active exercise of the power given by God or else prayer without it will be of no avail! Let us, then, Brothers and Sisters, each in our spheres, deal hard blows at the enemy! This is a fight in which all can do something who are the Lord’s people. Those who halt upon their crutches can use them for weapons of war as well as the mighty men can wield their swords! We have each an allotted work to do if we are the Lord’s Elect. Let us take care that we do it. You are a tract distributor—go on with your work—do it earnestly. You are a Sunday school teacher—go on, do not stop that blessed work—do it as unto God and not as unto man! You are a preacher—preach as God gives you ability, remembering that He requires of no man more than He has given to him—therefore be not discouraged if you have little success—still go on! Are you like Zebulon, one that can handle the pen? Handle it wisely and you shall smite through the loins of kings! And if you can do but little, at least furnish the shot for others that you may help them in their works of faith and their labors of love.

But let us all do something for Christ. I will never believe there is a Christian in the world who cannot do something. There is not a spider hanging on the king’s wall but has its errand. There is not a nettle that grows in the corner of the churchyard but has its purpose. There is not a single insect fluttering in the breeze but accomplishes some Divine decree! And I will never have it that God created any man or woman, especially any Christian, to be a blank and to be a nothing! He made you for an end. Find out what that end is—find out your niche and fill it! If it is ever so little, if it is only to be a hewer of wood and drawer of water, do something in this great battle for God and His Truth! Joshua must go out and take his men. I think I see him. He appears to have been a man of war from his youth. But what a motley host he had to choose from! Why, they were a set of slaves—they had never seen a sword in their lives, except in the hands of the Egyptians! They were poor, miserable creatures. They were cowards when they saw their old enemies at the Red Sea! And now their weapons were those which were washed up from the Red Sea and their regimentals were of all descriptions upon earth! Joshua, however, chooses out the strongest of them and says, “Come with me.” It was, indeed, as one called it, a “ragged regiment” with which he went to fight—and yet the ragged regiment was the victorious one! Joshua won the day against the Amalekites who had been trained to a predatory life. So, you children of God, you may know little of the tactics of warfare— your enemies may overthrow you in arguments and annihilate you in logic—but, if you are God’s children, they that are with you are more than a match for your foes—you shall live to see them yet dead upon the field— only fight on with faith in God and you shall be victorious!

But this is not all. Joshua might have fought. But he would have been routed, had it not been for Moses on the brow of the hill. They were both necessary! Do you not see the battle? It is not on a very large scale, but it is still worthy of your earnest attention. There is Amalek, rushing to the war with discordant cries—look!—Israel is repulsing them and Amalek flees! But what is it that I notice? Now Israel turns back and flees. Now again they rally and Amalek is put to the flight! Lo, they are cut to pieces by the sword of Joshua—mighty Amalek wavers like the corn beneath the mower’s scythe. The many of Amalek are disappearing! But again! Again the battle wavers—Joshua flees—but once again he rallies his troops! And have you not observed the wondrous phenomenon? There, on the brow of the hill stands Moses. You will notice that when his hands were outstretched, Israel routed Amalek. But the moment when, from weariness, he dropped his Hands—then Amalek had a temporary victory! And when again he held up his rod, Israel routed the foe! Each time the hand of prayer fell down, victory wavered between the combatants. Do you see the venerable Intercessor? Moses, being an aged man, becomes weary from standing so many hours. They seat him upon a stone—still, arms are not iron and the hands are drooping. But look! His eyes are flashing fire and his hands are lifted up to Heaven—tears are beginning to flow down his cheeks and his short prayers are going to Heaven like so many darts which shall find their target in the ears of God! Do you see him? He is the hinge of victory—as he falters, Amalek prevails—and as he is strong, the chosen people gain the victory. Look! Aaron is holding Moses’ hand for a moment—and Hur is also supporting them. And the good old man changes his hands, for the battle lasts all day long and in the hot sun it is wearisome work to hold them in one position. But see how courageously he holds them! Stiff, as though they were cut out of stone. Weary and worn, still his hands are outstretched, as if he were a statue and his friends assist his zeal. And see now, the ranks of Amalek are broken like thin clouds before a Biscay gale. They flee! They flee! Still Moses’ hands are motionless. Still they fight. Still the Amalekites flee. Still Joshua prevails until, at last, all the foes lie dead on the plain and Joshua and his men return with shouts of joy!

Now this teaches that there must be prayer as well as effort. Minister! Preach on. But you shall have no success unless you pray! If you do not know how to wrestle with God on your knees you will find it hard work to wrestle with men on your feet in the pulpit. You may make efforts to do so, but you shall not be successful unless you back up your efforts with prayer! You are not so likely to fail in your efforts as in your prayers. We never read that Joshua’s hand was weary with wielding the sword, but Moses’ hand was weary with holding the rod. The more spiritual the duty, the more apt we are to tire of it. We could stand and preach all day, but we could not pray all day. We could go forth to see the sick all day, but we could not be in our closets all day one-half so easily! To spend a night with God in prayer would be far more difficult than to spend a night with man in preaching. Oh, take care, take care, Church of Christ, that you do not cease your prayers! Above all, I speak to my own muchloved Church, my own people. You have loved me and I have loved you— and God has given us great success and blessed us. But mark it well—I trace all of it to your prayers. You have assembled together in multitudes, perfectly unparalleled, to pray for me on each Monday evening and I know I am mentioned at your family altars as one who is very dear to your hearts. But I am afraid lest you should cease your prayers. Let the world say, “Down with him.” I will stand against them all if you will pray for me! But if you cease your prayers, it is all up with me and all over with you—your prayers make us mighty. The praying legion is the thundering legion! If I might compare myself to a military commander, I would say that when I see my men rise to pray in such large numbers, I feel like Napoleon when he sent out his old guards. The battle had wavered. “There,” he said, “they go. Now the victory is sure.” Or, like our own guards, the black caps, who, wherever they went carried victory with them. The praying legion is a thundering legion everywhere! Men can stand against anything but prayer! We would pray the very gates of Hell off their hinges if we could pray as some men have done. Oh, that we had might in prayer! Do not, I beseech you, I ENTREAT YOU, do not cease to pray! Cease what you please, but do not give up that! Down on your knees—wrestle with God and verily the Lord our God will bless us! “And all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.”

III. And now I am to close up with just a few remarks, in the third place, TO STIR YOU UP TO THE WARFARE. Remember, O children of God, that there are many things that should make you valiant for God and for His Truth. The first thing I will bring to your remembrance is the fact that this warfare in which you are engaged is an hereditary warfare. It is not one which you began, but it is one which has been handed to you from the moment when the blood of Abel cried aloud for vengeance! Each martyr who has died has passed the blood-red flag to the next and he in turn has passed it on to another. Every confessor who has been nailed to the stake to burn has lit his candle and handed it to another and said, “Take care of that!” And now here is the old “sword of the Lord and of Gideon.” Remember what hands have handled the hilt. Remember what arms have wielded it! Remember how often it has “pierced to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow.” Will you disgrace it? Will you disgrace it? There is the great banner—it has waved in many a breeze. Long before the flag of this, our land, was made, this flag of Christ was borne aloft. Will you stain it? Will you stain it? Will you not hand it to your children, still unsullied and say, “Go on, go on. We leave you the heritage of war. Go on, go on and conquer! What your fathers did, do again. Keep up the war, till time shall end”? I love my Bible because it is a Bible baptized with blood. I love it all the better because it has the blood of Tyndal on it. I love it because it has on it the blood of John Bradford and Rowland Taylor and Hooper. I love it because it is stained with blood! I sometimes think I like the baptismal pool because that has been stained with blood and is now upon the continent, forbidden by law. I love it because I see in it the blood of men and of women who had been martyred because they loved the Truth of God. Will you not, then, stand by the banner of Truth, after such an illustrious pedigree of warriors have held it in their hands?

I would that I could have addressed you as I desired, but my voice fails me. I cannot, therefore, urge you, except by one consideration and that is the prospect of ultimate victory. It is certain that before long we shall triumph. Therefore let us not give up the fight! I have been much gratified of late to hear that there is a revival in the ranks of Christ’s Church. Here and there I hear of great Evangelists who are starting up. Some have said to me, when they have mentioned their names, “What say you to them?” My answer is, “Would God that all the Lord’s servants were Prophets!” Oh, that God might send thousands and thousands of men who would gather multitudes together to hear His Word! I would that the day were come when every Church and every Chapel in England were as full of souls as this and as large as this! I think the Churches are reviving. But if they are not, still victory is certain—God will still get the victory! Jehovah will triumph. Satan may dream he will, but he will not! Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, on to victory! Let the crown that is before you nerve you to the fight! To victory! To victory! And on, on, on! For God is with you! Remember the great Intercessor—Christ is on the hill and while you are in the valley He pleads and must prevail! Therefore go on and conquer for Christ’s sake!

I can no longer address you, but must finish up by repeating the words with which I always like to conclude my sermons—“He that believes on the Lord Jesus and is baptized shall be saved and he that believes not shall be damned!” Oh that you would believe in Christ! Oh that God would give you faith to put your trust in Him! This is the only way of salvation. “Believe on the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved.”

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THE MEDIATOR—THE INTERPRETER  
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**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 28, 1889, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And all the people witnessed the thunder and the lightning and the noise of the trumpet and the mountain smoking. And when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off. And they said unto  
Moses, Speak you with us and we will hear. But let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you and that His fear may be before your faces, that you sin not.” Exodus 20:18-20.**

THE GIVING of the Law was glorious with pomp of power. The blaze of splendor was intended to impress the people with it sense of the authority of the Law, by letting them see the greatness of the Lawgiver. It was meet that with great solemnity the Law of the Most High should be proclaimed, that Israel might have a holy reverence for its commands. This terrible grandeur may also have been intended to suggest to the people the condemning force of the Law.

Not with sweet sound of harps, nor with the songs of angels was the Law given, but with an awful voice from amid a terrible burning. Not in itself is the Law condemnatory. For if there could have been life by any Law, it would have been by this Law—but by reason of man’s sinfulness, the Law works wrath. And to indicate this, it was made public with accompaniments of fear and death—the battalions of Omnipotence marshaled upon the scene. The dread artillery of God, with awful salvos, adding emphasis to every syllable.

The tremendous scene at Sinai was also in some respects a prophecy, if not a rehearsal, of the Day of Judgment. If the giving of the Law, while it was yet unbroken, was attended with such a display of awe-inspiring power, what will that day be when the Lord shall, with flaming fire, take vengeance on those who have willfully broken His Law?

To us, that day at Horeb is a type of the action of the Law in our nature—thus does the Law deal with our consciences and hearts. If you have ever felt the Law spoken home to you by the Spirit of God, you have heard great thundering within. You have been forced to cry with Habakkuk, “When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones.” And God intended it to be so, that you might look to the flames which Moses saw and abandon forever all hope of acceptance by the works of the Law.

The glorious majesty which surrounded the institution of the Law is not, however, our subject at this time. I shall handle the text in another manner. The Lord God, in this instance, came as near to man as was possible—yes, He came nearer than man could bear. Until a Mediator was found, the approach of God brought to man nothing but terror. Although

under no great apprehension of guilt at the time—for they had only then heard the Law for the first time—yet the people removed and stood afar off and cried out, “If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die.”

God was near them in special condescension. For Moses said, “Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live?” Yet this memorable manifestation caused them alarm. Does it ever happen now that the Lord comes to His people in a way which dismays them? I think so. It is not really so, that God will fight against His people, but, to our apprehension, so it seems at certain times. Of these tempestuous manifestations of the Lord to our hearts I am going to speak at this time. And may the heavenly Comforter use it to the spiritual profit of His tried family!

Our first head is this—the Lord has ways of communing with His people which fill them with fear. But, secondly, this endears the Mediator to them. And thirdly, this Mediator teaches them to interpret wisely the Lord’s darker dealings with them. When we have thought upon these things, we shall close by saying to you that this sacred art of interpretation should be practiced by us now.

I. First, let me remind you that THE LORD HAS WAYS OF COMMUNING WITH HIS PEOPLE WHICH FILL THEM WITH FEAR. You must not think that the Lord always appears to His people in robes of light— sometimes He enrobes Himself in clouds and darkness. His paths drop fatness and yet He often has His way in the whirlwind.

True, He manifests Himself to us as He does not unto the world. But in the brightest of those manifestations He may make us fear as we enter into the cloud. It is not every Revelation of God which inspires the saints with joy. For in many cases it is far otherwise, even as with Daniel, who said, “I saw this great vision and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption and I retained no strength.” This experience may not have occurred to some of you. It is, however, known to many of the people of God who have had long dealings with Him. If any of you do not understand this matter, lay the sermon by till you do.

Sometimes the near approach of the Lord fills His people with apprehension and alarm. And this is sure to be the case when His coming includes a close application of the Law to their hearts. We used to talk of “Law-work” in days which are not past and are by moderns looked upon with contempt. And, my Brethren, our talk was not without good reason, for there is such a work and it ministers greatly to our good. Certain servants of God, who had experienced this Law-work to a very deep degree, fell into the error of regarding a marked measure of it as absolutely necessary to every child of God.

We will avoid that evil, for it was a grievous cause of uncharitableness. But we will not conceal the fact that many souls, in coming to God and in God’s coming to them, have been made to feel a hewing and burning work from the Law of God. The Law has rent them in pieces, because they themselves have rent in pieces. The Law has worked in them a sense of bondage, burden and despair. Even after we have fled for refuge to the hope set before us in the Gospel—after we have a full assurance that our iniquities are put away—the Lord sometimes works in us a further work of the Law in which He makes us to see its exactness, its spirituality, strictness and infinite compass.

It is no little thing to see how the Law judges the thoughts, desires and imaginations of the heart. As the plummet of the holy Law is held up, we see how out of the perpendicular we are and we are therefore distressed. Brethren, when I have carefully considered and inwardly perceived the holiness of God’s Law, I have felt as though the sharp edge of a saber had been drawn across my heart and I have shivered and trembled. Though the Law did not actually cut or wound, yet its very presence, in all the keenness of its two edges, has made me shudder.

So pure, so just, so uncompromising is the Law of God, that when it is really understood, it makes us quail and brings us to our knees. The Law searches to the dividing asunder of joints and marrow and it is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Its excessive light strikes us, like Saul of Tarsus, to the earth and makes us cry for mercy, When you begin to judge yourself and estimate your actions by its infallible rule, you cease from boasting and are filled with self-abhorrence.

I believe it to be one of the best means to growth in humility, to be well instructed in the Law, in the force and power of it. No man knows the brightness of the Gospel till he understands the blackness of those clouds which surround the Law of the Lord. Much of the shallowness of current religion is the result of a failure to apprehend the demands of Divine Justice and a want of clear perception of the heinousness of disobedience. Let but God set up the throne of His Law in your heart and make you feel the power of that Law in any one item of your daily conduct, much more in the whole circle of your life, and you will feel as the Israelites did when they could not abide the Presence of the Most High.

The Lord also may most truly and profitably come to a man and in His coming may unveil to him the depravity of his nature. If any man could see his own heart as it is by nature, he would be driven mad—the sight of our disease is not to be borne unless we also see the remedy. When the Lord permits the fountains of the great deep of our depravity to be broken up, then are the tops of the hills of our self-sufficiency drowned in fear. When we see what we are capable of being, apart from Divine restraining Grace, our spirit sinks. When Believers are allowed to see how much there is still about them that is akin to Hell—when sin becomes exceeding sinful and we feel that the taint of it has defiled our whole nature—then it is that we are horrified and appalled.

What an abyss of evil is within our bosoms! Probably some of you know very little about it. I pray that you may never discover it by its painful results. But I desire that you may believe it, so as to take a firmer grip upon the Doctrines of Grace and exercise greater watchfulness over your hearts.

Sin which dwells in us is no enemy that we can safely despise. Even in one single member of our fallen nature, namely, the tongue, there dwells a world of iniquity—“It defiles the whole body and sets on fire the course of nature. And it is set on fire by Hell.”

What poor creatures we are! The best of men are men at the best. And, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit and the power of Divine Grace, Hell itself does not contain greater monsters of iniquity than you and I might become. Within the magazine of our hearts there is powder enough to destroy us in an instant, if Omnipotent Grace did not prevent. When this is distinctly perceived, we are troubled before the Presence of the thrice holy God. Standing before the Lord, we cry with the Prophet, “Woe is me! For I am undone. Because I am a man of unclean lips.” This is a true manifestation of God. But it is by no means a cause of comfort to us.

The Lord may also come to us and lead us, by His light, to a discovery of actual sin in our life. We may sit here and think ourselves very good. But if so, we are in the dark. If a beam of Divine light is now entering our mind, our apprehension of our own character will be changed. The sins of a single day, if fully known in all their bearings, would drive us to despair, apart from the infinite Grace of God. Apart from the Divine plan of justifying the ungodly in Christ Jesus, any one hour would shut us up in Hell.

Beloved, think a minute of your omissions during the past week, how much you might have done and ought to have done, which you have not done. It is on the side of omission that some of us are most vulnerable. Honestly looking down upon our lives, we may be able to say that we do not know of any overt offense against God and for this we bless the Divine Grace. But when we come to think of what we have left undone, we feel like a traveler who, when crossing a glacier, suddenly sees an unfathomable crevasse opening just before him and widening fast as he looks down into its blue depths of frozen death.

Oh the sadness of that confession, “We have left undone the things which we ought to have done!” There is as much of lamentation in it as in the cry which precedes it—“We have done those things which we ought not to have done.” When we think of all our omissions, how can we stand before the Lord?

Think again of your failure in what you have done. Brethren, you have prayed this week. I only refer to this week. For seven days are more than enough for my purpose. You have prayed—you have kept your regular times for devotion. But how have your prayed? With fervency? With careful consideration? With concentrated mind? Brethren, have you prayed with faith? With importunity? Surely, each of these questions must cut into you like a whip of wire. If you are as I am, you cannot answer to this examination without wincing. Why, even in the one matter of prayer, the sins of our holy things may shrivel us up before the burning eye of the Lord, who searches the heart.

Your Bible also—you have read your Bible—of course you have. But with what attention? With what intention? With what devout belief? With what resolve to feel its force and obey its commands? Have we not sinned against this Book enough to cast us into the lowest Hell in the space of four-and-twenty hours?

When the Lord begins to take a man to pieces by coming near to him, another matter will often trouble him and that is his falseness, even where, in a measure, he is sincere. You prayed in public and expressed most proper emotions and desires. But were they really your own emotions and desires, or did you steal the expressions of another man? You preached about the things of God—did your testimony come from your heart? Do you act in accordance therewith?

You, my Christian friend, expressed yourself strongly but, in your heart of hearts, can you justify the expression? Do we not often go further with our lips than we go with our hearts? Is not this, to some degree, hypocrisy? Must it not be very displeasing to God that we should use words towards Him which we have not weighed and which are not fully true, as we use them? O Brethren, if the Lord sets out secret sins in the light of His countenance, we too, like Israel, shall start and shrink from the presence of the Lord.

If we add to these apprehensions of our own unworthiness a sense of the Divine glory, then we cower down and hide ourselves in the dust. When a peal of thunder rends the heavens and is followed up by a crash, as if the house would fall about your ears—while flames of fire blind you with their excessive brilliance—you feel that the Lord is terrible out of His Holy Places. God’s nearness has inspired you with an awe which has been shaded with dread. The one attribute of power suffices to make the strongest Believer feel that Jehovah is to be feared above all gods.

But, my Brethren, if properly apprehended, God’s omniscience inspires an equal awe, while His goodness, His love and His holiness are even more overwhelming when fully realized. One might possibly stand with unblanched cheek in the presence of Divine power. But when the Lord reveals His holiness, a man might far sooner gaze into the sun than look into the face of God. Even His love is as the fire of a furnace to our ugliness. At the sight of our God we say with Job, “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear: but now my eyes see You. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.” The nearness of God to sinful man is a killing thing and those who have known it will confess that it is so.

What, my Brethren, if, in addition to this, there should come to you a succession of alarming Providences? These Israelites not only knew that God was near but they heard the thunder, they saw the lightning, they looked into the thick darkness, they marked the mountain altogether on a smoke and by all this they were horror-stricken. Has it come to pass that the Lord has laid many blows upon His servant? Has He taken away the desire of your eyes with a stroke?

What if there is one, two, three little graves in yonder cemetery? What if love and friends have forsaken you? What if your business fails you and if your health fails you also? What if your spirits sink? Oh, then, indeed, I marvel not that you are scared with forebodings of still worse calamities and are ready to give up the ghost! You are now afraid because of the

nearness of the great God, who is trying you.

If to this is added an apprehension of speedy death, as in the case of the Israelites, who cried, “This great fire will consume us,” then, indeed, it is difficult to remain calm and hopeful. It will be no trifle to stand before the face of the Eternal. Since Heaven and earth shall flee from Your face and rocks shall melt and stars shall fall and the moon shall be turned black as sackcloth of hair, who shall stand before You, You great and glorious One?

Thus have I spoken to you upon the fact that our God does sometimes commune with His people in a way that fills them with overwhelming dread. Let us advance to our net theme.

II. Secondly, ALL THIS ENDEARS TO US THE MEDIATOR. The Israelites turned at once to Moses. They had already murmured against him— they afterwards said, “As for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him.” Once they took up stones to stone him. But now they are of another mind. Terrified by the Presence of God, they cry to Moses, “Go you near and hear all that the Lord our God shall say: and speak you unto us all that the Lord Our God shall speak unto you.”

The Mediator is everything to them now. They had found out by experience the necessity for an interposer. And they had not made a mistake either, for God Himself said they had well spoken what they had said. There is in God’s esteem an urgent need for a Mediator. When we sang just now—

*“Till God in human flesh I see,  
My thoughts no comfort find;  
The holy, just and sacred Three  
Are terrors to my mind,”*

we did not give utterance to morbid or ungrounded fear. It is so in truth. And the next verse is accurate also—  
*“But if Immanuel’s face appears,  
My hope, my joy begins;  
His name forbids my slavish fear,  
His Grace removes my sins.”*

It is a matter of fact that we need a Mediator. And these people were driven to see it. Brethren, be sensible of your sin and you will no more attempt to approach an absolute Deity than you would walk into a volcano’s mouth. You will feel that you need a sacrifice, a propitiation, a Savior, a Mediator. Perceive the infinite difference between your nothingness and the Divine infinity and you will feel that there is no drawing near to the Eternal but by Jesus Christ.

How can we, of ourselves, draw near unto God? It is wisdom to say unto the Well-Beloved, “We pray You, stand between the Lord and us.” When your trembling is upon you, when your heart faints with awe—then you perceive how much you need an Advocate. Bless God that He has appointed one to be High Priest for you who can safely go into the thick darkness and stand in the Presence of the Thrice Holy Majesty and represent you without fail.

Moses was well fitted to be the type of the true Mediator of the Gospel Covenant. He was himself in great favor with God, so that the Lord hearkened to his voice. Behold his dauntless courage in the Presence of God and, at the same time, his intense tenderness towards the people. Mark his faithfulness Godward as a servant over all his Master’s house, and then note his self-sacrifice for Israel, so that he once said, “Blot me, I pray You, out of Your book which You have written.” He offered himself to be a sacrifice for them.

But, O Beloved, consider Jesus Christ, our Mediator. Where is the like of Him? He is man, like ourselves. In all respects a sufferer, poor, needy, knowing even the pangs of death. And therefore He can lay His hand upon us with a warm, brotherly love. But then He is also, “God over all, blessed forever,” equal with the Most High, the Well-Beloved of the Father. And thus He can give His hand to the eternal God and so link our humanity with God. I feel most safe in trusting all my concerns with that dear Advocate, that Interpreter, one of a thousand. O Jesus, who can rival You?—

*“God and yet man, You are,  
True God, true man, are You;  
Of man and of man’s earth a part,  
One with us You are now.”*

Into the thick darkness our Mediator went. Forth from it He came. He interprets to us the language of the Eternal and He takes our petitions up to Heaven and translates them into the tongue of the Holy One, so that God hears us and accepts us in the Well-Beloved.

I know that some of you imagine that you would believe the Gospel if God were to speak to you out of the skies. Do not wish for it. The terror of His voice would overwhelm you, but it would not convert you. The Israelites were happy with a Mediator and so will you be. If you hear not Jesus, neither would you hear, though God should thunder. A Mediator is provided. Could you, with all your wit, suggest a better Mediator than Christ? I entreat you, accept the Gospel in Christ and come to God through Him. As there is no other way, so assuredly there could be no better way.

If you had all wisdom and all power in your hands with which to make a way of acceptance with God, could you devise one more pleasant, more simple, more perfect, more adequate, more exactly what  
you need? Come, then, dear Heart, come at once to God in Christ. And remember, Jesus says, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” “No man comes unto the Father but by Me.”

III. Now I come to my third point, upon which I would lay stress—THE MEDIATOR TEACHES US TO INTERPRET WISELY THE LORD’S DEALINGS.

Moses became an interpreter of the Lord’s terrible appearance to the trembling people and he put a cheering construction upon it. You, to whom God has been speaking in a way of terror—and I know there are such here, for I have had to comfort them—you have a Mediator to explain to you the ways of the Lord. Be ready to learn the lesson which He

teaches you. It is this—“Fear not, for God is come to prove you and that His fear may be before your faces, that you sin not.”

These rough dealings of God with your conscience, with your body, with your family and with your estate are not for your destruction but for your instruction—not for your killing but for your healing. As He came in tempest and thunder to teach the children of Israel, so has He come to you. If God is teaching you, He cannot mean to destroy you—the Law does not provide a schoolmaster for a convict who is to be hanged tomorrow. The discipline in God’s House, however severe it may be, is a sure proof of love. We educate sons and not enemies. The Lord is teaching you what you are and what He is.

If He had meant to destroy you, He would not have showed you such things as these. If a criminal must die, we do not put him through a rehearsal of the pains of death. No, no, there would be no use in such a course—it would be sheer cruelty, and depend upon it, the Lord will not show you His own greatness merely to make you miserable, nor reveal to you your own ruin merely to drive you to despair. He does not afflict willingly. Infinite love dictates the apparent severity with which He afflicts your conscience. You are being judged here, that you may not be judged hereafter with the ungodly. You are now made to abhor yourself, that the Lord may not abhor you in the day of the judgment of the wicked.

The Mediator here explains to trembling Israel that God had come to test them. We all need testing, do we not? Would you like to cross a railway bridge if it were reported to you that it had never been tested by a train? When the first Exhibition was built, I remember how they marched troops along the galleries to test them. Do you not desire to have your hope for eternity tested? The Lord draws near to us in ways which inspire our fears because He would test us.

What is the result of the test? Do you not feel your own weakness? Does not this drive you to the strong for strength? You feel your own sinfulness. And you fly to the Lord Jesus for righteousness. Testing has a practically good effect in slaying self-confidence and driving you to put your confidence where God would have it rest.

When God came to these people in clouds and storm, it was to impress them, to put depth into their thought and feeling. We are filled with fear at times on purpose that our religion may not be a flimsy, superficial thing. Our tendency is to slur spiritual work. We easily get to be trifling and careless. Levity in religion is an easily besetting sin with many. But when we are made to see the plague of our heart and the awful majesty of God, that fear of the Lord which endures forever soon drives out the triflers from the temple.

Fear plows deep and then faith sows and love reaps. But godly fear must lead the way. Godly fear makes prayer to be fervent prayer. It makes the hearing of the Word to be quite another thing from listening to the chatter of the world’s vanity. Holy awe of God makes preaching to me to be the burden of the Lord. It may be light work to your men of genius and learning. But to me it is life and death work. Often have I thought that I would rather take a whipping with a cat-o’-nine-tails than preach again. How can I answer for it at the Last Great Day unless I am faithful? “Who is sufficient for these things?”

When I have felt the dread responsibility of souls which may be lost or saved by the word they hear, the fact that God is so near has made my flesh creep and made me wish that I had never ventured on so bold a lifework. How shall I give an honorable account of my commission at last? Beloved, God, by such apprehensions as these, is deepening in us the work of His Grace, making us more alive to our position and better fitting us for it. It is all in love that He allows our awe of Him to darken into dread, our sense of weakness to deepen into faintness of heart.

Above all, it is explained to us that the dealings of the Lord are meant to keep us from sin. What does David say? “Before I was afflicted, I went astray: but now have I kept Your word.” Does not Hezekiah tell us that by these things men live and in all these things is the life of our spirit? We are so worldly that we need our nest to be stirred to keep us on the wing. Six days we are taken up with business, mixing with those who despise heavenly things. And we should come to think lightly of them, too, were it not that God comes to us in His dread majesty and makes us think, consider and fear.

This holy trembling drives off the shams which else would grow over us like mold on decaying matter. Our inward tempests clear the air and keep us from stagnation and the pestilence which breeds in it. God’s love will not suffer us to settle down in mere pretenses and so glide into gross sins—He empties us from vessel to vessel and thus discovers our evil sediment and cleanses us from it.

Many people, when they hear a sermon, say, “How did you enjoy it?” If you always enjoy sermons, the minister is not a good steward. He is not acting wisely who deals out nothing but sweets. God’s people need that the Word should at times be medicine to them and we do not enjoy medicine. The Word is as fire and the iron does not like the fire. Yet it is needful to its melting. It is as a hammer and the rock does not love the hammer. Yet it is needful to its breaking. Experiences which are painful may be therefore all the more profitable. That which makes us hate sin is a thing to be valued.

I pray you, after this manner read the dispensations of God. When He chides He loves. When He chastens He shows fatherly affection. And when He scourges He receives into peculiar familiarity. Do not, therefore, run away from a chastening God. If fear drives you away, let faith draw you near. He means your highest good. Never doubt it. Steadfastly believe that His heart loves even if His face frowns.

IV. I close by asking you to PRACTICE THIS ART OF SACRED INTERPRETATION. When your Lord speaks with you in thunder and writes bitter things against you, by faith read between the lines, and after the example of Moses, the mediator, put a comfortable construction upon rough words.

Faith sees many reasons for refusing to read as fear would suggest— here is one of them. When the Lord spoke to these people with the voice of trumpet and thunder, He did not speak in anger after all, but in love. For His first words set the keynote. Here they are—“I am the Lord your God, which have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” What gracious words! What happy memories they arouse! What loving kindnesses they record!

It is true that your Lord has taken your wife or your child away, or has made you sick, or has tried your soul by the hidings of His face. But it is not an enemy who has done this. It is your God who has done it, even the same God that delivered you from the power of sin and made you free in Christ Jesus. The Lord of Love has chastened you and chastened you in love. Learn Job’s philosophy and say from your heart, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Think of His former loving kindness. Consider what He has done for you through the Lord Jesus and His death on your behalf. He brought you out of the bondage of your natural depravity and He set you free from the Pharaoh of your evil passions. He has washed you from your sins and brought you through the Red Sea of your fears by His own right hand. Can you not believe that He means well for you? What if He does speak roughly—may He not do so without being distrusted? He is the same God—He changes not and therefore you are not consumed—can you not rely on His faithful love?

Will you take good from His hand and will you not also take evil? He who humbles us is our Covenant God, bound to us by His promise and His oath. He gave His Son to redeem us—He cannot now do us a displeasure—let Him do as seems Him good. We give Him carte blanche to do what He wills, for His love is beyond dispute. He died that I might live, and now it is impossible for Him to mean anything other than good towards me.

I sometimes think that if I never had a gleam of love from His face again, I would live on that one text—“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Salvation from sin and death and Hell should make us interpret every trying revelation and every afflicting Providence and every painful experience by the key of His ancient love. And so interpreted, every sorrowful line is sweetened.

Notice next, dear Friends, in your process of interpretation, that God cannot mean to destroy us, since this would be contrary to His Word. He has said, “He that believes in Him has everlasting life.” Can “everlasting life” be destroyed or die? How, then, could it be “everlasting life”? Can God declare it everlasting and yet end it? He has given us everlasting life in His dear Son. And, what is more, He has laid up that life in Christ. For “your life is hid with Christ in God.” Can He destroy the life which He has hid in His own immortal Son? Does not Jesus say, “Because I live you shall live also?”

What are you afraid of, then? God cannot destroy you. He has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” What if He speaks severely to you? It is that He may deliver you from sinning. Will you not bless Him? He will not curse you, for He has blessed you in His Son and, “there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” Bow yourself and take from your Father’s hand whatever He appoints.

Remember, that you are not, after all, in the same condition as Israel at the foot of Horeb. Though I have drawn a sort of parallel this morning, yet there remains a wonderful difference. “You are not come unto the mount that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness and tempest.” You are not come to a terrible voice which mortal ears could not endure. “But you are come unto mount Zion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. And to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel.”

You are come to the land of pardon, peace and promise—you are in the home of life, love and liberty. You have come to the Lord of adoption, acceptance and glory. Wherefore, do not, I pray you, construe the acts and dealings of God with your soul after the mean and slavish manner which unbelief suggests to you. No, believe your God in the teeth of all you hear, or see, or feel. The Lord has come to prove you, to put His fear before your face and to keep you from sin—therefore look for sweet fruit from the bitter tree of your present grief, and flee not from your God.

Again, dear Friend, here is our great comfort—we have a Mediator. When God deals with you by the Law, or by His rod, or by His searching Spirit, you are apt to say, “How can I endure His hand?” Hide behind the Mediator. Let Jesus be your shield, even as He is the Lord’s Anointed. Beseech the Lord God not to look on you as you are in yourself but to see you in Christ Jesus. Say—

*“Him and then the sinner see,  
Look through Jesus’ wounds on me.”*

Take care that you look through Jesus’ wounds on God. And if you do, you will see in Him infinite love and boundless kindness. The Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is unutterable love. “Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.” And when they fear Him most, His pity goes out to them in streams of tenderness. If your God uses the knife on you, it is to cut out a deadly cancer. If your God breaks you and grinds you, it is to get away your bran and make you as the fine flour of the meat-offering. He may seem to slay you but by this He makes you live. Though He slays you, still trust in Him.

Never believe anything which would militate against the truth of His love, or the wisdom or the tenderness of it. Cling to Him when He frowns. The closer you can cling, the less you will feel the blows of His hand when He chastens. A faith which believes when it smarts will soon have done with the rod. If you will have nothing but good to say of God, He will take you out of the fire, for it is evident that you do not need more of it. A full and firm belief in God when He seems to be against us is a grand mark of sanctification. To be able to spell out “love” when it is written in cruciform characters, shows a high state of spiritual education.

And now, Beloved, if you can take the Lord in this way, from now on and forever believing in His love and never staggering through unbelief, you will glorify your God and get good to yourself in every way. If you believe, then you will be strong. For faith is the backbone of the spiritual man. If you believe, you will love, and love is the very heart of the spiritual man. Believing and loving, you will endure with patience, and your patience shall be a crown to you. Believing, loving and enduring, you shall become equipped for every holy service and in that service you shall acquire more and more of likeness to your Lord, till when you have endured to the full, you shall be in all points a Brother of Him who is the Firstborn.

Like He, you shall be able to go into the thick darkness and have that communion with God which only they can know who have felt the consuming fire passing through them again and again and burning up that corruption of the flesh which makes God to be a terror to men. Like our Mediator, may we be made to plead with God for men and with men for God. May we go up into the mount and see God and eat and drink. And then come down with faces shining with the heavenly light. God give us thus to have a Mediator, to interpret our God through a Mediator, and then to grow like our Mediator by the work of His own Spirit.

I have said a great deal that must be very terrible to ungodly men, since it even tries the holiest. O my Hearers, if you are unconverted, I do not suppose that the terrors of the Lord, even though they make you fear, will work any lasting good in you. For I remember that those very people who trembled at Sinai were found, in a very few weeks, madly dancing before a golden calf and saying, “These are your gods, O Israel, that brought you up out of Egypt.”

Fear alone will work no saving or sanctifying effect on the heart. It plows but it does not sow. In the child of God, mixed with faith, fear becomes a holy tonic, a salutary medicine. But, as for you who have cause for fear, there is something else for you. Flee to the Mediator, trust in Christ Jesus, who stands between man and God, look unto Him at once, and looking you shall live. To our adorable Mediator be glory forever and ever. Amen and Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Exodus 20:18-21; Deuteronomy 5.**  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—92 (PART 1), 433, 281

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EARS BORED TO THE DOORPOST  
NO. 3337

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 1913.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 16, 1866.

**“And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free. Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the doorpost; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.”  
Exodus 21:5, 6.**

THE Jewish people had lived in Egypt and had been themselves slaves. They had, doubtless, learned much of art and science in Egypt, but they also learned many sinful manners and customs—and among the rest they learned the habit of slavery. When God found them and led them out into the wilderness to make a nation of them, He did not give them a code of laws such as He would give to us in the light of this dispensation, but He gave them laws as Jesus Christ, Himself, says, “according to the hardness of their heart.” He gave them a law suitable to the state in which they were. Their ceremonial laws, their political and economic laws, were very far from being perfect and were never intended to be regarded as perfect. They were not meant for a nation of men as much as for a nation of children. The nation was then in its infancy and statutes and ordinances were very much in accordance with the infancy of the people. Slavery, for instance, was not forbidden. It was not even forbidden for a Hebrew to hold his brother Hebrew in bondage! But, though it was not forbidden, yet it was so hedged about and limited with many regulations and conditions that it must have become very difficult, if not almost impossible.

In the first place, every Hebrew who held his brother in bondage was compelled to treat him as he treated himself. There was a law that his food and his raiment should be precisely similar to that of his master. Then, again, at the end of six full years, the man must go free, whatever might be the price at which he was purchased for six years. And when he went free, he was not to go out empty, but his master was required to give him something out of his barn, out of the winepress and out of the flock. In fact, it was a sort of apprenticeship of one man to another, with the condition that the servant should be treated as one of the family and was to be set up in business when he left. So much did the Jews feel that this was not a very profitable kind of thing, that it got to be a proverb that, “A Hebrew who buys a Hebrew servant, does not buy a servant, but he buys a master.” So the thing became very seldom practiced at all and this, perhaps, was the best way of dealing with the evil. They would have kicked against a law which forbade slavery altogether, but they submitted to this one which regulated it—and so the thing was kept in such check that it must of necessity fall. That, however, again, was not at all a rule for you or for me. It was like the putting away of a wife with a writing of divorcement, of which the Savior said that “Moses allowed it because of the hardness of their hearts.” It was not right in itself, but it was simply endured because of the low moral state of the people when they came as a herd of slaves from Egypt’s brick kilns, not having been trained and educated to understand the value of liberty as you and I happily have been in these later times for these many years.

But observe that sometimes the Hebrew servant, although free to go where he liked at the end of six years, would not go. He had married one of his master’s female servants. He had children and, besides, was so attached to his master and his family that he preferred to stay with him. Now, as God did not wish the people to love slavery, but would teach them the nobility of liberty, He made this ordinance that a man’s wish to remain in servitude should be attested by a somewhat painful rite—and He made it a law that this rite should be administered to him in public before the judges.

Lest a master should say the servant wished to be with him and then bored his ears by force—and so ensured his perpetual service—it was commanded that this boring of the ears should always be done in public before witnesses and the judges. An awl was taken and the man’s ears were fastened to the doorpost—and then after he must forever remain, though he might change his mind, since he had once deliberately chosen to serve his master.

Leaving, however, this outline of the meaning of this picturesque ceremony, I now want to use the passage in its spiritual meaning.  
First, I shall have to remind you that in Psalm 40 our Savior speaks of Himself as having had His ears bored. Did you notice the expression in the 40th Psalm, “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire: My ears have You opened.” The Hebrew says, “My ears have You dug.” Christ’s ears, then, were pierced so that He might from His own voluntary choice be the Servant of God forevermore. When I have spoken a little upon that, I want to speak of some professed servants of God who have never had their ears bored. And then, in the third place, I want to go into this business of boring some of your ears—and I have no doubt there are many here who have had their ears bored in days gone by and who will be glad to renew the rite afresh tonight by consecrating themselves again unto their Master. First, we have to speak—  
I. OF THE SAVIOR HAVING HAD HIS EARS BORED.  
One would not have dared to apply this to Him if He had not instructed His servant David, by the Holy Spirit, to apply it to Himself. “My ears,” says He, “have You opened.” Oh, wonder of wonders! That the King of kings should thus come to be the Servant of servants—that He who is “God over all, blessed forever” and who thinks it not robbery to be equal with God—should take upon Himself the form of a Servant and be made in the likeness of sinful flesh and, being found in fashion as a Man, should become obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross! Our Savior’s first appearance, here, was in the servant’s place! He was the son of a carpenter and He was laid in a manger. When He comes forward to begin His active life at thirty—that life is one continual service. They would have made Him a king, but He preferred to remain the Servant of all. You see this from the first to the last of His earthly life, for even in view of the Cross, He took a towel and girded Himself, and then a basin and, showing He was still a servant, He washed His disciples’ feet. He was still a Servant when He was led as a sheep to the slaughter. And as the last act of obedience that was possible, He bows His head and says, “Not My will, but Yours be done,” and He yielded up the ghost. Our blessed Lord might have broken free from the servitude whenever He pleased. He claims this for Himself, that He was voluntarily a Servant and especially that His obedience and Sacrifice unto death were His absolutely willing offering. He says of His life, “No man takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself: I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it up again.” He could have gone out free if He would. That host that came to seize Him in the Garden would have been no more able to take Him than the Philistines were able to take Samson when he snapped the green withes. He did but speak to them and they fell backwards—and this proved how powerful He was to have delivered Himself. And when He was before Pilate, He might even then have escaped. Did He not say, “You could have had no power against Me if it had not been given you from above”? And even on the Cross when they said, “If He is the Son of God, let Him come down from the Cross,” He might have leaped in one tremendous stride into the midst of His foes and smitten them with lightning flashes from those fearful eyes! He might have shaken the earth and removed Heaven rather than have died, if so it had been His will. But He had given His ears to be bored and He remained His Father’s Servant even unto death! Willingly, without a struggle, this Victim was laid upon the altar. Like the passive lamb, which starts not even when the knife is thrust into it, the Savior gave Himself as a Sacrifice for the sins of the people—and to the fullest extent was the Servant of His Father!  
This is very delightful for us to think upon, especially when we remember that our Savior still wears the print of the opened ear. Still is He in Heaven and there—  
*“Looks like a Lamb that has been slain  
And wears His priesthood still.”*  
For your sake He does not hold His peace and for Jerusalem’s sake He does not rest, but still continues to accomplish His Father’s good pleasure, still interceding for His saints and waiting until the time shall come when He shall take His great power and reign and the number of His elect shall be accomplished. Still is He the Servant of God and the Friend of man—His opened hands, His side and feet bearing the marks that like the scars in the ears of the Jewish slave made Him to be recognized as a slave forever!  
So is He our Friend and His Father’s Servant eternally. Brothers and Sisters, there is this to be said which ought to endear the Savior to you and to me—that His only motive for so having His ears bored, or dug, was His love. What says the servant in the text? “I love my master: I love my wife: I love my children.” This is what our Servant-Savior said. He loved His God—never man loved God as Christ did! As God, He loved infinitely Him who is One with Him, even His Father. And as perfect Man, He loved God with all His heart, soul and strength. He had voluntarily become a Servant and He loved His Master. And He also loved His spouse. Oh, there was little in her to love, but He thought much of her and does think much of her now! The Church is His bride and He sees her— *“Not as she stood in Adam’s fall,  
When sin and ruin covered all,  
But as she’ll stand another day—  
Fairer than sun’s meridian ray.”*  
He saw His Character reflected in her. He saw her as what she is to be when she is perfect through the Spirit and He loved her, oh, with such a perfect, all-constraining love, and said—  
*“For her I’ll go  
Through all the depths of sin and woe,  
And on the Cross will even dare  
The dreadful weight of wrath to bear.”*  
He found His spouse in the mire. He brought her up out of it. He found her in poverty and He became poor for her sake. He found her in rags and He stripped Himself to clothe her. He found her condemned and He was condemned for her acquittal. He found her on earth—He came from Heaven to bring her up from earth that she might be with Him where He is in Heaven forever. Then I love the last word, “I love my children.” That may be laid hold of by each one of us, for as He is “The Everlasting Father,” every Believer may regard himself or herself as His child! And He loves each one. He could die, but He could not deny His people! He could leave Heaven, but could never abandon us! He could not be content to be glorified unless His people were, too! He dared not be satisfied to sit upon a throne while they might be cast into Hell, but He could come down and bring them near to Himself by stooping as low as they had become! Let us bless Him! Let us, tonight, extol this blessed Servant of God in our hearts, who though King of kings had His ears opened because He loved His master, He loved His spouse, and He loved His children—and has, therefore, become their Servant forever!  
Now I thought, when I was turning over this in my mind, that perhaps some troubled conscience here might get comfort out of it, that perhaps someone might say, “Oh, well, if Jesus Christ has so given Himself up to be the Savior of sinners that He will never give up the work, then perhaps He will save me.” You know what is meant by nailing the flag to the mast. It means that the man means to fight it out. Jesus Christ has, so to speak, nailed the flag of mercy to the masthead and He will fight it out with the devil! Yes, He will save the meanest of His people! He has given Himself up, heart and soul, to be the Savior of sinners! It is His business and He will never give it up. So long as there is an unsaved sinner, Christ will be seeking him! So long as this world has sinners in it, it will be a hunting ground for this glorious Nimrod, this “mighty hunter before the Lord,” who has come to seek out poor wondering souls and bring them to Himself. “He is able to save unto the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for us.” His ears being bored for this work, the work of intercession will be His as long as He lives! We will now pass from that to remark, in the second place—  
II. THAT EVERY GENUINE SERVANT OF GOD IS ONE WHO WOULD NOT ACCEPT HIS LIBERTY, OR LEAVE OFF BEING THE SERVANT OF GOD, IF HE COULD.  
He has had his ears bored and he means to be, and must be, a servant of God as long as he lives. There are, however, a great many professors of whom we are going to speak to you, and a great many other men in the world, too, who have never had their ears bored to be God’s servants at all. There are some, in the first place, who hate the very thought of being God’s servant. “Serve God!” says one, “who is He? Who is Jehovah that I should obey Him?” The mass of men are of Pharaoh’s mind— they are not going to obey God—they think they are their own masters. I do not believe there ever was a man who was his own master, but that every man has a master of some kind or other. How many men whose master is money—and if money orders them to do anything, however outrageous—they would at once do it to obtain the money. No matter how dirty the trick might be, there are some men who would do it if it promised profit to them and they would not be found out. No matter though they were to half starve themselves and lose comfort in their houses, how many there are who would suffer much if they might but gain gold! Mammon is their master. Some take pleasure to be their master—and pleasure is a very hard master, indeed, for the pleasures of sin, though they seem to be cheap, are always dearly bought. A man never gets his penny’s worth for his penny when he goes into the lusts of the flesh. There whatever he gets he has to pay back again—in his own flesh and bones shall he have to pay back every drachma of joy that he wins by unhallowed lust! But, oh, how men will bend their necks to many gods and many lords rather than serve Jehovah! As for the God that made them, many never think of Him and many never think of Him but to mention His name in ribald jest or oath, or to despise His authority. Ah, Sinner, God knows how to deal with such as you are, for if you sin with Pharaoh, you shall perish with Pharaoh! If you say, “I will not serve God,” God will take care to make you a monument of His Justice, if you will not be a trophy of His Grace. “For this purpose,” said He to Pharaoh, “have I raised you up, that I might show My power in you,” and if God does not show His love in you, He will show His power by bringing you down one of these days, till you shall loathe the things you once loved and curse the day in which you dared to think yourselves wiser than God! When a creature is out at elbows with its creator, depend upon it, it is also out at elbows with itself. Things can never go along well when the wheel of our hearts does not cog with the wheel of God’s heart. We must come down to God’s will if we would rise up to happiness and peace!  
But there are many who profess to be the servants of God who have not had their ears bored—and this is proved by the fact that some of them go out from us after a time. Oh, it is a thing the most vexatious beneath the skies—it is the plague of the Church and it is the minister’s nightmare and specter—that there should be so many hollow professors who, nevertheless, are able to maintain a whitewashed profession for so many years! Truly, it is but a poor test of Christianity to walk uprightly in appearance for 10 or even 20 years, for there are inventions nowadays by which counterfeits may be brought to such perfection that you can scarcely tell them from the pure gold!  
Through many a crucible will the false thing go and not betray its falseness until at last there comes a discovering hour—and then woe to the Church of God, but, most of all, woe to the man who duped that Church and misled those who trusted him! I am inclined to say to everyone of you, “Do not be too sure—search yourself.” I am inclined, most of all, to say it to myself. I do so like to read a sermon sometimes—for I do not often hear one—that seems to give me a ring down upon the counter. You know I am often afraid of the jingle, whether it will sound like true gold or not, but it is a good thing to get a ring. A preacher with a soft and mealy mouth is but of little service to a Christian, but the man who sets forth plain and unpalatable Truths of God often comforts him because he is able to say, “Well, I can stand this searching Truth,” and then he goes away satisfied that things are right with God. Try yourselves, dear Friends! Try yourselves constantly and ask the Lord to search you, and come afresh to the blood of Jesus lest you should be mistaken! There was an Apostle who turned out to be a Judas—many a minister has been a deceiver! Many a Church member and many a Church officer, too, has been nothing but a whitewashed sepulcher full of bones and rottenness! Take care, dear Hearer, lest your lot should be the same!  
Then there are others who make a very fine profession, who are even worse, if possible, than these, for they are religious and irreligious, too. I know some of you can carry a hymnbook in your pockets and a songbook, too. You can come here, I daresay, on Sunday evenings and drop in on a weeknight, but there are some other places of very doubtful reputation which know you, too! Oh, yes, I know some who have said, “Well, I must give up my seat there because I cannot give up the other, for the preacher does give it to me so severely.”  
Ah, how the preacher wishes he could give it to you still more severely, for of all classes of men that should excite our sorrow and our pity, it is the men who are able to stand the Gospel and yet go on in their sins! Why, I have known professors in the country who would stand up in the singing pew, or sit near, who did not know what time of night they came home on Saturday from market! And we know there are not a few people who can drink the cup of the Lord and deep draughts of the cup of the devil, too, who will sing well when they are here, but will also sing a roaring good song at a public dinner. Jolly fellows! They are not very particular, but they had better be, or else they will

ind their lot at last particularly severe, for surely none shall so deserve the wrath of God as those who knew better! As I heard a poor soul say the other day, “Ah, Sir, I sinned in the light,” and said it, I hope, with a broken heart, too. I thought, “What a thing to be forced to say!” Some of you, I hope, will be forced to say it. You have sinned knowing that you were sinning—sinned knowing the penalty of sin, sinned knowing something about better things, too! Yet have you gone like a dog to his vomit—vomited on Sunday, but have gone back to it on Monday—and like the sow that was washed on the Sabbath have gone back to wallow in the mire for six days! God have mercy upon some of you! I would that in His mercy He would come and make you keep close to what you profess—and to be no longer halting between two opinions, but have your ears bored to be the servants of God forever—and not the slaves of sin!  
I think I might make out a pretty long list of people of this sort, but I shall only mention one class. There is a great number of young men and a greater number of young women who attend this place and we are delighted to see you, dear Friends. May your numbers never grow less, for we love you and we desire to bless God that so many of you have been converted! But I am always fearful about some of you young people, lest your religion should in any way depend upon any sort of excitement, or your happening to be connected with a really quickened and living Church, or happening to be in such an earnest class, as some of our classes are, or because you attend upon the ministry in this place. I do know some who, when they get away into the country, where perhaps the minister is not much more than half alive, they grow cold and, by-andby, and especially if they happen to get married, then the zeal which once fired them quite subsides. Now remember that the religion that depends upon any man, whoever he may be, or upon any woman, or that rests at all upon the company you have to keep, is not genuine religion at all! For our religion ought to maintain and will maintain its vitality, at least, if not its constant health, be you cast into whatever circumstances you may be. Some of you young women, perhaps, are going out to service where there are ungodly masters. Now you will know whether your Grace is real or not. Some of you young men are apprenticed, or obliged to go into situations where you are constantly in the midst of those who chaff you and jeer you—now we shall know what stuff you are made of! Now we shall see whether you are only stony-ground hearers, or whether there is real depth of earth in you, for if there is no depth of earth, you will soon wither away! But if your conversion was a genuine one, we defy all the wicked men on earth and all the devils in Hell to destroy it, for what God has done, none can undo! But what comes from man and not from the Spirit of God, depend upon it, will be of no use to you in the Day of Judgment.  
Thus there are many servants in God’s House who are only there a little while and who go out at the end of their six years. But now I am going to talk to—  
III. THOSE WHO HAVE HAD THEIR EARS BORED.  
First, I shall bring out the awls. Genuine Christians have had their ears bored, that is to say, they are such Christians that they could not be anything else. And when they have their choice—and they do have it every day, for temptation gives them many an opportunity—they will not go out, but are obliged to remain the servants of God. I am now going to tell you some of the awls with which God has bored their ears. Christian, you have had your ears bored. What was one of the things that did it? I think it was past mercies. Forsake the Lord Jesus Christ? How can I? He loved me! He bought me—  
*“He saw me ruined in the Fall,  
He loved me, notwithstanding all.”*  
Some of us were in great distress and Christ gave us peace—we were ready to destroy ourselves and He gave us joy and liberty—and since that day He has led us into green pastures and beside still waters and we have been a happy people! He has supplied us night and day! We cannot leave Him! We cannot leave Him!  
He has bored our ears, His Infinite Mercy in the past has fastened us to His doorpost. We dare not leave Him—we would not if we could! Do not many of you feel that the verse of the hymn is the real truth— *“A very wretch, Lord, I should prove,  
Had I no love to You”?*  
We owe our gracious Master so much that our ears are bored and we cannot leave Him. Imagine you see Ignatius standing up in the amphitheater when he is told that if he will curse Christ, he shall escape, and he says, “How can I curse Him? He has never done me a displeasure!” So with us! He has never done us ill. We cannot but speak well of His name and cling to Him!  
But I think our ears are bored, also, by a sense of our present helplessness. You say, “Leave Him? Ah, but where to?” We cannot do without Him! You tell us to do without Christ? As well tell the helpless baby that is hanging on its mother’s breast to leave its mother! And we are more helpless than that infant—there is nothing but death lying before us if we leave Him. Brothers and Sisters, what could you and I do the next hour if we had no Savior to depend upon, none of His Grace to keep us from sin, and none of His love to comfort us in affliction? We would be utterly ruined! Leave Him? Ask the young husband to forsake his spouse! Ask the man who has hunted after gold and won it to throw away his treasure! But as for us, we cannot leave our Spouse, nor forsake our Divine Treasure. Now have we found contentment! Now have we got all that our souls can wish for! Never, Jesus, never can we leave You! What could we do without You?—  
*“To whom or where could we go  
If we should turn from You?”*  
That is the second awl with which to bore our ears.  
Then there is a third awl. Leave Him? How can we, when we think about the future? We expect between now and getting to Heaven a great many storms—and what could we do without the Captain and Pilot of souls? We know there are many giants to fight and dragons to kill—and what could we do without our soul’s Greatheart to be our champion and protector? There are many arrows flying and what could we do without our shield? We could not leave our castle and high tower, or, if we did, what might not happen to us? Every ill certainly would, if we forsook Him. The past, the present and the future are all like sharp awls to bore right through our ears and fasten us to Christ!  
Leave Him? Why, the joy He gives us, the satisfaction, the delight, make it impossible for us to leave Him! Can a bride forget her ornaments? Can it be possible for a nation to put away its gods? Can a mother forget her child? All these things might be, but we cannot forget Him who is All-inAll to us! Once get the flavor of Christ in your mouth and you will never be satisfied with anything short of Him! Drink water from the well of Bethlehem and you will be like David—you will say of it again and again—“Oh, that one would give me a drink of the water of the well.” “My heart is fixed,” said David, “my heart is fixed.” Some people’s hearts are flying about like feathers in the air. Whichever way the wind blows, they blow, but “my heart is fixed.” Christ has driven four nails right through it and fastened it to His Cross! The spear has gone through my inmost soul—I have no other love but He—and I must love Him as long as I live.” Thus can the Christian speak! The joy which Jesus gives him is the awl that has pierced his ears!  
And then, dear Friends, is there not another reason, and a very strong one, namely, our hope forever? Leave Christ? Why, then we would have to leave Heaven and its happiness! We have great expectations. We sometimes hear of people who have “great expectations.” Yes, Believers have great expectations. We are not watching for dead men’s shoes, but we are looking for the golden sandals that they wear in the land of the living! We are not expecting the legacies of earthly relatives, but we are expecting the blessed legacy which Christ has left to all His people—to be with Him where He is! Yes, the son of poverty is expecting one of the many mansions! The child of tribulation is expecting to have every tear wiped away from his eyes! We are expecting to hear it said, “Well done, good and faithful servant—enter you into the joy of your Lord.” Give up Christ? No, the thought of Heaven bores our ears yet again. We cannot give Him up! We must still cling to Him because “we have respect unto the recompense of the reward.” Now all of these awls are sharp ones, but I do not suppose they have pierced some of you. If, however, any of you have ever felt them piercing your ears, I am sure you felt very happy while the boring was going on—and may you be pierced by them yet again and again!  
Thus, then, I have shown you the awls, but I cannot pierce your ears. The text forbids me, for it says, “the master was to pierce the servant’s ear.” Yes, there is no man can bind a soul to Christ, but Christ Himself must do it. There is such a struggle in men’s hearts against Christ that only the High Priest who knows how to bind the Sacrifice, can ever cast the cords of love around us and to His altar bind us fast. If, dear Friends, you are afraid of backsliding. If you are afraid you should grow cold and turn aside from your Master, bore your ears again tonight! Ask Him to open the scars afresh and let you feel it until you can have no doubt that it is there! That sweet sermon by Mr. Lewis some of you have never forgotten—on the text—“I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.” May you feel that you have had the Master boring your ears.  
Now, just one word upon what is to be bored, namely, the ears. The boring of the ears was the emblem of obedience, for it is with the ear that the servant hears. The Christian, then, will be mainly God’s servant through his ears. We hear God’s will and, therefore, do it. Some of you have ears that need a little opening, for you know some things to be your duty and you profess to be God’s servant, but you do not attend to them. Your ears, I hope, are bored, but you seem to have taken cold in them and you cannot hear the Master’s voice! Some of you, for instance, know that as Believers you ought to be baptized but yet you shrink from it. Others of you know you ought to be united with a Christian Church. “They gave themselves first to the Lord, and afterwards to the saints by the Word of God.” “He that has ears to hear, let him hear.” The obedient servant only has to hear his Master’s voice and he runs at once to do His bidding. “Oh,” you say, “but it is not essential, Sir.” No, I know it is not. But still, if you have a servant, you do not expect her to say that what you tell her to do is “not essential.” Try your servant Mary tonight. Tell her to do something. She does not do it. You tell her again. She does not do it and she says to you, “But, Sir, remember it is not essential!” You say to her, “I do not keep servants to argue points with me! If they will not do my bidding they must find another master.”  
Mind the Lord does not say this to you, for if a thing is His will, all that you have to do is to do it, asking no questions! I never heard of an angel in Heaven asking God why he was ordered to do such-and-such a thing. They serve Him there without questioning—and so may His will be done by us on earth after the same fashion, “as it is done in Heaven.”  
May you be like the high priests whose thumbs and toes were touched with blood to show that their active powers were given to the service of God. And may you also be like those whose ears were touched with blood to show that you hear the Master’s will and that your thoughtful faculties are given to the attentive observation of what His mind is, so that the hands and the feet may be guided as to what you should do!  
Lastly, I want you to notice that when the ear was bored, it was bored to the doorpost in the presence of the judges. It was not done in secret in some back room! It was done in public with witnesses present. If this man is going to devote himself to his master, he must be brought right out to the doorpost. “Now then, your ear, Sir. The awl must be driven right through it in the presence of spectators.” And I think consecration to Christ is not a thing to be done in secret. You who love the Lord Jesus Christ—acknowledge it! If you are His servants, wear His livery. If you are His servants, come out and profess to be so! Have your ears bored to the very doorpost, publicly, and openly avow yourselves to be on the Lord’s side. He asks it and it is no more than He deserves! “He that confesses Me before men,” He says, “Him also will I confess before My Father who is in Heaven.”  
I think this man might say, “My master’s house is to be my dwelling place forever.” I know some of us seem to have had our ears bored even to the posts of this very House of Prayer! Some of you are never absent, whatever service there may be. If it were to rain, I do not know how much, I do not think it would thin this congregation much, for you love to come up to the House of God. Well, the assembling of yourselves together will always, I hope, be a means of profit to you—it is always a manifest indication of your retaining your service under the good Master! May you thus always keep close to the posts of His door and when He comes, may He find you like servants waiting at the door for their lord!  
Now, are there any here tonight who would like to have their ears bored with the awls which I have mentioned? If so, I would say to them, “If your heart is right with God and you are trusting in Jesus, only, instead of making a resolution, offer a prayer and let this be the prayer— ‘Lord, while I live and till I die, I desire to be Your servant to the utmost of my power. I desire to do Your will or to allow it. I give myself up without reserve or limitation. All that I am, all that I have, I give up to You. Take me from this night forth and let me not offer this prayer as a mere matter of form or hypocrisy, but may I offer it heartily and from my inmost soul. Enable me to say I am Your servant. Oh, God! Sanctify me, spirit, soul and body, for Your name’s sake. Amen.’”

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THE EAR BORED WITH AN AWL  
NO. 1174

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

**“And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges;  
he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the doorpost; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.”  
Exodus 21:5, 6.**

THE slavery which existed among the ancient Jews was a very different thing from that which has disgraced humanity in modern times. And it ought also to be remembered that Moses did not institute slavery in any shape or fashion. The laws concerning it were made on purpose to repress it, to confine it within very narrow bounds and, ultimately, to put an end to it. It was like the law of divorce—Moses authored that law but he knew that the people were so deeply rooted in it that it could not be forbidden. And therefore, as Jesus tells us, Moses, because of the hardness of their hearts, suffered them to put away their wives. And so, I may say, because of the hardness of their hearts he suffered them, still, to retain persons in servitude. But he made the laws very stringent, so as almost to prevent it.

Among other repressive regulations, this was one, that when a slave ran away from his master it was contrary to law for anyone to assist in sending him back again. And with such a law as that, you can clearly see that nobody need remain a slave, since he could run away if he liked. It was nobody’s business—no, it was a sin for anybody—to force him back again. Now, if a man can go when he likes, his slavery is a very different thing from that which still curses many parts of the earth. But the case stood thus and, sometimes persons who were insolvent, who could not pay, were compelled by the law to give their services to their creditors for a certain number of years, always limited, as you see in this case, to six.

A man who had committed theft, instead of putting the country to the expense of a prison, was sometimes fined for his theft sevenfold. And if he had no money he was placed in servitude till he had bought himself free again—an institution not altogether indefensible, I think—and having a good deal of rough justice about it. Sometimes a person who was extremely poor would sell his services for the six years, which are here prescribed, to some wealthy person who was bound to house him, clothe him and feed him. This is very much like a system which still exists in some parts of our own country, where a person’s services are hired for the year, with so much nourishment to be given, and so much of wage.

Well, the law here says that if a man should have sold himself, or by insolvency should have come to be sold to his master, at the end of six years he might go free. He was quite free to leave his master’s house and

go where he pleased. But it seems that the servitude was so exceedingly light and, indeed, was so much for the benefit of the person in it, that frequently men would not go free. They preferred to continue as they were, servants to their masters. Now, as it was not desirable that this should often be the case and as, if it were permitted oppressive masters might sometimes frighten a servant into such an agreement, the law was made that in such a case the matter must be brought before the judges.

And before them the man must say plainly—note that word—he must say it very distinctly and plainly, so that there was no doubt about it, that it really was his wish not to accept his liberty, but to remain as he was. And then, after he had stated his desire and given as his reason that he loved his master—and loved the children and the wife that he had obtained in his service—his ear was to be pierced against the door of the house. This ceremony was intended to put a little difficulty in the way, that he might hesitate and say, “No, I won’t agree to that,” and so might, as was most proper, go free.

But if he agreed to that somewhat painful ceremony, and if he declared before the judges that it was his own act and deed, then he was to remain the servant of his chosen master as long as he lived. We are going to use this as a type—and get some moral out of it, by God’s blessing. And the first use is this. Men are by nature the slaves of sin. Some are the slaves of drunkenness, some of lasciviousness, some of covetousness, some of sloth—but there are generally times in men’s lives when they have an opportunity of breaking loose. There will happen Providential changes which take them away from old companions and so give them a little hope of liberty, or there will come times of sickness which take them away from temptation and give them opportunities for thought.

Above all, seasons will occur when conscience is set to work by the faithful preaching of the Word and when the man pulls himself up and questions his spirit thus—“Which shall it be? I have been a servant of the devil, but here is an opportunity of getting free. Shall I give up this sin? Shall I pray God to give me Divine Grace to break right away and become a new man—or shall I not?” Such a time may happen to some sinner here. I pray you, dear Friend, do not slight it, because these times may not often come. And coming but being willfully refused, they may never return to you. If you are resolved to be the slave of your passions, then your passions will, indeed, enslave you. If you are content to be a slave of the cup, you shall find that the cup will hold you by its fascinations as fast as captive in fetters of brass.

If you are willing to be the slave of unbelief and of the pleasures of the flesh, you will find that they will fasten you as with bands of steel and hold you down forever. There are times when men might get free. Their prison door is, for the moment, on the latch. “You almost persuade me to be a Christian,” cries Agrippa. Felix trembles and resolves to hear more of this matter. Many others in the same condition have been all but free— but they have deliberately preferred to remain as they were—and the result has been that sin has bored their ear and from that day forward they have seldom been troubled by conscience.

They have sinned with impunity. The descending scale to Hell has grown more and more rapid and they have glided down it with everincreasing pace. Have I not seen some such, for whom I hoped better things? The evil spirit went out of them and left them for a while—and oh, if Divine Grace had come and occupied the house, that evil spirit would never have returned! But they beckoned back that evil spirit and he came with seven other devils more wicked than himself—and the last end of these once hopeful persons has become worse than the first! Slave of sin, will you be free? Your six years are up tonight! Will you be free? The Spirit of God will help you to break every chain! The Redeemer will snap your fetters! Are you ready for liberty?

Or does your heart deliberately choose to abide under the bondage of Satan? If so, take heed. That awl of habit may bore your ear and then you will be beyond all hope of reformation—the victim of yourself, the slave of your sins, the idolater of your own belly—the abject menial of your own passions. “He that would be free himself must break the chain,” is the old saying. But I will improve it—he that would be free must cry to Christ to break the chain. But if he would not have it broken and hugs his bonds, then on his own head will be his blood! Christian man, the lesson to you is this—since the servants of Satan love their master so well, how well ought you to love yours? And since they will cling to his service, even when it brings misery into their homes, disease into their bodies, aches into their heads, redness into their eyes and poverty into their purses, oh, can you ever think of leaving your good and blessed Master, whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light? If they follow Satan into Hell, surely you may well say—

*“Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads,*

*I’ll follow where He goes.”*  
They are the willing servants of Satan. Be you, with more than equal ardor, the willing servants of Christ!

Our text reads us a second lesson, namely, this. In the 40th Psalm, in the sixth verse, you will find the expression used by our Lord, or by David in prophecy personifying our Lord, “My ear have You opened,” or, “My ear have You dug.” Jesus Christ is here, in all probability, speaking of Himself as being forever, for our sakes, the willing Servant of God. Let us just dwell on that a moment. Ages ago, long before the things which are seen had begun to exist, Jesus had entered into Covenant with His Father that He would become the Servant of servants for our sakes. All through the long ages He never started back from that compact. Though the Savior knew the price of pardon was His blood, His pity never withdrew, for His ear had been pierced.

He had become, for our sakes, the lifelong servant of God. He loved His spouse, the Church. He loved His dear sons, His children whom He foresaw when He looked through the future ages—and He would not go out free. Our insolvency had made us slaves and Christ became a Servant in our place. When He came to Bethlehem’s manger, then it was that His

ear was pierced, indeed, for Paul quotes as a parallel expression—“A body have You prepared Me.” He was bound to God’s service when He was found in fashion as a Man, for then He “became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.” When he came to the waters of Baptism at Jordan and said, “Thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness,” then did He, as it were, go before the judges and say plainly that He loved the Master, whom He was bound to serve, loved His spouse, the Church, and loved her little ones—and would, for their sakes, be a Servant forever.

When He stood foot to foot with Satan in the wilderness, the arch-fiend offered to Him all the kingdoms of this world—and why did He not accept them? Because He preferred a Cross to a crown, for His ear was bored. Afterwards the people, in the height of His popularity, offered Him a crown, but He hid Himself away from them. And why? Because He came to suffer, not to reign. His ear was bored for redemption’s work and He was straitened until He had accomplished it. In the Garden, when the bloody sweat fell from His face and He said, “If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me,” why did He not put away that cup? If it had pleased Him, He might have applied for 12 legions of angels and they would have come to the rescue. Why did He not summon that celestial bodyguard?

Was it not because He had wholly surrendered Himself to the service of our salvation? Before His judges He might have saved Himself. Why didn’t He? One word when He was before Pilate would have broken the spell of prophecy, but why, like a sheep before her shearers, was He dumb? Why did He give His back to the smiters and His cheeks to those that plucked off His hair? Why did He condescend to die and actually, upon the Cross, pour out His heart’s blood? It was all because He had undertaken for us, and He would go through with it. His ear was bored—He could not and He would not leave His dearly beloved Church—

*“Yes, said His love, for her I’ll go  
Through all the depths of pain and woe.  
And on the Cross will even dare  
The bitter pangs of death to bear.”*

He would not accept deliverance though He might have done so. “He saved others, Himself He could not save.”

Now, hear it, you Believers! If Jesus would not go free from His blessed undertaking, will you ever desire to go free from the service of His love? Since He pushed onwards till He said, “It is finished,” will not His love, by God’s Holy Spirit, inspire you to push forward till you can say, “I have finished my course, I have kept the faith”? Can you go back when Jesus goes before you? Can you think of retreating? Can desertion or apostasy be regarded by you with any other feelings than those of abhorrence when you see your Master nailed to the gallows of Calvary, to bleed to death and then to lie in the cold grave for your sakes? Will you not say, “Let my ear be bored to His service, just as His ear was dug for me”?

Let these observations stand as the preface for our sermon, for my discourse, though I will try to make it brief, deals with ourselves in an earnest fashion. Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I think I speak for all of you who love Jesus, when I say—we are willing to undertake, tonight, perpetual service for Christ. To lead you all to renew your dedication I shall speak upon our choice of perpetual service and our reasons for making that choice. And then I shall call you up and try to pierce your ears with some one of certain sharp awls, which I have here ready for the purpose.

I. First, let us speak upon our CHOICE OF PERPETUAL SERVICE. The first thing is we have the power to go free if we will. This is a very memorable night to me. Pardon my speaking of myself, I cannot help it. It is exactly 24 years this night that I put on the Lord Jesus Christ publicly in Baptism, avowing myself to be His servant. And now, at this present time, I have served Him four times six years and I think He says to me, “You may go free if you will.” In effect He says the same to every one of you, “You may go free if you will. I will not hold you in unwilling servitude.”

There are plenty of places you can go—there is the world, the flesh and the devil. For a master you may have either of these three if you choose. Jesus will not hold you against your will. Do you desire to go free, Brothers and Sisters, free from the yoke of Jesus? I can only speak for myself— and you may say, “amen,” for yourselves if you wish, but nothing more. “Blessed be His name,” I never wish to be free from His dear yoke! Rather would I say—

*“Oh, to Grace how great a debtor,  
Daily I’m constrained to be!  
Let that Grace, Lord, like a fetter,  
Bind my willing heart to Thee.”*

I will speak of Him as I find—I wish to serve Him not another 24 years, but four and twenty million years! Yes, and forever and forever, for His yoke is easy and His burden is light. It is said of the Hebrews, “If they had been mindful of the country from which they came out, they had opportunity to return.” And so have we. But will we return to the land of destruction? Will we go back unto Perdition? Will we renounce our Lord? No, by God’s Grace it cannot be! We are bound for the land of Canaan and to Canaan we will go. Wandering hearts we have, but Divine Grace still holds them fast and our prayer is—

*“Prone to wander, Lord, we feel it,  
Prone to leave the God we love.  
Here’s our heart, Lord, take and seal it,  
Seal it from Your courts above.”*

Well, then, since we might go free if we would, but wish not to do so, we are willing to declare before the judges—that is, before the public here assembled tonight, who shall be our judges—that though quite able to go free, (we say it plainly and without stammering), we have not the remotest wish to do so. If the service of Christ has been a fetter, Lord, put on double fetters! If Your service has been a bond, Lord, tie us up, hand and foot, for, to us, bondage to You is the only perfect liberty. Yes, if it must be so, we will say it here—

*“‘Tis done! The great transaction’s done. I am my Lord’s, and He is mine!  
He drew me, and I followed on,  
Charmed to obey the voice Divine.”*

And we will add the words—  
*“High Heaven that heard the solemn vow, That voice renewed shall daily hear  
Till in life’s last hour we bow,  
And bless in death a bond so dear.”*

We are willing to say it publicly and plainly, and we are willing to take the consequences too. Are we? That is the question! If we mean to be Christ’s servants forever, we must expect to have special troubles such as the world knows nothing of. The boring of our ear is a special pain, but both ears are ready for the awl. The Lord’s service involves peculiar trials, for He has told us, “Every branch that bears fruit He purges it.”

Are we willing to take the purging? What son is there whom his father chastens not? Are we willing to take the chastening? Yes, we would deliberately say, “Whatever it is, we will bear it, so long as the Lord will keep us and help us to remain faithful.” We dare not run away from His service! Would not, could not—and nothing can drive us to abscond from His house or His work, for, exulting in persevering Grace, we venture to say, “Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?” We will bear the boring of the ear! Perhaps it will come in the shape of more reproach from men. Some of us have had a very fair share of that and have been tolerably well abused up till now, but none of these things move us.

Will there be more cruel mocking between here and Heaven? No doubt there will! Then let them come and welcome! My solemn personal declaration at this hour is—

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

Do you not say the same, Beloved? Will you not serve Christ without any conditions, at all hazards? Will you not follow Him through the mire and through the slough, and up the bleak side of the hill, and along the crest of the field where the battle rages most fiercely? Yes, that we will, if but Divine Grace is given—if the Holy Spirit will abide in us. Do you not desire to follow the Lamb where ever He goes? Do you shrink from the supreme sacrifice? Do you not long to abide faithful though all should forsake the Truth? Yes, we desire perpetual servitude to Christ and to bear whatever that involves. I speak the heart of every lover of Christ when I say we do not want to serve Christ a little—we wish to serve Him much—and the more He will give us to do, the better we shall love Him!

Yes, and the more He will give us to bear for His dear sake, if He will give us corresponding Grace, the more will we rejoice! That is a great life which is greatly useful, or greatly suffering, or greatly laborious for Jesus Christ the Savior. Do you not feel in your inmost souls that instead of wishing to be set free, you wish to plunge deeper into this blessed bondage—to bear in your body the marks of the Lord Jesus—and to be His branded slaves forever? Is not this the perfect freedom you desire? So, then, there is the first point—our choice of perpetual service.

II. Now, secondly, OUR REASONS FOR IT. A man ought to have a reason for so weighty a decision as this. We have served our Master, now, for 24 years and do not want to change, but should like to live with Him and die with Him and live forever with Him. We speak boldly on a very weighty business. What reasons can we give for such decided language? Well, first, we can give some reasons connected with Himself. The servant in our text who would not accept his liberty, said, “I love my master.” Can we say that? I cannot feel content with merely saying it. It is true, true, true!

But if I were to begin to talk of how I love Him, or how I ought to love Him, I should break down altogether tonight. Even now I choke with emotion. I can feel love in my heart, but my heart is too full for expression. Oh, what a blessed Master He is! Not love Him? My whole nature heaves with affection for Him! Who can help but love Him? Look at His wounds and you must love Him if you have been redeemed. Look at the great gash which reached His heart, where flowed the water and the blood to be, for your sin, the double cure! Could you fail to love Him? I mean Him who died for you and bought you, not with silver and gold, but with His own pangs and griefs and bloody sweat and death! Leave Him?

O Savior, let us not be such devils as to leave You, for worse than demons should we be if we could apostatize from such a sweet Master as You are. We love our Master, for He has bought us and saved us from the miseries of Hell. And we love Him because there never was such a Master, so good, so tender, so royal, so inconceivably lovely, so altogether glorious! Our Lord is Perfection, itself, and the whole universe cannot produce His equal. We cannot now praise the stars, for we have seen the sun. We could not take up with the mean things of earth, for the Lord of Heaven has looked upon us and one glance of His eyes has enamored us of Him forever and forever. Want to leave the service of Jesus? By no means! No such wish crosses our soul.

Beloved, I am sure you have no desire to change Masters, have you? Are you not abundantly well-pleased with His treatment of you? When a servant comes up from the country to take a situation in town, if he goes back to the village, his old friends come round him and they say, “Well, John, how did you find the service? Did your master treat you well? Was the work very hard? Were you well-fed and well-clothed?” Now, Christian people, I am not going to talk for you, but you shall talk for yourselves to your friends and kinsfolk—answer for yourselves their various questions. If you can find any fault with Jesus, tell them of it. Say whether He has ever treated you badly and, if He has, report it to all the world. Do not allow any to be led into a bad service if you have found it to be such.

As for me, there was never a worse servant, but never servant had a better Master than I have! He has borne with my ill manners and treated me like one of His own family. I have been, at times, a dead weight to His household, but He has never given me a rough word, “My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.” Tonight I must, even though I may be thought egotistical, speak of His lovingness towards me. Twenty-four years ago I was a lad in jackets and I walked into the open river on a cold May day to be baptized into the name of Jesus as timid and timorous a youth as you well might see.

But when I rose from that water the fear of man was gone from my mind! I hope never to return. For the first time that night I prayed at the Prayer Meeting and this tongue has never since ceased to talk of His dear love—

*“Before since by faith I saw the stream  
His flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme,  
And shall be till I die.”*

Now see what my Lord has done for me! If anyone had said to me, “Twenty-four years from this time you will preach to a vast crowd and will have spiritual children whose number cannot be told,” I never could have believed it! It would have seemed impossible that such a thing could be! Yet so it is. His right hand has done wonderful things for me and my heart reverently extols Him. Glory be unto His name forever and forevermore! Leave my Master? Grant, O glorious Lord, that no such base and loathsome thought may even alight upon my breast! No, dear Master, I am Yours forever! Let me kiss Your feet again and be forever bound to You by new cords of love. Well, my Brothers and Sisters, the Lord has treated you kindly, has He not? Come, speak for yourselves! You could rise and tell stories, in their own way, equally as remarkable as mine and you could wind up, each one, by saying, “I love my Master. I cannot help but love Him.”

The servant in our text, who would not go free, plainly declared that he loved his wife, so that there are reasons connected not only with his master, but with those in his master’s house, which detain each servant of Jesus in happy bondage. Beloved, some of us could not leave Jesus, not only because of what He is, but because of some that are very dear to us who are in His service. How could I leave my mother’s God? How could I leave my father’s God, my grandfather’s God, my great-grandfather’s God? My Brothers and Sisters, how could I leave your God, to be separated from you, whom I have loved so long, so well?

Husband, tender and affectionate, could you leave your wife’s God? Wife, could you forsake the God of those dear babes in Heaven? They are resting there on the breast of Jesus and you hope to see them soon—do you not love Jesus for the sake of those who once nestled in your bosom? Yes, and it is not merely earthly relationship that binds us thus, but we love all the people of God because of our relationship in Christ! Truly we can say of His Church, “Here my best friends, my kindred dwell.” Some of the dearest associations we have ever formed commenced at the foot of the Cross. Our best friends are those with whom we go up to the House of God in company. Why, most of the friends that some of us have on earth we won through our being one in Jesus Christ! And we mean to stand fast for the grand old cause and the old Gospel, for the sake not only of Christ but of His people—

*“Now, for my friends and brethren’s sake, Peace be in you, I’ll say  
And for the sake of God our Lord  
I’ll seek your good always.”*

“Because I love my wife and my children,” says the man, “I cannot go out free.” And so say we. Besides, let me add, there are some of us who must keep to Christ because we have children in His family whom we could not leave—dear ones who first learned of Christ from us. Many in this place were first led to the Lord by our teaching and by our prayers. We could not run away from them—their loving prayers hold us fast! In them the Lord has hold upon us by new ties. You do not find a woman leaves her husband, as a rule, when there are seven or eight little children at home. No, and no man can leave Christ who has been spiritually fruitful—the seals of his ministry seal anew the indentures which bind him to his Lord. The successful pastor will be kept faithful. He must stand fast by the Church, and by the Church’s Head, when there are children begotten unto him by the power of the Holy Spirit through faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

There are reasons, also, why we cannot forsake our Lord which arise out of ourselves. And the first is that reason which Peter felt to be so powerful. His Master said, “Will you, also, go away?” Peter answered by another question. He said, “Lord, to whom shall we go?” Ah, Christian, there is no way for you but to go straight on to Heaven, for where would you go? Where else could you go? Some of us are so thoroughly identified with Jesus and His Gospel that the world would have nothing to do with us if we were to ask its friendship. We are committed too much to our Master ever to reckon upon receiving love and friendship from His foes. We have given the world too many slaps in the face to be forgiven by it. We have crossed the Rubicon and there remains nothing for us but victory or death.

Where could a poor wretch hide, who has been a well-known minister of the Gospel, should he apostatize? Where could he dwell? Should he journey to the ends of the earth some would remember his name and say, “When did you last apostatize?” In the remotest regions of the globe some would jeeringly say to him, “Have you fallen, have you gone aside?” Where could we go, then? We must cleave to Christ! It is of necessity we must. And why should we go? Come, Brothers, can you find any reason why we should leave Jesus Christ? Can you imagine one? As my imaginative faculty is not strong enough I will not attempt it.

I can see a million reasons for cleaving to Him, but not a presence of a reason for leaving Him. And when should any who love Him leave Him, if we must leave Him? Leave Him while we are young? It is then that we need Him to be the guide of our youth! Leave Him when we are in middle life? Why, then it is we need Him to help us to bear our cross, lest we sink under our daily load! Leave Him in old age? Ah, no! It is then we require Him to cheer our declining hours! Leave Him in life? How could we live without Him? Leave Him in death? How could we die without Him? No,

we must cling to Him—we must follow Him where ever He goes. These are a few of the reasons why we would be His servants forever.

III. In the last place, I want to bore your ear. Do you mean to be bound for life? Christians, do you really mean it? Come, sit down and count the cost and, if you mean it, come and welcome! There is the standard! The blood-red Cross waves at the top of it—will you now, in cool blood, enlist for life? Every man who wishes to desert may go home. Christ wants no press men. Ho, you volunteers! Come here! We want you and none but you! The Lord desires no slaves to dishonor His camp. Cowards, you may go! Double-minded men, you may get to your tents! But what do you say, you true Believers? Will you cleave to Him and His cause? Do you leap forward and say, “Never can we separate from Jesus! We give ourselves to Him for life, for death, for time, and for eternity. We are His altogether and forever”?

Come, then, and have your ears bored. And, first, let them be bored with the sharp awl of the Savior’s sufferings. No story wrings a Christian’s heart with such anguish as the griefs and woes of Christ. We preached, the other morning, upon the crown of thorns, [#1168, THE CROWN OF THORNS, April 12, 1874] and it was our task to bring before you the different items of our Savior’s griefs. Now, whenever you are hearing about Him, you ought to say within yourself, “Ah, He is piercing my ear. He is fastening me to His Cross. He is marking me for Himself, I cannot forsake my bleeding Lord! His wounds attract me. I fly to Him afresh. When the world would draw me off from Jesus, I find a central force drawing me back to His dear heart. I must be Christ’s. His suffering has won me. The bleeding Lamb enthralls me. I am His, by His Grace, and His forever!”

That is one way of marking the ear. Next, let your ear be fastened by the Truth of God so that you are determined to hear only the Gospel. The Gospel ought to monopolize the Believer’s ear. Some professors can hear any stuff in all the world if it is prettily put and so long as the man is a “clever” man (I think that is the word). When they hear a preacher of whom they can say, “He is very clever, very clever!” they appear perfectly satisfied—whether the man’s doctrine is good or bad. Now isn’t this foolishness? What does it matter about a man’s being clever? Satan is clever! And every great thief is clever! There is nothing in cleverness to gain the approval of a spiritual mind.

I pray God to give every one of you an ear that will not hear false doctrine! I do not think we ought to blame a man who gets up and goes out of a place of worship when he hears the Truth of God denied. I think we ought, rather, to commend him! There is a great deal of that soft, willowpattern style of man about nowadays. Let a man talk loudly and prettily, and many hearers will believe anything he says. Dear Brothers and Sisters, we must have discernment, or we shall be found aiding and abetting error! “My sheep,” says Christ, “hear My voice, and a stranger they will not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers.”

Now, if you mean to be Christ’s forever, you must not allow that ear of yours to hear bad doctrine! You must take care that, knowing the Truth of God, you hold to it and renounce every false way. Do not make your ear a common sewer into which foul doctrine may be poured, in hope that afterwards Jesus Christ may make it clean again. “Take care what you hear” is one of the precepts of infinite wisdom—let it not fail to impress your souls. Furthermore, if you really give yourself to Christ, you must have your ear opened to hear and obey the whispers of the Spirit of God so that you yield to His teaching and to His teaching, only. I am afraid some Christians give their ears to an eminent preacher and follow him whichever way he goes, very much to their own injury.

The right thing is to yield to the Spirit of God. Which way the Scripture goes—that is the way for you to go! And though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach to you any other Gospel than what this sacred Book contains—though I trust we may not be accursed if we do it in ignorance— yet, certainly, you will be accursed if, knowing it to be wrong, you follow us in preference to following the Lord! Let your ear be open to the faintest monitions of the Holy Spirit! There would be an end to all the sects and divisions in the Church if all Christians were willing to do what the Holy Spirit tells them. Alas, there are many people who do not want to know too much of the mind of God. What the Bible says is no great concern of theirs because, perhaps, that may not say quite the same thing as the Prayer Book—and they had rather not be disturbed in their minds.

Perhaps the Bible may not confirm all the doctrines of their sect and, therefore, they leave it unread, for they had rather not be perplexed. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, let names, parties, Prayer Books, catechisms and everything else go to the dogs sooner than one word of Jesus be neglected! Let us give ourselves up to the Spirit of God and to the teaching of His own Word, for as Christ’s servants our ears have been pierced. Your ear has thus been bored with three awls and none of them has pained you. Many young women have had their ears pierced—I do not know whether it hurt them or not. I do not suppose that the operation described in the text pained the man much, though there was a little blood lost, perhaps, when the awl went through the lobe of the ear.

I will tell you what some would do with their ears if they were pierced. I would not do it with mine, but an oriental would be sure to do it. What would he do? Why, put a ring in it and hang it with ornaments. When a Christian man has his ears bored to belong to Christ forever and ever, God will be sure to put a jewel in it for him! And what jewels ought to hang in the Christian’s ear? Why, the jewel of obedience. Practice the doctrine which your ear has heard! Then there would follow the diamond of joy—the ear which belongs wholly to Jesus will be sure to be adorned with the jewel of the Spirit, which is joy! If we give our heart up to Christ He will hang in our ear many costly gems of knowledge—we shall know the deep things of God when we are willing to learn them.

The ear being pierced, we shall sit like children at Jesus’ feet and learn of Him—and rubies and emeralds and pearls such as deep-sea fisheries never knew, shall belong to us! And our ear will be hung with the price

less gem of “quickness of understanding in the fear of the Lord.” “He wakens me morning by morning. He opened my ear to hear as the learned.” There, too, will hang that precious gem of separation from the world. The distinguishing mark of, “Holiness unto the Lord,” will be in the Christian’s ear like a precious jewel of inestimable price. When they were selling the Duke of Brunswick’s gems the other day, they found that ever so many of them were not what they were supposed to be—he had guarded them with great care and scarcely had enjoyed a happy hour in the great anxiety for his valuables—and yet some of them were not worth the keeping!

If you will give yourself to Christ and if your ear is bored, these precious Graces which I have mentioned will be pearls of exceedingly great price—such as angels might envy your wearing. There, young women, put these jewels in your ears and nobody will blame you for wearing such goodly ornaments. There, good man, you, also, may go with rings in your ears if these are the rings and these are the gems—and you will not be thought foppish and singular. May the Lord give them to you! As you come to the Communion Table, come with this feeling—“I am going there to renew my covenant. I have been a Christian these many years. By His Grace I love my Lord better than ever I did and I will, therefore, dedicate myself to Him again.”

And now, you unconverted people, do you think I have spoken the truth? If my Master had behaved badly to me I would have run away from Him long ago! I would not stand here to tell you that He was a good Master if He were not. But, since He is so good, oh that you would say, “I would like to be in His service.” Have you such a desire? Then, dear Heart, remember His own words, “Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out.” If you are willing to be His, He is willing to have you! He is so great a Prince that He can maintain an endless company of servants without embarrassing Himself. There was never a soul that needed Christ but what Christ needed that soul! Depend upon it, if you go to Him, He will enroll you among His household retainers and allot you an honorable portion day by day.

Seeking Sinner, believe in Jesus and live! God grant you Grace for Christ’s sake! Amen.  
**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—John 6:37**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—660, 658, 663.  
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THE INIQUITY OF OUR HOLY THINGS  
NO. 2153

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 6, 1890, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And you shall make a plate of pure gold, and engrave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And you shall put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the miter; upon the forefront of the miter it shall be. And it shall be upon Aaron’s forehead that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.”  
Exodus 28:36-38.**

DEAR Friends, I must begin by reminding you that we are not in this place dealing with unconverted men in their sins but with God’s people Israel in their holy things. I say this because we must never forget that “without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.” And when we are dealing with certain types it must be understood that the blood has done its essential work. Even a high priest, with all his “glory and beauty,” could not put away sin as before God without reference to the shedding of blood. The atonement is supposed to have been offered—these people have been purified and brought near by the appointed offerings.

But now, here comes the point with which this type concerns itself. They are God’s people and therefore they come to Him with their gifts and thank-offerings—these alone can draw near to Him or will even care to do so. But how shall they draw near, for even after being reconciled by the blood they continue to sin? There is iniquity even in their holy things! How shall they come to God without someone to stand between them who shall continually bear for them the iniquity of the “holy things which they shall hallow in all their holy gifts”? There is need of One who is “able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.”

That sacred Person is provided by God in Christ Jesus our Lord and thus the way to present acceptable sacrifice has been made clear for all the blood-washed people of God! Aaron in his glorious attire was the type of the living Christ who presented unto God the sacrifices of His people. Their faults in worship and fellowship he is made to bear and so their gifts and prayers are accepted before a holy God. Remember of what we are now speaking—not about the way of bringing the guilty sinner, at first, near to God, for that is by the blood alone—but the way of rendering the pardoned one continually acceptable to God in his daily service of thanksgiving, prayer, praise, labor and consecrated substance which he gladly brings to the Most High.

Aaron, for this purpose, was set apart beyond all other priests. They wore their plain white raiment of hallowed service, but he wore garments “for glory and for beauty.” As I said in the reading of the chapter, how glorious, how beautiful is the Lord Jesus in the eyes of God! Let me now add how beautiful is He in our eyes! The unveiled sight of Him will be our Heaven! Our present view of Him is our salvation, comfort, strength and sanctification. Oh, the glory of Christ! Often have I cried to God in prayer, “I beseech You, look not on me, my God, but look upon the face of Your Anointed! Did You ever see the like of Him? Is He not altogether lovely to You? Even the poor, half-opened eyes of Your servants have seen enough beauty in the Lord Jesus to ravish their hearts and hold every affection in glad captivity. Look You, O God, upon Him, for in Him you are always well-pleased—

*‘Him and then the sinner see:  
Look through Jesus’ wounds on me.’”*  
Why was the high priest so adorned for glory and beauty? We need

such a high priest, but stop! Paul does not so put it. He says, “Such an High Priest became us” (Heb. 7:26). It was becoming for us to have this glorious High Priest thus splendidly arrayed! When I thought over that saying of the Apostle, it seemed to me that if the High Priest had been covered with ashes—if He had been dressed in rags—He might have seemed such a High Priest as would befit us! But God thinks not so—He has said, “Take away the filthy garments from Him. Let them set a fair miter upon His head.” He has covered us with a robe of righteousness and we are comely with His comeliness which He has put upon us. And we are such in God’s sight that it is becoming that we should not be represented by a High Priest in sordid garments, but by One who is dressed in “gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen.”

What great things God thinks of His elect! What a high price He puts upon His redeemed! His delight is in His saints. He takes more solace in them that fear Him than in all creation besides. “Unto you that believe Christ is precious”—but you that believe are also precious to Him! Does He not say, “Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honorable”? Therefore none but an honorable and glorious Person shall represent the chosen. Let us humbly rejoice in the glory and beauty of Him who takes our place before the Infinite Jehovah—

*“Jesus, in You our eyes behold  
A thousand glories more  
Than the rich gems, and polished gold,  
The sons of Aaron wore.”*

I thank God that though the meanest and vilest of all His creatures because of my sin, yet He who represents me to God is neither mean in Person nor vile in apparel but He is altogether perfect in Himself and altogether beauteous in His array. Take comfort from this thought to begin with. You will need such consolation for I am going to remind you of very uncomfortable Truths. Let us consider first a sad subject—“The iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts.” And then, secondly, we shall dwell upon a glad subject— “HOLINESS TO THE LORD shall be upon Aaron’s forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things. It shall always be upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.”

May God, the Holy Spirit, open up the type before us and also open our hearts to receive its teaching!  
I. First, consider A SAD SUBJECT—“The iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel shall hallow.” They were “holy things.” Despite the iniquity, their offerings were hallowed and holy! This is a precious saving clause. Our prayers, our praises, our service to God—these are holy things—albeit iniquity attaches to them. They are holy as to God’s ordinance, for He has ordained them for His Glory. He has bid us serve Him. He has bid us draw near in prayer. He has also said—“Whoever offers praise glorifies Me.” When we do what God bids us, the act is holy because it is done in obedience to the Divine ordinance.  
Such deeds are holy as to the Divine design, for the sacrifices which the Israelites brought were meant to set forth Christ and His glorious work— therefore they were holy. They were meant to be tokens of our gratitude, love, dedication, homage—therefore they are holy. The great Father teaches us much precious Truth by every institution of the tabernacle, the temple and the Gospel Church—and therefore obedience to each ordinance is holy. These deeds were often holy in the intent of the worshipper. When he brought his turtle doves, or his lamb, or his bullock he intended, if he was not altogether outside of spiritual worship, to exercise real reverence, true allegiance and sincere gratitude to God—and this intent was holy.  
Our God is so gracious as to call His people’s love, His people’s faith, His people’s labor, His people’s patience “holy things” because He sees how truly their hearts desire that they should be! He knows what is holy and what is not holy—and though there is a defilement about our holy things, yet holy things they are if sincerely presented, for the Lord God calls them so! Blessed be His name! But although “holy things,” there was iniquity upon all of them and I shall not confine myself to the case of the Israelites, but shall speak of our own case.  
Did we ever do anything yet that had not some spot of iniquity upon it? Is not our repentance, after all, but poor stuff compared with what it ought to be? Is not unbelief mixed with our faith? Has not our love a measure of lukewarmness in it? Did you ever sing unto the Lord with pure, reverent praise—and without there being some forgetfulness of the God to whom you sang? I have never prayed a prayer, yet, with which I have felt content. From my first prayer till now I have need of Grace to cover my shortcomings at the Mercy Seat. No act of consecration, no act of self-sacrifice, no rapture of fellowship, no height of spirituality has been without its imperfection! If even the Apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration feared as they entered into the cloud and wandered in their speech, not knowing what they said, it is no strange thing that we are like they! If we ourselves see much to regret, what must the eye of God behold? Sadly do I say, in the language of the hymn—  
*“If I sing, or hear, or pray,  
Sin is mixed with all I do.”*  
Furthermore, some of these sins are apparent—indeed, many of them are painfully before our own eyes. Brothers and Sisters, I need not enlarge upon our omissions—how we omit to pray. How we forget to study the Word with intelligent care. How we are remiss in keeping up daily fellowship with God. How slow we are in serving. How impatient in suffering. How backward in alms-giving. How apt to compromise with the world! If the Lord should mark iniquity, who among us could stand? When you think of what you have not done, who among you can talk about perfection? It is not so much sins of commission that trouble some of us—for by God’s Grace we are, for the most part, kept from such transgressions—but sins of omission bear terrible witness against us. Who can number them? Who can escape their accusing voice? You have done well—you ought to have done much better. You have done much—you might have done far more. You have given freely, but have you ever given all that you have like the poor woman with her two mites, which were all her living? O Brothers and Sisters, if we have any idea of what the height of the standard of holiness is, we shall be far more inclined to lament our failures before God than to vaunt our holiness before men!  
But I will dwell upon the iniquity of those holy things which we do attend to. The phrase used in my text troubles me—I felt laid in the dust before God as I thought of it—“The iniquity of the holy things” is a terrible phrase to me. If the Lord sees iniquity in our holy things, what iniquities there must be in our unholy things! If even that which God calls holy still has iniquity about it—how vile must that be which even Divine condescension could not call holy—which even our own conscience could not thus describe! Let us look into this sad matter. Do you never feel great dullness and deadness in holy things? One of my Brothers behind me said to me one Sabbath morning, “We come here from business dull and dead, but you seem always to be full of holy life.”  
I dropped a tear when I got away from him, to think that he should have an opinion of me which I could not pretend to deserve. Alas, Beloved, we know what it is to kneel down and feel as if we could not pray though we had then most need to wrestle at the Throne of God! We know what it is to read our Bible, but we might as well have read a newspaper for all the desire of our heart to the Truth of God. Have you ever felt almost unwilling to worship God? I am sure some of you do when you so readily stay away from public worship because of a little rain, or a slight headache, or some other excuse of the kind. Your willing absence is an outward and visible sign of the lack of inward and spiritual Grace.  
When we do come to the house of God, do we always find our heart in the Lord’s ways? At the hour of prayer are we eager and earnest? Do not our spirits need whipping to devotion? Toward the business of the world we can fly like eagles—but in coming to God we creep like snails— *“Our souls, how heavily they go  
To reach eternal joys!”*  
This is one of the common sins of our holy things—lack of life, lack of energy, lack of joy in the Lord. When you get over this, have you not full often to confess a lack of reverence? We pray, my Brethren, and we address God as “Holy! Holy! Holy!” but do we veil our faces with awe in His sacred Presence? If we had a true sense of His holiness and Glory, would not our sense of imperfection humble us in the dust? Alas, we draw near to God with our lips, but in our spirit we are flippant, impertinent and comparatively careless!  
Are we ever as fully conscious of the divine Majesty as we ought to be? We sing His praises and think rather of the music than of the worship. We use the language of prayer without an adequate sense of what we are saying. Is it not so? The Lord God is in Heaven and we are upon earth—He is perfect and we are full of sin—how lowly should be our behavior! Is it so? We would prize the Savior far more as our Mediator if we had a deeper feeling of reverence for the thrice holy God to whom we approach by Him. Do you not too much fail in this respect in your holy things? When you come to the Lord’s Table tonight, may you come with that holy thoughtfulness by which you may discern the Lord’s body—but you have not always done so—or if you have, you are far in advance of your pastor!  
It is true we pay no superstitious reverence to the material substances of bread and wine, but before Him whom they symbolize we bow in lowliest worship and with subdued spirits we eat of this bread and drink of this cup. I fear in this holy thing we may not always have been so spiritual, so concentrated, so withdrawn from the world or so fired with holy affection as we ought to have been. I have to complain—and I suppose you do, also—that wandering thoughts will intrude in my prayers, my study of the Word, my sacred song, my choice meditation—indeed, even in ministering the Word among you I find my mind roaming.  
I cannot wonder if you have wandering thoughts in hearing my poor words, for I cannot even hold my own mind to them as I would! Yet, as far as it is my Lord’s Word which I proclaim, it is an unholy thing for us to be making room in our minds for other things while the Truth of God is being spoken. Oh, that we could tie our thoughts to the Cross and never allow them to go further than where they can constantly have Him in view! Sabbath worship, how holy and how precious it is when the soul is at home with her doors shut and none within but God! But when our minds are all over the place, climbing the hills of vanity, or diving into the abysses of care, then it is ill with us! If you bring your children on your back into your pew. Or if you keep on jingling the keys of your cupboards. Or if all your ledgers and your day-books seem spread out before you and all your fields and your spoiling hay are on your minds—surely such common care will spoil your holy exercises and prevent you from enjoying the repose of the day and the sanctity of the holy assembly!  
Too often, I am afraid, the best of God’s people play the hypocrite in a measure. Have we not in public prayer spoken beyond our experience? Have we not seemed very earnest, when, in truth we were working ourselves up to fervency rather than speaking because our hearts were on fire? It is an awful thing to be more glib than gracious! Our own Brethren soon discern the imitation of fervency. I can, at the Prayer Meetings, readily tell when the Brother is praying and when he is only performing, or playing at prayer! You know how it is with some prayers—they are like an invoice, “as per usual,” or a list of goods with “ditto, ditto” every here and there. Oh, for a living groan! One sigh from the soul has more power in it than half an hour’s recitation of pretty pious words! Oh, for a sob from the soul or a tear from the heart—a dewdrop of Heaven’s own life! May the Lord help us to get rid of all seeming—this it is which, to a degree, defiles our sacrifices.  
I have to complain also—and I fear many here would have to complain even more than I do—of lack of faith in prayer. We plead with God an exceedingly great and precious promise and we think we believe it when we do not more than half trust to it. If God wanted to surprise His people, all He would have to do would be to answer certain of their prayers—for these are offered as a matter of course with no idea of their being heard! I think I have seen this sort of thing in many good Brethren in another form. They say, “Here is a wonderful thing! I prayed for such-and-such a thing and the Lord has given it to me.” Is that wonderful? You are on strange terms with God when it becomes a marvel to you that He keeps His promise! I like better the utterance of the good woman, who, when her friend said, “It is wonderful!” replied, “Yes, in one sense it is wonderful, but not as you mean it. It is not wonderful for God to fulfill His promises—it is just like Him.” It is just like the Lord to hear His people’s prayers! O Friends, our lack of faith has done more mischief to us than all the devils in Hell and all the heretics on earth! Some cry out against the Pope and others against agnostics—but it is our own unbelief which is our worst enemy! If we could kill Old Incredulity, we could soon rout all the rest of the devil’s army. Oh for more faith that our unbelief might not mar our holy things!  
But suppose we do not fail in any of these respects—do you know what often happens? Well, after the private prayer is done, or the public worship is over, or the preaching, or the visiting of the sick has been performed, we sit down and inwardly say, “Yes, I did that uncommonly well, I know I did. I was wonderfully helpful”—which, being interpreted, often means, “I am a fine fellow.” Then we rub our hands and say to ourselves, “And the wonder is I am not at all proud! Thank God I am never tempted in that direction. I have too much common sense. I know what a poor creature I am”—and so on and so on. Thus we do our utmost to coat over our good deeds with the slime of self-conceit. This is to pour filthiness upon our sacrifice and make it an abomination in the sight of the Lord! Beside this, there generally mingles with the pride a contempt of others. Our endeavors to go up lead us to push others down. We have brought a bullock and we patronizingly say, “I like to see those poor people over yonder bring their pigeons and their doves. I am glad that they do something, though it is so much less than I.” This often means, “It makes my bullock look bigger when the turtle doves and pigeons are seen by way of contrast. No doubt those good people are doing their best—but yet, I think if they tried, they might have done better. At any rate, I have far exceeded them.” O foolish one! What have you to do with your brother’s sacrifice? What right have you to compare yourself with another? What have you that you have not received? And if you have received it, why do you boast as though you had not received it?  
But enough of this! These are only a few of the iniquities of our holy things which we can see. Beside these, there are many imperfections of our service which we do not notice because we are not spiritual enough to discern them. But God sees them. Bring me a needle. This is a highly polished needle. What an instance of human skill to make so small an implement so bright, so absolutely smooth! Bring me that microscope! I have just now put the wing of a butterfly under it. That is God’s work and, as I enlarge it, I discover no imperfection—but more and more of marvelous beauty! That butterfly’s wing under the microscope becomes most wonderful and I worship God as I gaze upon His handiwork. Take the butterfly away, now, and put your needle in its place.  
What? Why this is a

ough bar of iron which has never been smoothed or polished! This is wretched workmanship! It does not seem fit for delicate work. Such is man’s manufacture—the best of it. When God puts your prayers and my sermons under His microscopic eye, they are not at all what we thought they were, but quite the reverse! This ought to humble us as we come before the Presence of the All-Seeing One. These imperfections in our holy things are so grievous that they should prevent any one of our works, or offerings, or prayers being accepted before the thrice-holy God.  
He is so pure that He cannot endure that which is defiled! He is so perfect that He cannot enter into fellowship with that which has a blemish! We must bring that which is perfect for it to be accepted in itself—and we have nothing of our own that is perfect. And therefore, were it not for the great High Priest, of whom I am about to speak, we should be cut off from every kind of acceptance or communion with God. We have nothing which God can accept—  
**“Our best is all defiled with sin:  
Our all is worth nothing.”**  
II. Secondly, we have now to consider a glad subject—Lord help me to speak of it aright! The glad subject is that a high priest was provided through whom the iniquity of Israel’s holy things could be purged and the holy things themselves could be pleasant unto God. What was done in type has also been done in reality. Consider, then, that God provided the high priest. It was ordained that he should be a man perfect in his person. Any defect that could be seen of eye, or hand, or foot disqualified him from being high priest—and secret faults which could not be observed by his fellow men equally disqualified him.  
In our Lord Jesus there is no defect, open or secret. The verdict of Pilate was true—“I find no fault in this Man.” He was tempted in all points but He never sinned in any point. The piercing eyes of the prince of this world found nothing in Him. He is perfect and so He can be High Priest unto God. The man had to be chosen of God. Aaron was so. God elected him to that high office and even so our Lord is God’s elect in whom His soul delights. The Lord says, “I have exalted One chosen out of the people.” Christ is ordained of God and by Divine authority He stands as High Priest for us. This man had to be anointed for his work. Aaron was anointed with oil, but our Lord was anointed with the Holy Spirit. We could not have a better High Priest, nor could His anointing be more complete—He was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. If we had to choose and we had the wisdom of God granted us to make the choice, we could only say, “Let Him stand for us, for there is none like He.” Blessed be God, we have precisely the High Priest that we need!  
This high priest was altogether given up to his people. Only a word here. He has a heart—his people’s names are on the breast-plate which covers it. He has shoulders—his people’s names are written on his shoulderpieces and thus he lends them his power. He has feet—there were no sandals for the priest—he ministered barefooted before God. Why? Because it is the only way in which the Lord can be worshipped according to His repeated command—“Put off your shoes from off your feet, for the place whereon you stand is holy ground.” Christ has given to us the heart of His love, the shoulders of His strength, the feet of His humiliation. “He loved me and gave Himself for me.”  
But, you observe that his head is left. Ah, well, he must give us his head. The power to think is supposed to dwell in the temples and the forehead. The golden plate covered Aaron’s forehead from temple to temple and it was always conspicuous there. Thus Christ has given up His thought, His judgment, His mind, His every faculty to His people. He is all ours! The high priest reserved nothing of himself—he gave all of himself to all his people. Christ is ours. From head to foot He serves us personally and constantly. The point I want to bring out most prominently is this— the high priest bore “the iniquity of the holy things.” You and I have been guilty of iniquity in our holy things—we have said enough upon that humbling subject. But here is our joy—that Jesus bears it all!  
Putting on His heavenly miter, marked as “HOLINESS TO JEHOVAH,” He bears for us the iniquity. “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” “He was made sin for us, who knew no sin.” It is a wonderful mystery, the transference of sin and of merit—it staggers human reason—faith alone apprehends it! How can the guilty be accounted righteous? How can the perfectly righteous One be made sin? Mysterious these things are, but they are true and the Word of God is full of declarations to this effect. In this Truth of God lies the one hope of sinners! All the iniquity of our holy things our Lord Jesus has borne and it is no longer imputed unto us!  
As He stood before God, though He bore the iniquity of the people, yet He exhibited to God no iniquity! And on His forehead was written, “HOLINESS TO JEHOVAH.” Notice that He bore before God a holiness most precious—in token whereof, in type, the engraving was inscribed upon a plate of pure gold. The righteousness of Christ is more precious to God than all the mines of gold in the whole world! His righteousness was absolutely perfect—therefore there was nothing on that plate of gold but “HOLINESS TO JEHOVAH.” There was no iniquity in His holy things—His holiness was conspicuous and undeniable—it shone on the forefront of His miter. That holiness of His was permanent. It was not painted on that sheet of gold—it was engraved like the engraving of a signet.  
Christ’s righteousness will neither wash out nor wear out. Engraved in incorruptible gold, His righteousness shines gloriously and never loses its virtue. It retains its permanent perfection before the Lord. And as it was precious, perfect, permanent, so it was peculiar—for it was not merely holiness, but “HOLINESS TO JEHOVAH.” Christ was wholly dedicated to Jehovah! It was His meat and His drink to do the will of Him that sent Him. His one thought was to glorify the Father. And that holiness of His was prominent—although it was in His secret heart, it was also on His brow where even His enemies were forced to see it and honor it. In everything He thought, said, did, or suffered, He was evermore “Holiness to Jehovah.”  
One thing more I want you to notice and that is that the high priest always wore it—“And it shall always be upon his forehead.” He is always “Holiness to God” on our behalf. Our Lord Jesus Christ never shifted His Character, never ceased to be a Servant of the Host High and never ceased to be perfectly obedient to Him whom He came to serve. Dwell upon these things. If that plate were once taken off, the high priest could no longer officiate—and if Christ were once to lay aside His righteousness on your behalf you would not be accepted. Your holiness is not always on your brow, but His holiness is always on the forefront of His miter and therefore you are always accepted in the Beloved! How I delight to speak of this Truth!  
There is a flood of infidelity in the Church of God, today, and it often rushes against the doctrine of imputation—in fact, imputed righteousness has been kicked down the aisles of most of our places of worship—it cannot be endured! Yet we believe in it all the more for this! Listen to my text, “It shall always be upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.” We are accepted because of something in Him. It is not what is upon our forehead, but what is upon His forehead that makes us and our offerings to be accepted! We are accepted in the Beloved, justified by His righteousness. I cannot preach about this matter as I would, but I beg you to think it over. The Lord Jesus by His holiness secures our personal acceptance and then the acceptance of our holy things. Our prayers are accepted, our tears are accepted, our zeal is accepted and our patience is accepted—to God there is now sweet music in our praises.  
In very deed God accepts our sermons, our Sunday school teaching, our tract distribution, our almsgivings to the poor, our contributions to His cause. Our holy work is now viewed with Divine favor. Will you not offer more and more of these holy things since they are, in very deed, accepted in Christ? Through His glorious righteousness we are favorably regarded of the Lord—there is no question about it. First God accepts us and then He accepts our holy things. The Lord is pleased with all we do for Him because He is pleased with His Son. When He sees our iniquity He turns His eyes away and looks on that perfect holiness which shines upon the forehead of the Well-Beloved! Our Lord is that Altar which sanctifies both the giver and the gift. God grant us to know the comfort of this Truth!  
Now that I have taught you the main doctrine of the type, I desire to bring forth one or two lessons. The first is, see here a lesson of humility. We always want to be growing in this Divine Grace. Brothers and Sisters, take each of us—we are by nature as proud as Lucifer—and if we do not happen to be flaming with pride just now, there is enough of tinder in the tinderbox of our heart to get up a blaze of pride within five minutes! We do not need the devil or our friends to flatter us—we can do that business better than any of them. We have a very fine opinion of ourselves. But what have we to flatter ourselves about? Nothing!  
Bring out here this morning all your holy things and enlarge upon their excellence. Bring out your diaries from the time of your conversion until now and read the record of your good deeds. There is iniquity in them all! I have heard of a good man who lay dying. He thought he would examine his life and sort out his actions—laying his good deeds on his right hand and his sins on his left hand. He went on with the sorting for a little time but very soon he perceived that they were so much alike—the good and the bad—that he felt sick of them all. He then determined to bind them all up in one bundle and throw them overboard—and trust to enter Heaven by Free Grace alone! This was a very sensible decision! O Friends, our good works, if we lay them up in store and value them as jewels, will, like the manna in the wilderness, very soon breed worms and stink! There is enough rottenness in our best performances to make them offensive to an enlightened conscience! Oh, that this fact—that even our holy things are tainted—may be the death warrant of our pride!  
In the next place, learn the awful hazard of going unto God without our High Priest. Our forehead will be leprous if we dare offer sacrifice without the High Priest who wears the golden plate of holiness to the Lord upon His forehead. I am not going to expound the passage, but I will simply read to you 2 Chronicles 26:15-20. Uzziah was a commendable king and he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord—“His name spread far abroad; for he was marvelously helped, till he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the Altar of Incense.  
“And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the Lord, that were valiant men: and they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertains not unto you, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for you have trespassed; neither shall it be for your honor from the Lord God. Then Uzziah was angry, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was angry with the priests, the leprosy even rose up on his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, from beside the Altar of Incense. And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from there; yes, himself hastened also to go out, because the Lord had smitten him.”  
Whenever you get to think that you can stand before God and present your own offering without the Lord Jesus, the leprosy of fatal pride is white upon your forehead! I tremble for some people when I hear them parading their own perfection. One said, “My will is so in accord with God that I do not need to pray.” The leprosy was on his forehead when he thus spoke! This has polluted many who seemed to be among the most excellent servants of God. They have tried to do without the great High Priest and His representative holiness and, like Uzziah, they have been cut off from the house of the Lord and made to dwell alone and bemoan their folly.  
But, dear Friends, we may here find another lesson—learn how you must be dressed as a royal priesthood unto the Lord. I thought I would copy out what George Herbert says about the dress of the Lord’s Aarons. You will not understand it all as I read it, but if you have George Herbert’s Poems, read the piece entitled, “Aaron,” and chew at it till you have masticated its meaning. He speaks of the clergy, but we will understand him as speaking of all Believers who are as assuredly priests and clergy as any ordained ministers can be. We are made kings and priests unto our God. We want to know how we ought to be dressed. One cries, “Wear a surplice!” Another says, “No, keep to the black gown.” We are not thinking of such trivialities as garments, black or white. We belong to a spiritual kingdom and our robes are spiritual. “Then,” says one, “it is clear that we must be holy.” Granted. But it is not our beauty and our glorious dress before the Lord. If you put on your own holiness, to be dressed in it, you will only display your iniquity. “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.”  
The Lord Jesus Himself is our dress—we put on Christ! Let Herbert speak—

*“Holiness on the head,  
Light and perfections on the breast, Harmonious bells below, raising the dead, To lead them unto life and rest.  
Thus are true Aarons dressed.*

*Profaneness in my head,  
Defects and darkness in my breast,  
A noise of passions ringing me for dead  
Unto a place where is no rest.  
Poor priest, thus am I dressed.  
Only another head I have, another heart and breast, Another music, making live, not dead,  
Without whom I could have no rest:  
In Him I am well dressed.  
Christ is my only head,  
My alone only heart and breast  
My only music, striking me even dead;  
That to the old man I may rest  
And be in Him new dressed.  
So holy in my head  
Perfect and light in my dear breast,  
My doctrine tuned by Christ (who is not dead, But lives in me while I do rest)  
Come, people: Aaron’s dressed.”*

When you have Christ’s head and breast, and doctrine then you are ready for service and may say, “Come, people: Aaron’s dressed.” This is how I desire to preach to you, putting off self and putting on Christ as all. C.H.S. [Charles Haddon Spurgeon]? Away with him! JESUS! Let that dear name be glorified forever! When you go to Sunday school do not go as pious Mary or thoughtful Thomas—you will make a mess of it if you do. But go as the messenger of the Lord, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all! Be clothed with the Lord Jesus! Hide yourself away in His glory and beauty—and then you will be a true Aaron—dressed for your holy work.

Lastly, let sinners gain a store of comfort here. If God’s own people have iniquity in their holy things and yet they have Christ to bear it for them, how patient must He be who is our High Priest! You, poor Sinner, you need a Savior very much. Lo! He is here, ready to be a go-between for you and put His righteousness in front of your iniquity and Himself in the place of your poor guilty and condemned person! Come, now, and hide away in Christ! Come, now, and trust my Lord with all His beauteous garments. He wears them, still, and wears them for poor ragged sinners. Come and look up to Jesus and He will stand for you and you shall become the righteousness of God in Him because He is made a curse for you! God bless you, Beloved, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Exodus 28:1-38.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—912, 382, 325. Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #1203 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE CONSECRATION OF PRIESTS  
NO. 1203

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 15, 1874, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“This is the thing that you shall do onto them to hallow them, to minister unto Me in the priest’s office.”  
Exodus 29:1.**

UNDER the Law, only one family could serve God in the priest’s office, but under the Gospel all the saints are “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9). In the Christian Church no persons whatever are set apart to the priesthood above the rest of their Brethren, for in us is fulfilled the promise which Israel, by reason of her sin, failed to obtain— “You shall be a kingdom of priests unto Me.” Paul, in addressing all the saints, bids them present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is their reasonable service. It is the grand design of all the works of Divine Grace, both for us and in us, to fit us for the office of the spiritual priesthood, and it will be the crown of our perfection when, with all our Brothers and Sisters, we shall sing unto the Lord Jesus the new song, “Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever.”

All the saints have this honor. According to Peter, in the second chapter of his first Epistle, it belongs even to newborn babes in Grace, for even such are spoken of as forming part of an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices. Nor is this confined to men as was the Aaronic priesthood, for in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female. My subject, today, is the consecration of priests, but it does not refer exclusively, or even especially, to persons called clergymen, or ministers—but to all of you who believe in Jesus, for you are God’s clergy, His cleros, that is, His inheritance, and you should be all ministers, ministering according to the Divine Grace given to you. The family of Aaron was chosen unto the priesthood, “for no man takes this honor upon himself, but he that was called thereunto as was Aaron,” and even thus, all the Lord’s people are chosen from before the foundation of the world.

Being chosen, Aaron and his sons were at God’s command brought near unto the door of the tabernacle. None ever come to God except they are brought to Him. Even the spouse sings, “He brought me into the banqueting house.” Jesus said, “No man can come unto Me except the Father, which has sent Me, draw him.” We are made near by the blood of Jesus and brought near by the drawing of the Holy Spirit. Assuming that you and I have made our calling and election sure, let us further see what is needed to qualify us to serve as priests at the altar of the living God. Follow me carefully as I mention the ceremonies prescribed in the chapter before us, for they teach us necessary things—the outward ceremonies are abolished—but their inner meaning remains.

I. First, THE PRIESTS WERE WASHED. We read in the 4th verse, “Aaron and his sons you shall bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall wash them with water.” The pure and holy God cannot be served by men of unclean hands and impure hearts. He would not endure it under the Law, nor will He tolerate it under the Gospel. “Be you clean that bear the vessels of the Lord,” and, “Be you holy for I am holy,” are standing precepts of our priesthood. It was well said by the Psalmist, “I will wash my hands in innocence, so will I compass Your altar, O Lord.”

This washing is afforded us in two ways, answering to our double need. First, it is given to us in regeneration, in which we are born of water and of the Spirit. By the power of the Holy Spirit we are made new creatures in Christ Jesus and in us is fulfilled the type set forth in Naaman, who washed in the Jordan, and his flesh came, again, unto him, even as a little child. Not in the waters of Baptism, but in the living water of the Holy Spirit are we cleansed from Nature’s original defilement. He it is who causes old things to pass away and makes all things new. Through His sanctifying operations we are cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit—and made vessels fit for the Master’s use. This washing is essential in every case.

You may say, “I desire to serve God,” but you cannot do it till you are born again. Your whole nature must be cleansed, or you will never be qualified to stand as a priest before the thrice holy God! I marvel how some who know nothing about regeneration can dare call themselves priests. They are strangers to the renewing influences of the Spirit and yet they style themselves God’s ministers! Has God set blind men to be guides and dead men to quicken souls? Onto such as these, God says, “What have you to do to declare My statutes?” The need of another form of washing was indicated by the double stream which flowed from the pierced breast of Christ, for, “forthwith came there out blood and water.”

We must be washed by remission of sin, of which David sang, “Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.” In the first moment of our faith in Jesus there is given to us a washing which makes us, once and for all, clean in the sight of God. It is that washing to which the Lord Jesus referred when He said, “He that is washed needs not save to wash his feet, for he is clean.” The priests were washed once, from head to foot, to make them ceremonially clean—after that they needed only to wash their feet when they came into the holy place. Even thus our Lord told His disciples, when He washed their feet, that they had no need of another complete bathing, for they were clean every whit.

Believers should not pray to their heavenly Father as if their sins still rested upon them and had never been forgiven, for the Lord has put away their sin—and as far as the east is from the west so far has He removed their transgressions from them. Yet as they continually accumulate some evil and stain by being in this body and in this world, they have need to come each day with, “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.” Our first washing has removed all sin as before God the Judge. Our daily washing cleanses us from offenses towards God as our Father. Even when we walk in the light as God is in the light, and have fellowship with one another, we yet need daily cleansing from all sin by the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son. And, blessed be God, we have it!

Now, my dear Hearers, have you thus been cleansed from all sin? Do you know, today, the power of that word, “Being made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness”? Have you the blessedness of that man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity and in whose spirit there is no guile? Do not try to stand as a priest before God till you have received this double washing! Remember the great aim of the Gospel is to make us priests unto God—but the consecrating process must begin by our being cleansed as sinners from the guilt of sin and the defilement of our nature. He who would serve the Lord must first confess his iniquities and obtain remission, or he can no more approach the living God than a leper could enter into the Holy Place!

II. After being washed, THE PRIESTS WERE CLOTHED. They might not wear one of the garments which belonged to themselves or to their former calling. Undergarments were provided for them and outer garments, too— within and without their raiment was new and appropriate. They put on what was given them, nothing more and nothing less. No man can serve God acceptably in his own righteousness, it is but filthy rags. We must have the fine linen of an inward sanctification and the outer garment, for glory and for beauty, of the Imputed Righteousness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We must, in a word, sing with the hymn—

*“Jesus, Your blood and Righteousness,  
My beauty are, my glorious dress.”*  
We cannot worship God unless it is so, or He will drive us from His Presence.

Note that these garments were provided for them. They were at no expense in buying them, nor labor in weaving them, nor skill in making them. They had simply to put them on. And you, dear child of God, are to put on the garments which Jesus Christ has provided for you, at His own cost, and freely bestows upon you out of boundless love. These garments formed a complete apparel. They had no shoes upon their feet, it is true, but they would have been superfluous, for the place where they stood was holy ground. They were sandaled with reverence. The child of God, when he is bedecked in the Righteousness of Christ, still feels a solemn awe of the Lord and comes into the Presence of the Most High with adoration, for he remembers that he is but a creature at his best.

These garments were very comely to look upon . Though the common priests did not wear the breastplate of jewels, nor the bells and pomegranates, nor the girdle of blue and fine twisted linen, yet, in their ordinary dress of pure white, they must have been very comely to look upon. Fine white linen is the emblem of the righteousness of the saints and truly, in God’s eyes, with the exception of His dear Son, there are no lovelier objects in the world than His own people when they are dressed in the garments of salvation. The dress provided was absolutely necessary to be worn. No priest might offer sacrifice without the appointed garments, for we read in the 43rd verse of the 28th chapter, “They shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the Holy

Place; that they bear not iniquity, and die.”

They would have died had they attempted to sacrifice without being clothed according to the Law of God! A man pretending to serve God without the Divine Righteousness upon him, puts himself in a most perilous position. He is where the flaming wrath of God burns terribly. Better for him to keep his own place, in the distance, than to draw near unto the service of God, unless he is adorned with the glorious array which Christ has woven in the loom of His life and dyed in His own blood. Dear Brothers and Sisters, if you desire to worship God aright in holy labor, or prayer, or praise, you must go to your engagements dressed in the Righteousness of Jesus, for in that way, only, can you be “accepted in the Beloved.”

III. Then, thirdly, THESE PRIESTS WERE ANOINTED. It does not appear that they were each one personally anointed so early in the ceremony, but they saw the fragrant oil poured upon Aaron on their behalf. So you find it written in the 7th verse, “Then shall you take the anointing oil and pour it upon his head, and anoint him.” So that in order to serve God aright, it is necessary for us to see the anointing which has been given without measure to our Covenant Head.

But you say to me, “Of what benefit can that be to us? We require the unction of the Holy Spirit upon ourselves.” True, but the oil which was poured upon Aaron’s head went down his beard and its copious flow descended even to the skirts of his garments. And what you need to know, if you are to be a true priest to God, is that the Holy Spirit comes to you through Christ and from Christ—and it is because your Head is anointed that you have an unction from the Holy One. You could not have been Christians if He had not, first, been the Christ. Be of good cheer concerning this, for though you may be one of the lowest members of the mystical body of Jesus Christ, you have an anointing from the Holy One because Jesus has that anointing—and in the power of that anointing you may minister before the Lord.

Further on in the discourse we shall have to show you the personal anointing which you must individually receive, but it is highly important for every worker to see where his fragrance before God must lie—never in himself— but always in his Covenant Head. Be filled with the Spirit, but do not dream that the Spirit of God comes to you apart from your Lord! You are the branch, and the sap can only come to you through the stem. You are a member, but your life dwells in your Head. Divided from Jesus you are dead! Never forget this, for any attempt at independence will be fatal. A man in Christ is fragrant with a holy perfume before the Lord, but out of Christ he is an unclean thing and cannot approach the altar.

IV. Fourthly, having been washed, clothed and representatively anointed, they had, next, TO SHARE IN THE SIN OFFERING. They were sinful men. How could they approach a thrice holy God? You and I are sinful, as we know by bitter experience. How can we hope to stand before the Mercy Seat and present acceptable sacrifices unto such an One as God is? There is no way of approaching Him while our sin is seen. It must be covered—covered by a sin offering. We are told that the sin offering selected was a bullock without blemish, of the first year, strong and vigorous—a perfect being as far as it could be.

Lift your eyes to Jesus, in whom is no spot of sin, being undefiled in Nature and immaculate in life. He it is who stands for you, even He who knew no sin, and yet was made sin for you that you might be made the Righteousness of God in Him. He, in the fullness of His strength, and in the perfection of His Manhood, gave Himself as a ransom and a substitute for you. View Him with wondering gratitude! The bullock of the sin offering being brought to the altar, Aaron and his sons were to lay their hands upon it. Read the 10th verse—They “shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock.” The Hebrew word means more than lightly placing the hands—it gives the idea of pressing hard upon the bullock’s head.

They came, each one, and leaned upon the victim, loading him with their burden, signifying their acceptance of its substitution and their joy that the Lord would accept that victim in their place. When they put their hands on the bullock, they made a confession of sin, and the Rabbis have preserved for us the form in which that confession was made, but time forbids our reading it to you. The act was evidently understood by all concerned as a typical transfer of guilt—and the placing of the bullock as the sin offering in the place of the sinner. Come, Brothers and Sisters, though washed, though clothed, though anointed—come as penitents and rejoice in the vicarious Sacrifice of Jesus!

Draw near unto the Lord with sincere hearts and acknowledge your transgressions! Come and again accept your Savior as your Sin Bearer, for a sin bearer who is not accepted by you can be of no service to you. The hands of faith must be laid upon the Sacrifice—for my part, I like to lay them there every day, no, I desire to keep them there always— believing without ceasing that my sin is imputed no more to me, but by a sacred act of God was laid upon Jesus, according to that sentence, “He has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

The bullock was killed as a token that just as the poor beast was slain, so they deserved to die for their sins. And that done, the blood was caught in bowls and taken to the altar where it was poured out, at the bottom of the altar, round about. Read the 17th verse. There must have been a pool of blood all round the altar, or, at any rate, a crimsoned line. What did it signify? Did it not show that our only access to God is by the blood? Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, there is no way for you to God as His priest except through the precious blood! We cannot draw near to God, or serve Him aright, if we forget the blood of Atonement. Our standing is upon and within the blood of sprinkling! We must bring our prayers, praises, preaching, almsgiving and all other offerings to the altar around which the blood is poured! In vain are all good works which are not so presented! See you well to this, my Brethren. It is essential beyond all else.

This done, the choicer and more vital parts of the bullock were taken and burned upon the altar, to show that even when our Lord Jesus is viewed as a Sin Offering, He is still a sweet savor unto God. And however He might hide His face from His Son because of our sin, yet He was always, in Himself, well-pleasing unto the Father. Hence the inwards of the bullock were burned on the altar, where nothing could be presented but that which was a sweet savor to God. O You Lamb of God, under whatever aspect we behold You, You are still precious to Your Father! You were beloved by Him even when You had to cry, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

But because the bullock was a sin offering, and therefore obnoxious to God, its flesh, skin and all that remained were carried outside the camp and burned with a quick, consuming fire—as a thing worthy to be destroyed—for sin was upon it and it must be burned up. Believer, have you seen Jesus as the great Offering for sin, made a curse for us? You will never serve God in the priestly office aright unless you see that sin is a hateful thing to God—so hateful that even when it only lay upon His dear Son by imputation, He could not look upon Him—but bruised and smote Him until He cried in anguish, “Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani.” “Jesus, also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the camp,” to show that not without His being treated as a transgressor could we be treated as righteous and, also, that sin is, in itself, a deadly pest which must not be endured in the camp of the chosen.

Never let your joy concerning the Atonement lessen your horror of transgression— *“With your joy for pardoned guilt,  
Mourn that you pierced the Lord.”*

I am persuaded that no one will ever serve the Lord humbly and devotedly unless he obtains a clear view of the Lord Jesus as his Sin Offering and Substitute. Some preachers either do not know that Truth of God or else they think too little of it to make it prominent in their sermons, hence their ministry does not save souls. The great saving Truth of God is the doctrine of Atonement by Substitution. Without it, ministers will keep souls in bondage year after year because they do not proclaim the finished redemption, nor let men know that sin was laid on Jesus that it might be forever removed from the Believer. “He was made sin for us that we might be made the Righteousness of God in Him.”

Brothers and Sisters, get that Truth clearly into your heads—and intensely into your hearts—and you will become devoted to the Lord! Do not only believe that grand Truth, but to the spirit of it serve the Lord without weariness, seeing you have been redeemed with a price far more precious than silver and gold!

V. After the sin offering, the consecrated ones went on to TAKE THEIR SHARE IN THE BURNT OFFERING. The burnt offering differed widely from the sin offering. The sin offering indicated Christ as bearing our sin, but the burnt offering sets Him forth as presenting an acceptable offering unto the Lord. God required of us perfect obedience. He demanded from us a pure and holy life—and the requirement was a just one—but among us all there is none righteous, no, not one. How, then, could we stand before the thrice Holy Lord?

Beloved, Jesus stands in the gap! Before God, His Righteousness was perfect, acceptable and delightful. And for us it is presented. He is made of God unto us Righteousness. The burnt offering does not bring to light the remembrance of sin except so far as it reminds us that we were in need of a perfect Righteousness. It brings before us only the thought of Jesus offering Himself as a sweet savor unto God and making us accepted in the Beloved. The priests were to bring a ram without blemish. And when killed, before it was laid on the altar, its innards were to be washed, for otherwise the natural foulness of its body would prevent its being a fit type of that Savior who is pure within—in whom there is no taint of original sin.

When this ram was brought, the priests were to lay their hands upon it, as much as to say, “We accept this ram, that it may represent us as acceptable before God.” Oh, Beloved, lay your hands on Jesus, now, by faith, and say, “Jesus, I accept You as my Righteousness before the Lord, and believe that as God sees in You all that is delightful, and smells a sweet savor of rest, so He will be well-pleased with me for Your sake.” This offering, when placed upon the altar, was wholly burnt. Not a fragment of it was put outside the camp, not a morsel of it was eaten by man—the whole ram was utterly consumed with fire, for it was a burnt offering unto the Lord.

And thus, dear Friends, it is very delightful for us to see that God received Jesus, the whole of Jesus—there was nothing in Him to reject—and nothing that could be done without. He satisfied the Lord. He asked no more, He would have no less. Jesus has rendered to the Father all that He could desire from men and the Lord is well-pleased for His Righteousness’ sake. A sense of acceptance is a very necessary thing to those who would worship God aright, for if you do not enjoy it, the legal spirit will begin to work to win acceptance by merit, and that will spoil it all. If men dream that they are to pray or preach their way to Heaven, or to do this and to do that, to be acceptable with God, they will offer strange fire on the Lord’s altar and bring sacrifices with which He can never be pleased.

He will call them vain oblations and frown on the offerer. How delightful it is to serve God with a sense that we are pleasant in the sight of God, for this fills us with gratitude, inspires us with zeal, creates boldness and fosters every Grace! With what joy will you stand to minister daily whatever your calling may be—whether it is as a mother in the family, a servant in the house, a minister in the pulpit—or a teacher in the class! You will not need driving like a slave to his toil, but like a dearly beloved child you will rejoice to please your Father in all things. Work in the prison of the Law under the lash of conscience is a very different thing from holy work in the sunlight of the Lord’s Countenance and the liberty of full acceptance where one knows that he is not to be judged and condemned by the Law, but stands forever justified because of what Christ has done for him and serves his God with a holy alacrity unknown to others!

VI. After the priests had seen for themselves the sin offering and the burnt offering, it was necessary that they should partake of a third sacrifice, which was a PEACE OFFERING. Another ram was brought as unblemished and vigorous as the former, for Jesus is never to be typified by anything but the best of its kind. We are told in the 19th verse that Aaron and his sons were to put their hands upon it, for, whatever view of the great sacrifice they might gaze upon, it was imperatively necessary that they should have a personal interest in it. Mere theory will never do—we must have personal acquaintance with the Lord—and we must have Him to be our own.

So long as we have no part or lot in Jesus we are as much excluded from the service of the Lord as were the uncircumcised and the unclean. No man can run the heavenly race unless he is looking unto Jesus! He cannot be a soldier of the Lord unless he has Christ for his Captain. He cannot feed others until he has, himself, fed on Jesus. He cannot bring others to Jesus till he has come himself. “The husbandman that labors must first be partaker of the fruits.” This is one of the laws of spiritual husbandry and cannot be set aside. Lay your hands upon the head of the Substitute before you venture to lay it upon the work of the Lord.

When this was done, the peace offering was slain. A sin offering was a thing obnoxious to God and represented expiation made for sin. A burnt offering was a sweet savor unto God and it was all burned on the altar, all being for the Lord alone—thus representing the Lord Jesus as rendering to the Lord a complete obedience which magnified the Law and made it honorable. But the peace offering was shared between the Lord and the priest or offerer. The Lord’s part was consumed with fire upon the altar and another portion was eaten by man in the holy place. The peace offering was thus an open declaration of the communion which had been established between God and man, so that they ate together, rejoicing in the same offering.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters, when you have felt the sweets of seeing the Lord as a Sin Offering and then have tasted the high joys of acceptance as you have gazed upon Him as the Burnt Offering, satisfying Jehovah’s heart, it is surpassingly delightful to behold the Lamb of God as our Peace Offering, making glad the heart of God and man—and bringing both, in bonds of friendship, to a common meeting place! The Eternal Father says, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.” And we cry, “This is our beloved Lord, in which our inmost soul rejoices!” In the peace offering the communion between the priests and the Lord commenced outwardly by their being consecrated by the blood of the peace offering. Moses dipped his finger in the blood and smeared, first, the priest’s right ear, then his thumb, and then his toe.

As Matthew Henry says, as if they marked the boundaries and extremities of man’s being to show that all that was enclosed within the crimson lines was consecrated unto the Lord. We go not too far when we add that it signified the dedication of each faculty. The ear was henceforth to hear God’s commands, to listen to Divine teaching and to drink in Divine promises—no more to regard falsehood, sin and vice. The hand was henceforth to be engaged in the Divine service with diligence and intelligence, for the right hand was thus marked, and the thumb, the most useful part of it— for holy work the hand must be reserved.

The feet were to be equally holy. The priest, wherever he stood, or walked, or ran, was to be, “holiness unto the Lord.” He had no right to go anywhere if that blood-marked foot would be out of place. The whole man was thus consecrated by the blood of the Everlasting Covenant—a solemn seal, indeed! Our personal share of the blood of Jesus has already done this for us! It has constrained us to yield unto God our whole manhood, spirit, soul and body. My Brother, you can never serve God as His priest unless you are wholly given up to God through the blood of Jesus! You must have this verse in your very soul and must masticate it, digest it, assimilate it into your nature—“You are not your own, you are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies and your spirits, which are His.” This surrender of yourself unto the Lord commences your communion with the Lord—the peace offering has begun.

The next thing was to sprinkle the priests all over with a mixture of oil and blood. This is that anointing which I said we should see by-and-by. “You shall take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons’ garments with him.” Yes, Brethren, we need to know that double anointing—the blood of Jesus which cleanses—and the oil of the Holy Spirit which perfumes us. It is well to see how these two blend in one, Jesus and His Atonement, the Spirit and His sanctification—the world for us and the work in us.

Read the third of John, and there you find, “You must be born again.” But side by side with it you get, “Whoever believes in Him is not condemned.” It is not so easy for the preacher to always give these two doctrines with equal clearness and distinctness. He is very apt, when he is preaching up simple faith and saying, “Only believe,” to forget that equally important statement, “You must be born again.” It is a terrible blunder to set the blood and the oil in opposition—they must always go together! Yet there are some who have even spoken depreciatingly of repentance, which is an essential part of the work of the Spirit of God. Their zeal for holding up the Righteousness of Christ by faith has driven them beyond the bounds of the Truth of God!

Brothers, do not err in this matter, but abide in equal loyalty to these equally sure and important verities! If you would serve the Lord aright, you must have the blood and the oil sprinkled upon you, that is to say, you must know personally the influence of them both. What a strange sight these men in white garments must have presented, bespattered all over with blood and oil! Did that stain their garments? No, it adorned and perfumed them. Remember that saying, “They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” No purity is comparable to that which comes by the Spirit and by the atoning blood—in God’s sight these priests thus stained were more beautiful, by far, than they had been before!

Oh, my Soul, prize Jesus and His blood! Don’t forget that you need the gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit! Bless God for justification, but seek after sanctification! Praise Him for perfection in Christ Jesus and go on to obtain the perfect work of the Holy Spirit! We have a cleansing and we also have an unction from the Holy One. As our experience is, so let our teaching be, for the priests’ garments taught the people. We are to go forth as priests and declare the virtue of the atoning Sacrifice—but we must also manifest the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives.

The next part of the ceremony was very singular. The priests had their hands filled. Certain parts of the ram were taken and “one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer out of the basket of unleavened bread, which is before the Lord,” and all these were put into the hands of Aaron and his sons, so that they stood with their hands full before the Lord. See the beauty of this and pray for a complete realization of it, yourself! The Lord intends to make you a priest, but your hands are full of sin. What have you to do? You must lay those guilty hands on the Sin Offering and make confession, and exercise faith—then the sin is gone, being transferred to Another, and your hands are empty.

What next? Will the Lord leave you empty-handed? No, He gives you something to offer. He allows you a part of the Peace Offering to fill your hands with—and this you present before Him as a Wave Offering. It is a blessed thing to stand before God with your hands full of Christ! The service which consists in holding forth Jesus is most blessed. I love preaching when I have to preach only Jesus! Then I come before you, not emptyhanded, but loaded with meat and bread for you. How idle it is for us to stand before God with nothing to offer! And if we have not Jesus we have nothing, or worse than nothing!

We may also interpret the full hands of the priests as representing our being enriched with the Truth of God. I believe it used to be a ceremony in the English Church that, when the bishop ordained a minister, he always placed the Bible in his hands to set forth what he was expected to deal out to the people. When the Lord ordains His people to be priests unto Him, He puts the Bible into their hands and fills their heads and hearts with the Truths of God. When you have the Inspired Word in your hands, you have both meat for strong men and bread for children. You have all sorts of spiritual food for all sorts of persons—and you need not fear that they will turn away dissatisfied—they cannot need more to feed upon than the bread of God’s altar and the flesh of God’s Peace Offering.

When their hands were full and they stood at the altar, it indicated the way in which they brought to the Lord all that they had. We cannot act as priests before God with empty hands. “None of you shall appear before Me empty,” is His command. Has He given us wealth? Let us give without grudging, devising liberal things. Never neglect weekly storing and weekly offering—these are fit parts of Sunday worship. Have we time, talent, influence? Let us consecrate them all and come with those possessions which Jesus has lent us—and present them with the flesh of the Peace Offering and the sacred oil! Holding this in their hands, the priests had to wave their pleasant burden to and fro.

I scarcely know why, except that you, who are God’s priests, have not had your hands filled that you may stand still, but that you may move them to and fro in the earth—that east, west, north and south may know the benefit thereof—and that your Brethren on either hand may commune with you in your ministering. Every now and then the priests stopped the horizontal motion and heaved or lifted up their offering, as if to say, “It is all for You, O Jehovah. We lift it up into the Presence of Your august Majesty, for it is Yours and we are about to lay it on Your altar.” Believers, if you have had your hands filled by God, you must not be idle! Your fullness is meant for distribution to God’s Glory.

If the clouds are full of rain they empty themselves upon the earth. If the rivers are full of water, they run into the sea, and if God gives you a fullness, it is that you may communicate it to others and devote it to Himself. Jesus Christ breaks the bread, multiplies it and gives it to the disciples to divide among the multitude. Nary a man becomes empty-handed because he does not know the art of distribution. He has his hands full and cries out, “Where shall I bestow my goods? My hands are full and I would not keep it for myself and my family.” My Brother, wave it among your neighbors! Lift it up to God in solemn consecration and then let it be laid upon God’s altar, since for this purpose you were called to be a priest unto the Most High.

Last of all there followed a very pleasant part of the matter—they sat down and feasted. God had received His part in the burning of the victim on the altar—and now Aaron and his sons were to “eat those things with which the atonement was made.” You cannot serve God without strength. You cannot have strength except you eat, but you must be careful what you take into your soul, for according to what your food is will your strength be. The Lord would have His people fed daily upon Christ, and fed in the holy place where they serve. Christ is delightful to God and is delightful to you, so you must feed on Him in communion with God, in the place of holy fellowship. There is no sustenance for our inner nature anywhere but in Jesus, but, blessed be His name, no other sustenance can be desired, for He fills us to the full and gives us a strength which is equal to our day.

I know some good people who are very busy, indeed, in the services of God. And I am very delighted that they should be, but I would caution them against working and never eating. They give up attending the means of Grace as hearers because they have so much to do as workers. That is very well—and some strong men may be able to do it safely—but I do not think many of us can afford to do without the regular hearing of the Word of God. Whatever may be our zeal to work like Martha, we must also sit at Jesus’ feet like Mary, or we shall become “numbered with much serving.” The priest is to offer sacrifice, but he must have time, also, to feed on the portion allotted to him.

How sweet it is to enjoy the food of God, the flesh of Jesus, the bread of Heaven! Aaron and his sons had the breast and the shoulder for their part—the love of Christ’s heart and the power of Christ’s arm. I am thankful, as one of God’s priests, to have the shoulder and breast, for power and love are necessary for my comfort and support. Eli’s vile sons were apt to drive a three-pronged hook into the cauldron and bring up what they thought the choicer portions—but my soul is more than content with what the rules of the house allot me—in fact, these are the best parts of the sacrifice!

In closing, I would call the attention of Believers, for a moment, to the fact that Aaron and his sons received this consecration for life. You will find in the 9th verse, the words, “The priests’ office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute.” “Once a priest, always a priest,” is the rule in the priesthood to which we belong! We abide in Christ and we also have an anointing which abides in us, for we have been sealed with “that Holy Spirit of promise.” Do not act, at any time, as if you were not priests. If you profess to be the Lord’s, do not lie about it, let it be truly so—and that every day, and all the day, and in all things—for He has made us kings and priests unto God forever. Do not, I beseech you, dishonor your sacred character.

I shall ask two questions in closing. Do you and I offer sacrifice continually? Unto this we are called, according to the Apostle, that we should offer the sacrifice of prayer and praise continually. To Him the cherubim continually cry “Holy, holy, holy.” Do we, every day, feel that our whole being is “Holiness unto the Lord”? In the workshop, in the home, at the fireside, in the field as well as in the Prayer Meeting the vows of God are upon us. We are a separated people and belong unto God alone. O see you to this! What have you, now, to offer? Have you brought an offering? What will you render unto God for all His benefits towards you? Is there nothing to be done for Christ this afternoon? No sick one to be visited, no poor child to be instructed, no backslider to be reclaimed? Shall a single hour go by without a sacrifice?

I charge you, Brothers and Sisters, continually bring of your substance, continually bring of your talent, continually bring of your influence! If God is God, and if you are His priests, serve Him! If you are not His ordained ones, then you live unto yourselves and it will be well to know it! Anything is better than to be hypocrites! But if you are true men and women, I beseech you, by the mercies of God, present your bodies, your souls, your spirits unto God, which is but a reasonable service. When you have once and for all made the consecration, may God grant you Divine Grace continually to stand to it, and He shall have the Glory, forever and ever. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Exodus 29:1-37.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—411, 663, 878.  
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EATING THE SACRIFICE  
NO. 2528

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, AUGUST 1, 1897. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 30, 1884.

**“And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy.”  
Exodus 29:33.**

On the last two Sabbath mornings I have spoken concerning the sacrifices under the Law. Our first sermon was, “Putting the Hand upon the Head of the Sacrifice,” and the next was, “Slaying the Sacrifice” (Nos. 1771

and 1772—Volume 30—read/download the entire sermon for free at http://www.spurgeongems.org ).

Now we are to make an advance and to speak about the eating of the sacrifice, for in certain cases the offerer ate a portion of that which had been presented to God.

It has been said by some people who are very particular in drawing nice distinctions, that there was no eating of a sacrifice in which there was any connection with sin. I beg to differ from that opinion and I have showed you that every sacrifice had something to do with sin, since no sacrifice would have been needed if the man bringing it had not been a sinner. And here, in this case, I might have selected many texts to teach the Truth of God I want to bring out just now, but I have especially chosen this one because it says, “They shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made.” You all know that a covering is only needed for those who are naked, or who have something that requires to be hidden. So, the atonement, or the covering, is evidently intended for the guilty— and has something to do with sin—yet of the things wherewith the atonement was made, Aaron’s sons were to eat, so that there is to be an eating, a joyous reception into ourselves even of those things which have a connection with the putting away of sin!

The first thing that an offerer did with his victim when he brought it was to appropriate it to himself by laying his hands upon it. So, when a sinner comes to Christ, his first act is to lay his hands upon Christ, that Christ may be shown to belong to the sinner and that the sinner’s guilt may be transferred to Christ and borne by Him as the sinner’s Substitute. In later life we are continually to look to Christ and, by faith, to lay our hands upon Him. But we are to advance to a yet more lively and more intensely spiritual way of appropriating Him to ourselves. This is indicated in the text by eating—

*“There is life for a look at the Crucified One,”*but, after you have begun to live, the substance of that life comes through feeding upon the Sacrifice! The first appropriation—the laying on of the hands—is an outward act. But the later appropriation—feeding upon the Sacrifice, taking it into yourself—is altogether an inward matter. You who are not yet saved have not, at present, anything to do with this eating of the Sacrifice. Your first business is to look to Jesus—not so much spiritually to enjoy Him as, by faith, to look to Him as outside of you, to be regarded by the eye of faith while you, a poor guilty sinner, simply look to Him and find salvation in Him. It is afterwards, when you shall have made some advance in the Divine Life, when you shall have clearly seen the Victim sacrificed and His blood making an Atonement for your sins, that you shall come and feed upon Jesus Christ.

At the time of the Passover, the Jew must first take the lamb, kill it and sprinkle the blood on the lintel and the two side posts of his house. And after that he must go inside and, when the door is shut, feed upon that lamb whose blood is sprinkled outside. He must eat the Passover supper that he may be refreshed before starting on his journey through the wilderness. Let not this distinction be forgotten—the eating of the sacrifice is not intended to give life, for no dead man can eat—but to sustain the life which is there already. A believing look at Christ makes you live, but spiritual life must be fed and sustained—and the feeding of that life is explained by our Savior in the words I read to you just now— “Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat, indeed, and My blood is drink, indeed”—spiritual meat and spiritual drink to support the spiritual life which God has given. Hence it was ordained, even under the Law, that after the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify the priests, they were to come and sit down and “eat those things wherewith the atonement was made.”

I. The first thing about which I have to speak to you at this time is, THE PARTICIPATION—the eating of the sacrifice.  
So, first, I will describe it. We are to “eat those things wherewith the Atonement was made,” to participate in Christ, to take Him into ourselves. The act of eating is a very common but a very expressive method of setting forth participation, for it is entirely personal. Nobody can eat for you, or drink for you. It is personally for yourself that you partake of bread, and the bread goes into yourself, to build up yourself, to be assimilated by yourself into yourself so as to become part of yourself. And, dear Friend, the Lord Jesus Christ must thus be received into your heart and soul by yourself, for yourself and must remain within yourself, you exercising upon Him continually a blessed act of faith by which you have communion and fellowship with Him. This can’t be done by any sponsor, or proxy, or through any means—it must be done personal[y, directly and distinctly by yourself. God help you to receive Christ into yourself! That point, surely, is plain enough. As a man himself receives food into himself, to become part of himself, so must you and I receive the Lord Jesus into ourselves, for ourselves, to be interwoven with ourselves, so that we two shall be one!

This participation is not only personal, but it is distinctly inward. There is no receiving Christ by any exercise of the flesh, by anything that we can do externally. It is within that we are to receive Christ, with our heart, with our spirit. We are not to regard Him only as yonder on the Cross, but as formed in us the hope of glory, as coming into us to sit as King upon His Throne and to reign within us—for it is into our innermost nature that we are to receive the blessed Truth of God concerning Christ and His Atonement.

And it is an active reception, too. A man can receive some things into himself passively. Oil may penetrate into his flesh. Certain drugs may be injected beneath the skin and so may permeate the blood, but eating is an active exercise, a thing done by a man, not in his sleep, but with the full intent that he may receive into himself that which he eats. So must you receive the Lord Jesus Christ, feeding upon Him willingly, actively taking Him into yourself with the full consent and power of your whole being. You know, also, that eating arises from a sense of need and it leads to a sense of satisfaction. The most of people eat because they are hungry, though I suppose there are some who eat simply because the time has come, whether they need food or not. I have heard that the best time for a poor man to have his dinner is when he can get it, and that the best time for a rich man to have his dinner is when he wants it. And I think there is something in the saying. In this spiritual feeding, if you will feed on Christ when you can get Him, you may begin at once. What is needed in most cases is an appetite, but when a man has an appetite for Christ, when he says, “I must have pardon, for I am a sinner. I must have a renewed heart, for I have an evil one. I must have spiritual life, for I am in a state of spiritual death,” then he has the appetite which only Christ can satisfy! Then, when he receives Christ into his heart, there follows a sense of satisfaction as you have sometimes seen in the case of a person who has enjoyed a good meal. He needs no more. He lies down and is perfectly content.

Oh, but what a satisfaction Christ brings to the soul that feeds upon Him! When you have fed on Him, dear Friends, how full you have become—not to repletion, for the more you receive of Him the more He will enlarge your capacity—but you have received Him to the fullness of satisfaction! Do you recall that Psalm where David says, “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips”? Oh, yes, and it is so with us when we receive Christ into our hearts! Then are we filled to the full and this is the kind of participation which is meant in our text—we are to “eat those things wherewith the Atonement was made”—we are to receive Christ personally, inwardly, actively, because of our soul’s hunger and that our feeding upon Him may lead to an intense satisfaction with Him! Do you want another Savior, you who have received Christ Jesus into your souls? I know that you do not! Is there something, after all, that you desire to add to the blessed Lord and His Divine work? I know that there is not, for, “you are complete in Him”—perfectly satisfied with Christ Jesus, filled up to the brim with all spiritual blessings!

Thus I have tried to describe this participation. Now I want you to practice it. Notice that the text says, “They shall eat those things wherewith the Atonement was made.” Among, “those things,” there was flesh, there was bread in the basket and so forth. And they were to eat of all those things. I gather from this injunction that you and I must endeavor to feed upon all that makes up the Atonement and all that is connected with the Atonement. For instance, let us feed upon the Father’s love that gave the Lord Jesus Christ to bleed and die. Then let us feed on the fact of the Divine Person of the Lord Jesus. Oh, what a blessed loaf that is! What is the use of a Savior to me if He is not Divine? I am sure that nothing short of Deity can ever save such a soul as mine from the sin in which it is found! But Christ is “very God of very God,” so I feed upon that glorious Truth of God! Will not you do the same, dear Friends? Then feed upon the fact of His perfect Humanity, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, born of a human mother, as certainly Man as we are. Oh, there is many a satisfying meal in the blessed Doctrine of the true and indisputable Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Then, when you have fed upon Christ’s Deity and Humanity, feed upon the willingness with which He came to save us. Long before He was born into this world, His delights were with the sons of men and He looked forward with joy to the time of His appearing. “Lo I come,” He said, “in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will, O My God.” In the fullness of time He came, leaping over the mountains, skipping over the hills, that He might save His people! It is no unwilling Savior who has come to save you and me, Beloved. Feed on that sweet Truth of God. Think of the love that did lie at the back of it all, the love He had to His Church and people, which moved Him to lay aside all His Glory and take upon Himself all our shame—to surrender the ineffable splendor of His Throne—to be nailed up to the shameful Cross! O Brothers and Sisters, there is a great feast for the soul in the love of Christ! This is “butter in a lordly dish.” There was never such wine, even at a king’s marriage, as that which Christ Himself made, and we can truly say to Him, “You have kept the best wine until now.”

Yes, but I believe that there is food for us at every stage of the Redeemer’s passion. There are sweet fruits to be gathered even in dark Gethsemane. There are precious clusters of the vine to be found at Gabbatha, the pavement where the cruel scourges made the sacred drops roll. What food there is for our souls upon Calvary! Every item of our Lord’s death is sacred! We would not omit any of the details of His suffering, for some strike one mind and some strike another, but could we go through the whole history of our Savior, from the agony in Gethsemane till He said, “It is finished,” we should find all the way full of food for our souls! Where are there such pastures as those that grow on Calvary? Sharon, you are altogether outdone! O plains that fed the flocks of old, you are barren compared with this little hill whereon the Savior poured out His soul unto death! Try, dear Christian Friends, to feed on all these things! I cannot keep you to do it, now, but at such times as you can get an hour, or even a few minutes, say to yourself, “This is all spiritual food for me. I am to feed on ‘those things wherewith the Atonement was made.’”

Before I pass to the second division, I want to tell you one more thing about this participation which, I think, enables it, and lifts it altogether out of the commonplace, namely, that this feeding of the priests—or, if you turn to the peace-offering, the feeding of the offerer, himself—upon the sacrifice was in fellowship with God. When the sacrifice was offered, a part of it was burnt on the altar. That was God’s portion. The altar represented God and the Lord received the portion that was consumed by the fire. In the text before us, we see that the priest was also to take his share. It was a part of the same sacrifice, so both God and the priest fed upon it! You and I, Beloved, are to feed with God on Christ! That is a blessed sentence in the parable of the prodigal son where the father said, “Let us eat and be merry.” The father eats, and the family eats with him—“Let us eat, and be merry.” Oh, it is indeed joyful for us to remember that the Father finds satisfaction in the work and merit, the life and death of the Only-Begotten! God is well pleased with Jesus, for He has magnified the Law and made it honorable. And that which satisfies the heart of God is passed on to satisfy you and me. Oh, to think of our being entertained in such a fashion as this!

You remember that it is said of the elders who went up with Moses and Aaron into the mountain, that, “they saw God, and did eat and drink.” And surely we are as favored as they were, for now in Christ Jesus we behold the reconciled God and we eat and drink with Him. And while the Father smiles because the work of Atonement is finished, we sit down and we rejoice, too. Even we poor weeping sinners wipe our tears away and sing—

*“Blessed be the Father, and His love,  
To whose celestial source we owe  
Rivers of endless joy above,  
And rills of comfort here below.”*

If God is content, so are we! If the Judge of all the earth says, “It is enough,” we also say, “It is enough.” Our conscience echoes to the verdict of the Eternal. Christ has finished the transgression and made an end of sins, and brought in everlasting righteousness and, therefore, we enjoy the sweetest imaginable rest in Him! The Father’s delight is in Him and so is ours. Oh, who among us who knows the Lord Jesus, will stand back for a moment from this blessed eating with God? “They shall eat those things wherewith the Atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them.”

II. This brings me to my second point which is an advance upon the former one, namely, THE OFFICIAL CHARACTER OF THIS PARTICIPATION. In this particular form, the participation was for the priests only.

Now, mark this. The child of God, when he is first converted, does not know much about being a priest. He does not know much about doing anything for Christ. I heard of a good Scottish woman whose style of speech I cannot imitate, but I like the sense of it. Someone said to her, “How long have you been a servant of the Lord?” She said, “No, nay, but He has been a servant to me, for does He not say, ‘ I am among you as He that serves”? “Ah,” replied the other, “that is true. But, still, you have served the Lord.” “Yes,” she answered, “but it is such poor work I have ever done that I do not like to think of having done anything at all for Him. And I would rather talk of how long He has been doing something for me, than how long I have been doing anything for Him.” That is quite true! Yet, inasmuch as the Lord Jesus Christ died for us, we reckon that we all died and that He died for us that we, henceforth, should live, not unto ourselves, but unto Him and, by His Grace, so we do. If the Lord has really blessed us with His love, we have begun to be priests, and we have begun to serve Him.

Now the priest, because he is a priest, is the man who must take care that he feeds upon the Sacrifice. But how are we priests? I am not, now, talking about ministers, I am talking about all of you who love the Lord. Christ has made all of us who believe in Him to be kings and priests unto God—there is no priesthood in the world that is of God save the High Priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ and, next to that, the priesthood which is common to all Believers. And the idea of there being any priesthood on earth above and beyond the priesthood of all Believers is a false one, and there is no Scripture, whatever, to vindicate it, to justify it, or even to apologize for it—it is one of the lies of the Roman Catholic church! All Believers are priests, but they do not all fully recognize that great Truth of God. It is a pity they do not realize that glorious fact and so join in the Apostle John’s doxology, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

Being priests, they are, first of all, to offer themselves. What says the Apostle? “I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Now, you will never do this unless you feed upon Christ! I shall never be a sacrifice to God unless my soul is nourished upon the true and living Sacrifice, Christ Jesus, my Lord! To attempt sanctification apart from justification is to attempt an impossibility! And to endeavor to lead a holy life apart from the work of Christ is an idle dream! You priests who offer yourselves unto God must take care that it is all done through Christ who is in you.

Next, as priests, we are to intercede for others. A priest was chosen to offer prayer for others and every Christian ought to pray for those who are round about him. But you will never be men of prayer unless you feed on Christ, I am sure of that. If Christ is not in your heart, intercessory prayer will not be in your mouths. You will never be true pleaders with God for men unless you are, yourselves, true feeders upon the atoning Sacrifice of Christ.

A true priest is, next, to be a teacher. The Prophet Micah said, “The priest’s lips should keep knowledge,” and so should it be with all Christians. They are to teach others. But you cannot teach others what you do not know yourselves! And unless you are, first, partakers of the fruits, you will never be able to sow the seed. You must feed upon Christ in your inmost soul or else you will never speak of Him with any power to others.

Priests, again, were chosen from among men to have compassion on the ignorant and on such as were out of the way. That is your duty, too, as Christians—to look after the weak ones and the wandering ones—and to have compassion upon them. But, unless you live by faith upon the compassionate Savior, you will never keep up the life of compassion in your own soul! If Christ is not in you, neither will you be in the spirit of Christ, full of love to such as need your help. But, coming fresh from communion with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, your words of consolation will sweetly drop into afflicted hearts and will comfort them. You will have the tongue of an instructed one and be able to speak seasonable and sweet words to such as are weary. Take care, then, that you feed upon Christ.

I believe, also, that a Christian man is to act as a priest for a dumb world, and to express the worship of creation. It is he who is to chant creation’s hymn. It is his voice that must lift up the hallelujahs of the universe. The world lacks a tongue. Yon sea, with all its rolling billows, yet speaks not a word articulately. And yonder stars, with all their brilliance, cannot tell out the glory of God in human language, or, indeed, in any language at all! “There is no speech, nor language; their voice is not heard.” Nor can the sweet flowers, nor even the birds, in actual language tell of Him who made them and express their gratitude to Him. But you and I have a tongue, which is the glory of our frame, and with that tongue we are to open our mouths for the dumb and speak the praises of God for all creation! Take care that you do it! Before you lies the world, like a great organ, all ready to sound forth the sweetest music, but it cannot play itself. Those little hands of yours, if they are instinct with heavenly life, are to be laid among the keys and you are to fetch forth strains of mighty hallelujahs unto Him who has made all things and sustains all things by the power of His hands! Feed on Christ and you will be able to do this, for He speaks to reveal God and He becomes the tongue of men unto the Father! Live on Him and you shall learn the art of speaking for creation unto the Creator.

III. Now I have done when I have very solemnly noticed, in the third place, THE ABSOLUTE PROHIBITION. “They shall eat those things wherewith the Atonement was made. . . but”—“but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy.”

Who was “a stranger” in such a case as this? Everybody was a stranger, in the matter of the priests, but such as belonged to the priests. And strangers might not partake of the sacrifices with the priests. The prohibition is clearly given in the 22nd Chapter of Leviticus, at the 10th verse—“There shall no stranger eat of the holy thing: a sojourner of the priest”—that is, a mere guest—“or an hired servant, shall not eat of the holy thing.” Listen. You who only come into the House of God just to look on, you who do not belong to the family, but are only sojourners— welcome as sojourners—but you may not eat of the Holy Thing! You cannot enjoy Christ, you cannot feed upon the precious Truth connected with Him, for you are only a sojourner. I am very sorry, on the first Sabbath night in the month, and I think that some of you must feel very sorry and sad, too. There is to be the Communion, the Lord’s Supper. You have been hearing the sermon, but you have to go away from the table, or else to take your place among the spectators. You are only sojourners—you do not belong to the family and dare not profess that you do! You are only a sojourner, or a stranger.

And it was the same in the case of a hired servant. He might not eat of the holy thing, and he who only follows Christ for what he can get out of Him—he who works for Christ with the idea of meriting salvation, hoping that he may earn enough to save himself by his works—is only like a priest’s hired servant. He says, “I do my best and I believe that I shall go to Heaven.” Yes, just so. You are a hired servant, even though Heaven seems to be the wage you are expecting, but you may not eat of the Holy Thing.

Now notice what is written in Leviticus 22:11. “But if the priest buys any soul with his money, he shall eat of it.” Is not that a blessing? If the Lord Jesus Christ has bought you with His precious blood, and you by faith recognize yourself as not your own, but bought with a price—then you may eat of the Sacrifice. “If the priest buys any soul with his money” —it may be a very strange person, somebody for whom you and I would not give two pence—but if the Great High Priest has bought any soul with His money, “he shall eat of it.”

“And he that is born in his house, shall eat of his meat.” There is the Doctrine of Regeneration, as the former part of the verse spoke of Redemption. If you have been born again, and are no more in the house of Satan, but in the house of the Great High Priest, you may come and eat of this spiritual meat! If you have the blood-mark, having been bought by Christ, and if you have the life-mark, having been quickened by the Spirit, and born into the family of Christ, then come along with you! Though least and weakest of them all, come and welcome!

Listen to this next verse—“If the priest’s daughter also is married to a stranger, she may not eat of an offering of the holy things.” She is the priest’s daughter, mark you. Nobody denies that—and shall not the child partake with the father? No, not if she is married to a stranger. She now bears her husband’s characteristics. She has given herself up to him. She is no longer her father’s, she belongs to her husband. Oh, is there anybody here who once made a profession of religion, but who has gone aside? Have you got married to the world? Have you got married to amusements and Sabbath-breaking? Have you got married right away from the Priest, your Father—right away from the Church of Christ— right away from the people of God? Then you cannot eat of the Holy Thing!

Yet listen to one other verse. “But if the priest’s daughter is a widow, or divorced, and has no child, and is returned unto her father’s house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father’s meat; but there shall no stranger eat thereof.” Perhaps there is someone here who says, “I am a widow.” I do not mean that your natural husband is dead, but that the world has become dead to you! You went and married into the world for wealth and you have lost it. You are poor now, riches are dead to you. You used to be such a fine woman, but now your face has lost its comeliness, your beauty is dead. Everybody used to admire your talents, but you have not any talent, now, and they all give you the cold shoulder. Ah, well, I am not sorry that the world has cast you out and cast you off! Perhaps the men of the world have said concerning you, “We will have no more to do with him.” You are divorced, you see.

Long ago, I was divorced from the world. I got a bill of divorcement pretty quickly when I began to preach the Gospel in London! If it were worth while, I could publish some of the cruel and false things that men said. According to them, I was the biggest charlatan and the greatest hypocrite and deceiver who ever lived. That was my bill of divorcement— the world said, “We have done with you”—and I replied, “I have done with you.” And so we parted. There were not many words on my part, but there were a great many on theirs. Well, if it is so with you. If you feel that the world has done with you and you have done with the world, and you are willing to come back to your Father’s house, just as in the days of your youth, come along with you! Come in and eat of His dainties, feed upon Christ on earth by faith, and then go up and feed on Him even to the fullest in Glory everlasting!

But you must get away from your stranger husband, for if you cleave to him, you will have to be counted with that which your heart lusts after. What you love shall label you. Where your delight is, where your treasure is, there your heart is—and there your portion is! But if the Lord will help you to escape right away from the clutches of error and sin, then it shall be with you as it was with the priest’s daughter—“If she is returned unto her father’s house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father’s meat.”

“But there shall no stranger eat thereof.” If you will not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you are a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel— and there is no way of your being made near but by the blood of the Cross. If you believe in Him, you are “no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” But if you are not bought with His money, or born in His house, then you must remain strangers—and there is no blessing for you, no comfort for you!

The other day, one who had been attending a religious service and mocking and jesting at everything sacred, said, when he was talked to about it, “Oh, but I am a Christian! Jesus died for me.” It was a lie! He had neither part nor lot in the matter, or else he could not have acted profanely as he did! And there are others who talk as he did, but I tell you, Sirs, whatever you say, this is what God says, “A stranger shall not eat thereof.” If you have not been born again, you cannot feed upon Christ! But, oh, if you will look to Him who died for the sinner, then you shall feed upon Him who lives for the saint! God Bless you in both these respects, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **JOHN 6:41-71.**  
Verse 41. The Jews then murmured at Him—That is, at our blessed Lord. “The Jews then murmured at Him.”

41, 42. Because He said, I am the bread which came down from Heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it, then, that He says, I came down from Heaven? There are always some who complain that the Gospel is “too commonplace, too well-known.” They already know all that is to be known about it, just as these people knew the mother and father of our Lord Jesus. How could He, who was the son of the carpenter, have come down from Heaven? But this ought to have commended Him to them that though He was Divine, He became so truly Human and so perfectly took upon Himself our Nature as to be the son of Joseph—one whose father and mother they knew! And ought we not to be glad of a Gospel plain enough for a child to grasp, simple enough for the most ignorant to be saved by it? Let us not seek after signs and mysteries, but graciously accept the Gospel which the Lord Himself gives us.

43, 44. Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me draws him: and I will raise him up at the last day. This was high ground for Christ to take. It was as much as to say, “You need not murmur. I did not expect that you would believe in Me. I know that human nature is such that, without a Divine work upon the heart, man cannot come to Me, and will not believe in Me. I am not disappointed, or deceived, when you murmur among yourselves, ‘No mall can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me draws him.’”

45. It is written in the Prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that has heard, and has learned of the Father, comes unto Me. Nobody else will come to Christ. There is no real Christian in the world but is of God’s making. A Christian is a sacred thing, the Holy Spirit has made him so. It takes as much of God’s Omnipotence to make a Believer as to make a world. And only He that created the heavens and the earth can create even as much as a grain of true faith in the heart of man!

46. Not that any man has seen the Father, save He which is of God, He has seen the Father. The Divine Son has seen the Father. You and I are to believe—we cannot see as yet.

47. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on Me has everlasting life. He has it even now in possession—a life that can never die out is in the breast of every man who believes in Christ! Oh, what a joy is this!

48. I am that bread of life. Jesus is that bread which feeds the spiritual life and sustains the everlasting life.  
49, 50. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from Heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. The bread that feeds the undying life is Christ Jesus, Himself, whom we do spiritually feed upon, and who is the nourishment of our souls.  
51. I am the living bread which came down from Heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. Christ—God Incarnate—is the nourishment of faith, the spiritual food of the everlasting life! The new life which God puts into us is not natural, so as to be fed upon natural food, like bread and meat. But it is spiritual and it must live upon spiritual food. That food is nothing less than Christ Jesus, Himself.  
52-56. The Jews therefore said among themselves, saying, How can this Man give us His flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh, and drinks My blood, has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat, indeed, and My blood is drink, indeed. He that eats My flesh, and drinks My blood, dwells in Me, and I in him. These Jews would not understand Christ when He spoke very plainly. He did not, therefore, retract a single word that He had said, but as the first light had dazzled them— and willingly were they dazzled by it—He turned the lantern full upon their faces and made them blind, for the excessive light of the explanation was too much for them. It was not Christ’s intent to save them—He was making the Light of God, itself, to be blindness to them because they had already refused Him. And now the time was come when the heart of these people must be made yet more gross, that they should not see with their eyes, or hear with their ears! May the Lord never give us up to such a fate as that! It is a dreadful thing when the Light of the Gospel becomes the instrument of blinding men, and it still does so. After a certain degree of willful rejection of it, that which would have been a savor of life unto life can be turned into a savor of death unto death by men’s closing their hearts against it!  
Yet I wonder and am astonished at our Lord and Master’s course of proceeding, that here, when the men do not and will not see, He does but speak the Truth of God the more boldly! Let no man think that Jesus was here alluding to the eating of the bread and drinking of the wine in the Lord’s Supper! That ordinance was not instituted at that time and there could be no allusion to what did not then exist! It is quite in another sense, in a high spiritual sense, that our mind feeds upon the flesh and blood of Christ. That is to say, the fact that God was made flesh—the fact that Christ died for sin—these are the food of our souls, and thereon our faith grows, and our spirit is strengthened.  
57, 58. As the living Father has sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eats Me, even he shall live by Me. This is that bread which came down from Heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eats of this bread shall live forever. This is spiritual feeding upon spiritual Truth.  
59-62. These things said He in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum. Many, therefore, of His disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can bear it? When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples murmured at it, He said unto them, Does this offend you? What and if you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before? Let our Master teach us what He pleases, nothing ought to offend a disciple of Christ! It is ours to sit at His feet and receive all His words without quibbling. But if we do not believe what He tells us upon some elementary points, what should we do if He were to reveal something more to us—and lead us into the higher and deeper doctrines of His Word?  
63. It is the Spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing. That is to say, it is the meaning of Christ’s words that gives life, not the words, themselves. And if we stumble at the letter, and begin to ask, “How can we eat the flesh of Christ?” taking that expression literally, it will kill us! We need to get into the spirit of what He says, the true spiritual meaning of it, for that is where the life lies.  
63, 64. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. Could that be truly said of any here? “There are some of you that believe not.” If so, you know what becomes of unbelievers—you certainly cannot attain the blessings promised to faith. May God grant that, before this day is quite over, there may not be left one among you that believes not!  
64-66. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him. And He said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father. From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. So it seems that a man may be recognized as a disciple of Christ and yet he may go back and walk no more with Him. Oh, that we may be real disciples—disciples indeed! Oh, that we may be part and parcel of Christ, true branches of the true Vine, living members of the living body of Christ!  
67. Then said Jesus unto the twelve. The choice and pick of all His followers. “Then said Jesus unto the twelve.”  
67, 68. Will you, also, go away? Then Simon Peter. Who was the readytongue of the Apostles. “Then Simon Peter.”

68. Answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the Words of eternal life. That was a very conclusive way of answering one question by another—“Will you also go away?” “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the Words of eternal life.” Brother, Sister, if we wandered from Christ, where could we go? And how can we leave Him when He has the Words of eternal life?

69-71. And we believe and are sure that You are that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spoke of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray Him, being one of the twelve.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—296, 786, 313.

SPECIAL NOTICE  
The August number of The Sword and the Trowel contains a full report of the services in connection with the stone-laying at Beulah Baptist Chapel, Bexhill-on-Sea, together with an article by Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon upon the same subject, and reproductions of two photographs taken during the proceedings. There are also the usual items of interest—The Question Oak. The Pastor’s Page. Our Own Men and their Work, Indian Incidents and Illustrations. The By-Ways and By-Gones of Life, etc. etc. Dr. McCaig’s Conference Paper and an illustrated letter from Pastor J. G. Potter on Famine Relief in India. Extra copies should be ordered at once, price 8d., post free 4d., of Messrs. Passmore and Alabaster, or through

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SILVER SOCKETS—REDEMPTION THE FOUNDATION!  
NO. 1581

DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 30, 1881, **BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, When you take the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto  
the Lord, when you number them; that  
there be no plague among them,  
when you number them. This  
they shall give, everyone that passes among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel  
of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty  
gerahs): an half shekel shall be  
the offering of the Lord. Everyone that passes among them that are numbered, from twenty years old  
and above, shall give an offering unto the  
Lord. The rich shall not give more,  
and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to  
make an atonement for their souls. And  
you shall take the atonement money  
of the children of Israel, and shall  
appoint it for the service of the  
Tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a  
memorial unto the children of Israel before  
the Lord, to make an atonement for their souls.”  
Exodus 30:11-16.**

**“A bekah for every man, that is, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for that went to be  
numbered, from twenty years old and  
upward, for six hundred and three  
thousand and five hundred and  
fifty men. And of the hundred talents of  
silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary,  
and the sockets of the veil; an hundred  
sockets of the hundred talents, a talent for a socket.” Exodus 38:26-27.**

WILL you kindly open your Bibles to Exodus 30, for I must commence my discourse by expounding that passage. When the account was taken of the number of the children of Israel, the Lord commanded that every male over 20 years of age should pay half a shekel as Redemption money, confessing that he deserved to die, acknowledging that he was in debt to God and bringing the sum demanded as a type of a great Redemption which would, by-and-by, be paid for the souls of the sons of men. The truth was thus taught that God’s people are a redeemed people—they are elsewhere called, “the redeemed of the Lord.” If men reject the Redemption which He ordains, then they are not His people, for of all His chosen it may be said—“The Lord has redeemed Jacob and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he.”

Whenever we attempt to number the people of God, it is absolutely necessary that we count only those who at least profess to have brought the Redemption price in their hands and so have taken part in the Atonement of Christ Jesus. David, when he numbered the people, did not gather from them the Redemption money and, therefore, a plague broke out among them. He had failed in obedience to the Lord’s ordinance and counted his subjects, not as redeemed people, but merely as so many heads. Let us always beware of estimating the number of Christians by the number of the population of the countries called Christian, for the only true Christians in the world are those who are redeemed from iniquity by the blood of the Lamb and have personally accepted the ransom which the Lord has provided—personally brought their Redemption money in their hands by taking Christ to be theirs and presenting Him, by an act of faith, to the great Father.

God has upon earth as many people as believe in Jesus Christ and we dare not count any others to be His but those who can say, “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” We must not count heads which know about Christ, but hands which have received the Redemption money and are presenting it to God. We must not count persons who are called Christians by courtesy, but souls that are Christly in very fact because they have accepted the atoning Sacrifice and live before God as “redeemed from among men.” Observe that this Redemption, without which no man might rightly be numbered among the children of Israel, lest a plague should break out among them, must be personal and individual. There was not a lump sum to be paid for the nation, or 12 amounts for the 12 tribes—each man must bring his own half shekel for himself.

So there is no Redemption that will be of any use to any of you unless it is personally accepted and brought before God by faith. You must, each one, be able to say for yourself concerning the Lord Jesus, “He loved me and gave Himself for me.” The doctrine of general redemption, which teaches men to say, “Oh, yes, we are all sinners, you know. Christ died for us, for He died for us all,” lays a very poor foundation for comfort. We need not so much a general as a personal redemption—a Redemption which actually redeems and redeems us as individuals! The great Sacrifice for the sin of man must become to us a personal Atonement, for only so can we realize its efficacy. You must, each one, bring Christ to the Father, taking Him into your hands by simple faith. No other price must be there and that price must be brought by every individual, or else there is no acceptable coming to God.

It was absolutely essential that each one should bring the half shekel of Redemption money, for Redemption is the only way in which you and I can be accepted of God. If birth could have done it, they had the privilege beyond all doubt, for they had Abraham as their father! They were lineally descended from the three great Patriarchs and they might have said, “We are Abraham’s seed and were never in bondage to any man.” No, but salvation is not of blood, nor of birth, nor of the will of the flesh—salvation is by Redemption—and even the true child of Abraham must bring his Redemption money. So must you, you child of godly parents, find salvation by the Redemption which is in Christ Jesus, or be lost forever!

Do not believe the falsehood of certain modern divines that you children of godly parents do not need to be converted because you are born so nobly and brought up so tenderly by your parents! You are, by nature, heirs of wrath even as others. “You must be born again” and you must be personally redeemed as well as heathen children, or else you will perish, though the blood of ministers, martyrs and Apostles should be running in your veins! Redemption is the only ground of acceptance before God—not godly birth or pious education. There were many, no doubt, in the camp if Israel who were men of station and substance, but they must bring the ransom money or die amid their wealth! Others were wise-hearted and skillful in the arts, yet they must be redeemed or die. Rank could not save the princes, nor office spare the elders—every man of Israel must be redeemed and no man could pass the muster-roll without his half shekel, whatever he might say, or do, or be.

God was their God because He had redeemed them out of the house of bondage and they were His people because He had “put a redemption between His people and the Egyptians.” Well did David ask, “What one nation in the earth is like Your people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to Himself?” Note well that every Israelite man must be, alike, redeemed and redeemed with the like—with the same Redemption. “The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel.” Every man requires Redemption, the one as well as the other. Kings on their thrones must be redeemed as well as prisoners in their dungeons. The philosopher must be redeemed as well as the peasant. The preacher as much as the profligate and the moralist as certainly as the prostitute or the thief. The Redemption money for every person must be the same, for all have sinned and are in the same condemnation!

And it must be a Redemption that meets the Divine demand because, you see, the Lord not only says that they must each bring half a shekel, no more, no less, but it must be, “the shekel of the sanctuary”—not the shekel of commerce, which might be debased in quality or diminished by wear and tear, but the coin must be according to the standard shekel laid up in the Holy Place. To make sure of it, Moses defines exactly how much a shekel was worth and what its weight was—“A shekel is twenty gerahs.” So you must bring to God the Redemption which He has appointed—the blood and righteousness of Christ—nothing more, nothing less! The ransom of Christ is perfection and from it there must be no varying. The price must satisfy the Divine demand and that to the fullest.

Note that the price appointed did effectually redeem so far as the type could go. Some rejoice in a redemption which does not redeem, for the general redemption by which all men are supposed to be redeemed leaves multitudes in bondage and they go to Hell in spite of their kind of redemption! Therefore do we preach a particular and special Redemption of God’s own chosen and believing people—these are effectually and really ransomed—and the precious price once paid for them has set them free! Neither shall any plague of vengeance smite them, for the Redemption money has procured them eternal deliverance! This type is full of instruction. The more it is studied, the richer will it appear. Every man that is numbered among the children of Israel and permitted to serve God by going out to war, or to take upon the duties of citizenship, must, as he is numbered, be redeemed.

So must every one of us, if we are truly God’s people and God’s servants, find our right to be so in the fact of our Redemption by Christ Jesus our Lord. This is the joy and glory of each one of us—“You have redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth.”

Now we turn to the second of our texts, and there we learn a very remarkable fact. In the 38th chapter, verse 25, we find that this mass of silver which was paid, whereby 603,050 men were redeemed, each one paying his half shekel, came to a great weight of silver. It must have weighed something over four tons and this was dedicated to the use of the Tabernacle—the special application of the precious metal was to make sockets into which the boards which made the walls of the Tabernacle should be placed. The mass of silver made up 100 sockets and these held up the 50 boards of the holy place. They were in a wilderness, constantly moving and continually shifting the Tabernacle. Now, they might have dug out a foundation in the sand, or, on coming to a piece of rock where they could not dig, they might have cut out foundations with great toil. But the Lord appointed that they should carry the foundation of the Tabernacle with them!

A talent of silver, weighing, I suppose, close upon 100 pounds, was either formed into the shape of a wedge, so as to be driven into the soil, or else made into a solid square plate to lie upon it. In the wedge or plate were made mortises into which the tenons of the boards could be readily fitted. These plates of silver fitted, the one into the other, tenon and mortise wise, and thus they made a compact parallelogram, strengthened at the corners with double plates and formed one foundation, moveable when taken to pieces, yet very secure as a whole. This foundation was made of the Redemption money. See the instructive emblem!

The foundation of the worship of Israel was Redemption! The dwelling place of the Lord their God was founded on Atonement! All the boards of incorruptible wood and precious gold stood upon the Redemption price! The curtains of fine linen, the veil of matchless workmanship and the whole structure rested on nothing else but the solid mass of silver which had been paid as the Redemption money of the people! There was only one exception and that was at the door where was the entrance to the Holy Place. There the pillars were set upon sockets of brass, perhaps because as there was much going in out of the priests, it was not meet that they should tread upon the token of Redemption. The blood of the Paschal Lamb, when Israel came out of Egypt, was sprinkled on the lintel and the two side posts—and out of reverence to that blood it was not to be sprinkled on the threshold.

Everything was done to show that Atonement is to be the precious foundation of all holy things and everything done to prevent a slighting or disregard of it. Woe unto that man of whom it shall ever be said, “He has trodden under foot the Son of God and has counted the blood of the Covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing.” I do not, for a moment, bring before you the type of the text as a proof of doctrine! I intend to use it simply as an illustration. It seems to me to be a very striking, full and suggestive emblem, setting forth most clearly certain precious Truths of God. I feel I am quite safe in using this illustration because it is one among a group of acknowledged types and could not have been given without a reason. I do not see why they could not have made the foundation sockets of iron, or why they could not have been content with tent pins and cords as in other cases of tent building. I see no reason, in the necessity of the case, why they must be sockets of silver—there must have been another reason. Why was that particular silver prescribed? Why must the Redemption money be used and nothing else? Truly there is teaching here if we will but see it!

Moreover, this does not stand alone, for when the Tabernacle was succeeded by the Temple, Redemption was still conspicuous in the foundation. What was the foundation of the Temple? It was the rock of Mount Moriah. And what was the hill of Moriah but the place where, in many lights, Redemption and Atonement had been set forth? It was there that Abraham drew the knife to slay Isaac—a fair picture of the Father offering up His Son. It was there the ram was caught in the thicket and was killed instead of Isaac—fit emblem of the Substitute accepted instead of man! Later still, it was on Mount Moriah that the angel, when David attempted to number the people without Redemption money, stood with his sword drawn. There David offered sacrifices and burnt offerings. The offerings were accepted and the angel sheathed his sword—another picture of that power of Redemption by which mercy rejoices against judgment!

And there the Lord uttered the memorable sentence. “It is enough, stay now your hand.” This, “enough,” is the crown of Redemption! Even as the Great Sacrifice, Himself, said, “It is finished,” so does the Great Accepter of the Sacrifice say, “enough.” What a place of Redemption was the hill of Zion! Now, if the Temple was built on a mountain which must have been especially selected because there the types of Redemption were most plentiful, I feel that without an apology I may boldly take this first fact that the building of the Tabernacle in the wilderness was based and grounded upon Redemption money and use it for our instruction.

With this much of preface we will now fall to and feed upon the spiritual meal which is set before us. O for Divine Grace to feast upon the heavenly Bread that we may grow thereby! Spirit of the living God, be pleased to help us in this matter.

I. First, I want you to view this illustration as teaching us something about GOD IN RELATION TO MAN. The tent in the wilderness was typical of God’s coming down to man to hold communion with him—the fiery cloudy pillar visible outside and the bright light of the Shekinah, visible to him who was called to enter once a year into the innermost sanctuary, shining over the Mercy Seat—these were the tokens of the special Presence of the Deity in the center of the camp of Israel. The Lord seems to teach us, in relation to His dealing with men, that He will meet man in the way of Grace only on the footing of Redemption. He treats man concerning love and Grace within His holy shrine, but the basis of that shrine must be the Atonement!

Rest assured, dear Friends, that there is no meeting with God on our part except through Jesus Christ our Redeemer! I am of Luther’s mind when he said, “I will have nothing to do with an absolute God.” God out of Christ is a terror to us! Even in Christ, remember, He is a consuming fire, for even, “our God is a consuming fire.” But what He must be out of Christ may none of us ever know—

*“Till God in human flesh I see,  
My thoughts no comfort find.  
The holy, just and sacred Three  
Are terrors to my mind!  
But if Immanuel’s face appears,*

*My hope, my joy begins!  
His name forbids my slavish fear,  
His Grace removes my sins.”*

You must not attempt to have audience with God, at first, upon the footing of election. It were presumptuous to attempt to come to the electing Father except through the atoning Son. “No man,” says Christ, “comes to the Father but by Me.” Never attempt to speak with God on the footing of your own sanctification, for very soon you will come to bringing your legal righteousness before Him and that will provoke Him.

Always enter the Holy Place with the thought, “I know that my Redeemer lives.” “Not without blood.” Remember that! Into the Holy Place went the high priest once every year, “not without blood.” There can be no coming of God to man on terms of peace except through the one great Sacrifice—that must be the foundation of it all. No, and not only God’s coming to us, but God’s abiding with us is upon the same foundation, for the Tabernacle was, so to speak, the House of God—the place where God especially dwelt among His people, as He said, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them.” But He never dwelt among them in anything but in a tent that was set upon the silver of the Redemption money and you, dear Friend, if you have ever walked with God, can only maintain your fellowship by resting where you did at first—as a poor sinner redeemed by your Savior.

They have asked me to rise, sometimes, to a higher platform and come to God as a sanctified person. Yes, but a rock, though it may be lower than the little wooden stage which some erect upon it, is safer to stand upon! And I believe that those who walk with God according to their attainments and imaginary perfections, have climbed up to a rotten stage which will fall under them before long. I know no mode of standing before God today but that which I had at first. I am still unworthy in myself, but accepted in the Beloved! Guilty in myself and lost and ruined—but still received, blessed and loved because of the Person and work of Christ. The Lord cannot dwell with you, my dear Friend—you will soon have broken fellowship and be in the dark if you attempt to walk with Him because you feel sanctified, or because you have been active in His service, or because you know much, or because you are an experienced Believer.

No! No! No! The Lord will only abide with us in that Tabernacle whose every board is resting upon the silver foundation of Redemption by His own dear Son! There can, Beloved, be no sort of communion between God and us except through the Atonement. Do you need to pray? You cannot speak with God except through Jesus Christ! Do you wish to praise? You cannot bring the censer full of smoking incense except through Christ! It is only within that foundation of silver that you can speak to God, or hear Him speak comfortably with you. Would you hear a voice out of the excellent Glory? Do you pray that the great Father would speak with you as with His dear children? Expect it through Jesus Christ, for, “through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” Even unto the Father, though we are children, we have no access except through Jesus! The tabernacle of communion even to him that lives nearest to God must be built upon the Redemption price. Free Grace and dying love must be the golden bells which ring upon our garments when we go into the Holy Place to speak with the Most High!

The Tabernacle was the place of holy service where the priests all day long offered sacrifices of one kind and another unto the Most High. And you and I serve God as priests, for He has made us a royal priesthood. But how and where can we exercise our priesthood? Everywhere as to this world. But before God, the foundation of the temple wherein we stand and the ground of the acceptance of our priesthood is Redemption! The priests offered their sacrifice not in groves of man’s planting, or on high hills which were the natural strength of the land, but within the space marked out by the silver slabs of atonement money—and so must we worship and serve within Redemption lines. If we come to the idea of legal merit and suppose that there is a natural goodness in our prayers, or in our praises, in our observances of Christian ceremonies, or in almsgiving, or in zealous testimony, we make a great mistake and we shall never be accepted.

We must bring our offerings unto that court which is fenced about by the Foundation most precious which God has laid of old, even the merit of His dear Son! We are accepted in the Beloved and in no other manner! We are shut in within the Foundation which Christ has laid of old, not with corruptible things as with silver and gold, but with His own most precious blood! Thus much, dear Brothers and Sisters, upon one view of this subject. May you learn much of God in His relation to man while you meditate thereon at your leisure and are taught of the Holy Spirit.

II. I think we may, in the second place, apply this illustration TO CHRIST IN HIS DIVINE PERSON. The Tabernacle was the type of our Lord Jesus Christ, for God dwells among men in Christ. “He tabernacled among us and we beheld His Glory,” says the Apostle. God dwells not in temples made with hands, that is to say, of this building, but the Temple of God is Christ Jesus, “in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Our Lord is thus the Tabernacle which the Lord has pitched and not man—and our first and fundamental idea of Him must be in His character as Redeemer. Our Lord comes to us in other characters and in them all, He is right glorious, but unless we receive Him as Redeemer we have missed the essence of His Character, the foundation idea of Him.

As the tent in the wilderness was founded upon the Redemption money, so our idea and conception of Christ must be first of all that, “He is the propitiation for our sins” and I say this, though it may seem unnecessary to say it, because Satan is very crafty and he leads many from the plain Truth of God by subtle means. I remember a Sister who had been a member of a certain denomination who was converted to God in this place, though she had been a professed Christian for years. She said to me “I have always believed only in Christ crucified—I worshipped Him as about to come in the Second Advent to reign with His people, but I never had a sense of guilt. Neither did I go to Him as putting away my sin and, therefore, I was not saved.”

When she began to see herself as a sinner, she found her need of a Redeemer. Atonement must enter into our first and chief idea of the Lord Jesus. “We preach Christ crucified”—we preach Him glorified and delight to do so—but still, the main point upon which the eye of a sinner must rest, if he would have peace with God, must be Christ crucified for sin. “God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Do, then, my dear Hearer, let the very foundation of your faith in Christ be your view of Him as ransoming you from the power of sin and Satan! Some say they admire Christ as an example and well they may! They can never find a better! But Jesus Christ will never be truly known and followed if He is viewed only as an example, for He is infinitely more than that! Neither can any man carry out the project of being like Christ unless he first knows Him as making atonement for sin and as giving power to overcome sin through His blood.

Some writers have looked upon Christ from one point of view and some from another—and there is no book that is more likely to sell than a Life of Christ—but the most essential view of Him is to be had from the foot of the Cross. No complete life of Christ has been written yet. All the lives of Christ that have yet been written amount to about one drop of broth, while the four Evangelists are as a whole bullock. The pen of Inspiration has accomplished what all the quills in the world will never be able to do again and there is no need they should. However much we dwell upon the holiness of our Lord, we cannot complete His picture unless we describe Him as the sinner’s ransom. He is white, but He is ruddy, too. Rutherford said, “O then, come and see if He is not a red man. In His suffering for us He was wet with His own blood. Is He not well worthy of your love?”

When He comes forth in the vesture dipped in blood many shun Him— they cannot bear the atoning sacrifice—but He is never in our eyes so matchlessly lovely as when we see Him bearing our sins in His own body on the Cross and putting away transgression by making Himself the Substitute for His people! Let this, then, be your basic idea of Christ—“He has redeemed us from the curse of the Law.” Indeed, in reference to Christ, we must regard His Redemption as the basis of His triumphs and His Glory— “the sufferings of Christ and the glory that shall follow.” We cannot understand any work that He has performed unless we understand His vicarious Sacrifice. Christ is a lock without a key; He is a labyrinth without a clue until you know Him as the Redeemer! You have spilt the letters on the floor and you cannot make out the Character of The Wonderful till first you have learned to spell the words—ATONEMENT BY BLOOD.

This is the deepest joy of earth and the grandest song in Heaven. “For You were slain and have redeemed us unto God by Your blood.” I beg you to observe, in connection with our text, that as the foundation of the Tabernacle was very valuable, so our Lord Jesus, as our Redeemer is exceedingly precious to us. His Redemption is made with His precious blood. The Redemption money was of pure and precious metal, a metal that does not lose weight in the fire. “The Redemption of the soul is precious.” What a Redemption price has Christ given for us! Yes, what a Redemption price He is! Well did Peter say, “Unto you that believe, He is precious”—silver and gold are not to be mentioned in comparison with Him.

To me it is very instructive that the Israelites should have been redeemed with silver in the form of half-shekels because there are many who say, “These old-fashioned divines believe in the mercantile idea of the Atonement.” Exactly so! We always did and always shall use a metaphor which is so expressive as to be abhorred by the enemies of the Truth of God! The mercantile idea of the Atonement is the Biblical idea of the Atonement. These people were redeemed, not with lumps of uncoined silver, but with money used in commerce. Paul says “You are not your own: you are bought”—listen—“with a price,” to give us the mercantile idea beyond all question! “Bought with a price” is doubly mercantile. What do you say to this, you wise refiners who would refine the meaning out of the Word of the Lord? Such persons merely use this expression about the “mercantile idea” as a cheap piece of mockery because in their hearts they hate the Atonement altogether—and the idea of Substitution and expiation by vicarious Sacrifice is abhorrent to them.

Therefore has the Lord made it so plain, so manifest, that they may stumble at this stumbling stone, “whereunto also,” I think, as Peter says, “they were appointed.” To us, at any rate, the Redemption price which is the foundation of all is exceedingly precious. But there is one other thing to remember in reference to Christ, namely, that we must each one view Him as our own, for out of all the grownup males that were in the camp of Israel, when they set up the Tabernacle, there was not one but had a share in its foundation. We read in Exodus 35:25 and 26, “And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats’ hair.”

The men could not spin, perhaps they did not understand that art, but every man had his half a shekel in the foundation. I want you to think of that. Each Believer has a share in Christ as his Redemption—no, I dare not say a share in Him, for He is all mine and He is all yours. Brothers and Sisters, have you, by faith, laid hold upon a whole Christ and said, “He has paid the price for me”? Then you have an interest in the very fundamental idea of Christ! Perhaps you are not learned enough to have enjoyed your portion in certain other aspects of our Lord, but if you are a Believer, however weak you are—though you are like the poor among the people of Israel—you have your half shekel in the foundation! I delight to think of that! I have my treasure in Christ—“my Beloved is mine.”

Can you say He is yours? I do not deny it. So He is, but, “He is mine.” If you deny that fact we will quarrel at once, for I do assert that, “my Beloved is mine.” Moreover, by His purchase, “I am His.” “So am I,” you say. Quite right! I am glad you are, but I know that, “I am His.” There is nothing like getting a firm, personal hold and grip of Christ—my half shekel is in the basis of the tabernacle—my Redemption money is in the divinely glorious building of Grace! My Redemption is in the death of Christ which is the Foundation of all!

III. Time fails me and yet I have, now, a third thought to lay before you very briefly. The tabernacle was a type Of THE CHURCH OF GOD as the place of Divine indwelling. What and where is the Church of God? The true Church is founded upon Redemption. Every board of shittim wood was shaped and mortised into the sockets of silver made of the Redemption money and every man that is in the Church of God is united to Christ, rests upon Christ and cannot be separated from Him. If that is not true of you, my dear Hearer, you are not in the Church of God! You may be in the Church of England or of Rome—you may be in this church or some other—but unless you are joined to Christ and He is the sole Foundation upon which you rest, you are not in the Church of God.

You may be in no visible church whatever, and yet, if you are resting upon Christ, you are a part of the true house of God on earth. Christ is a sure Foundation for the Church of God, for the Tabernacle was never blown down. It had no foundation but the talents of silver and yet it braved every desert storm. The wilderness is a place of rough winds—it is called a howling wilderness—but the sockets of silver held the boards upright and the holy tent defied the rages of the elements! To be united to Christ by faith is to be built on a sure Foundation! His Church will never be overthrown, let the devil send what hurricanes he may! And it was an invariable foundation, for the Tabernacle always had the same basis wherever it was placed. One day it was pitched on the sand; another on a good piece of arable ground; a third time on a grass plot and tomorrow on a bare rock—but it always had the same foundation. The bearers of the holy furniture never left the silver sockets behind. Those four tons of silver were carried in their wagons and put out first as the one and only foundation of the holy place!

Now, the learned tell us that the 19th Century requires “advanced thought.” I wish the 19th Century was over. I have heard it bragged about so much that I am sick of the 19th Century! We are told that this is too sensible a century to need or accept the same Gospel as the first, second and third centuries. Yet these were the centuries of martyrs; the centuries of heroes; the centuries that conquered all the gods of Greece and Rome; the centuries of holy glory—and all this because they were the centuries of the Gospel! But now we are so enlightened that our ears ache for something fresh—and under the influence of another gospel, which is not another—our beliefs are dwindling down from alps to anthills and we, ourselves, from giants to pigmies! You will soon need a microscope to see Christian faith in the land—it is getting to be so small and scarce!

By God’s Grace some of us abide by the Ark of the Covenant and mean to preach the same Gospel which the saints received at the first! We shall imitate those who, having had a silver foundation at the first, had a silver foundation for the Tabernacle, even till they came to the promised land! It is a foundation that we dare not change. It must be the same, world without end, for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever!

IV. Fourthly and lastly, I think this Tabernacle in the wilderness may be viewed as a type OF THE GOSPEL, for the Gospel is the Revelation of God to man. The tent in the wilderness was the Gospel according to Moses. Now, as that old Gospel in the wilderness was, such must ours be, and I want to say just two or three things very plainly and have done. Redemption, Atonement in the mercantile idea—must be the foundation of our theology—doctrinal, practical and experimental. As to doctrine, they say a fish stinks first at the head and men first go astray in their brains. When once there is anything wrong in your belief as to Redemption, you are wrong all through. I believe in the old rhyme—

*“What think you of Christ? is the test  
To try both your state and your scheme,  
You cannot be right in the rest*

*Unless you think rightly of HIM.”*  
If you get wrong on the Atonement, you have turned a switch which will run the whole train of your thoughts upon the wrong line. You must know Christ as the Redeemer of His people and their Substitute, or your teaching will give an uncertain sound. As Redemption must be the foundation of doctrinal divinity, so it must of practical divinity. “You are not your own: you are bought with a price,” must be the source of holiness and the reason for consecration. The man that does not feel himself to be specially “redeemed from among men,” will see no reason for being different from other men! “Christ loved His Church and gave Himself for it.” He who sees no special giving of Christ for His Church will see no special reason why the Church should give herself to Christ!

Certainly Redemption must be the foundation of experimental theology, for what is an experience worth that does not make us, every day, prize more and more the redeeming blood? Oh, my dear Friends, I never knew, though I had some idea of it, what a fool I was till of lately! I tell you that those dreadful pains which may even make you long for death will empty you right out and not only empty you, but make you judge yourself to be a hollow sham and cause you to loathe yourself—and then it is that you cling to Christ! Nothing but the atoning Sacrifice will satisfy me! I have read plenty of books on modern theology but none of them can heal so much as a pin’s prick in the conscience! When a man gets sick in body and heavy in spirit, he needs the old-fashioned Puritan theology—the Gospel of Calvin, the Gospel of Augustine, the Gospel of Paul, the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Our theology as a matter of experience must be based upon Redemption!

Ah, Brothers and Sisters, and not only our theology but our personal hope. The only Gospel that I have to preach is that which I rest upon myself—“Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” “For the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed.” “He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.” Oh, dear Hearers, build on that and you will never fail! But if you do not take Christ’s Redemption as the foundation of your hope—I do not care who you are—you may be very learned but you know nothing at all! The Lord grant you Grace to know that you know nothing and then you will know something! And when you have learned as much as that, may He teach you the Redemption of His Son and reveal Christ in you! This, Beloved, is, therefore, the burden of our service and the glory of our life.

Those silver sockets were very precious, but very weighty. I dare say the men who had to move them sometimes thought so! Four tons and more of silver make up a great load. O blessed, blissful draft, to have to put the shoulder to the collar to draw the burden of the Lord—the glorious weight of Redemption! My Soul, blessed are you to be made a laboring ox for Christ, always to be bearing among this people the divinely precious load of the Foundation which Christ has laid for His people! You, young Brothers that preach, mind you, always carry your four tons of silver—preach a full and rich Redemption, all of you! You who teach in the Sunday school, do not let the children have a place to live that has no foundation—the first wind will blow it over and where will they be—left naked under the ruins of that in which they had hoped!

Lay Christ for a foundation. You cannot do better, for God Himself has said, “Behold, I lay in Sion a chief Cornerstone, elect, precious.” Lay this silver foundation wherever you are! Yes, but though the ingots were heavy to carry, every Israelite felt proud to think that that Tabernacle had a foundation of silver. You Amalekites out there cannot see the silver footing of it all! You Moabites cannot perceive it! All you can see is the badger skins outside—the rough exterior of the tent. You say, “That tent is a poor place to be a temple—that Gospel is a very simple affair.” No doubt it is to you, but you never saw the silver sockets! You never saw the golden boards! You never saw the glory of the inside of the place lit up by the seven-branched candlesticks and glorious with the Presence of God. Brethren, Redemption is our honor and delight—

*“In the Cross of Christ I glory  
Towering o’er the wrecks of time:  
All the light of sacred story  
Gathers round its head sublime.”*

This the First and this the Last—the bleeding Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world and yet living and reigning when earth’s foundations shall dissolve! That blessed Lamb of God is in the midst of the Throne of God and His people shall all be with Him, forever triumphant! He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Foundation and the Headstone. O Savior of sinners, glory be to Your name! Amen and amen.

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INCENSE AND LIGHT  
NO. 1710

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 11, 1883, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresses the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations.”  
Exodus 30:7, 8.**

CERTAIN ceremonies under the Law were only of annual celebration, while other matters were of daily observation. And by the daily repetition they were intended to be set forth as eminently constant and perpetual. These daily ordinances were to be regarded by the children of Israel as of standing obligation, abiding types of constant necessity, never to be removed so long as the dispensation should last. When the priest went into the tabernacle, he could not enter it without being warned of sin and of sacrifice, for at the entrance of the holy place stood an altar of brass upon which there was offered, every morning, a lamb and every evening a lamb.

This taught that access to God was not possible except by expiation— expiation by bloody sacrifice, expiation by the death of a substituted victim—expiation which must continue as long as sin remained. You could not even enter into the first court without the sight of an altar, blood and fire—thus showing us that there is no coming to God, even on the ordinary level of Christian experience, apart from the Atonement made by our Lord Jesus, who is “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” You cannot be heard in penitent prayer, or receive pardon, or commence the life of faith, or be even a babe in Grace unless you know the great Truth of God, that the Lord “has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Without the shedding of blood, remission of sin and access to God are out of the question! Paul ascribes our drawing near unto the Lord to our Savior’s perfect Sacrifice, for he says, “You who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of Christ.”

Before the innermost sanctuary there hung a substantial veil and the entrance into the Holy of Holies was only permitted once in the year. If that veil had been lifted up so that we could enter, we would have found, at the door, a golden altar, to represent, again, our Lord Jesus Christ under another aspect—for on that golden altar there was offered a sweet perfume of precious spices, denoting His perpetual intercession on the behalf of His people and His enduring merits which are continually being presented by Himself before the Throne of the Most High. To go within the veil you must pass by the Altar of Incense. Learn, therefore, that to the door of the inner chamber of communion with God we must approach by the perfect merit of our redeeming Lord! We come not in our own merit, but we are “accepted in the Beloved.”

If we have ever been favored with high and holy communion with God, such as He reserves for favored saints. If we have been enabled to come boldly to the Throne of heavenly Grace and have looked into the tempered brightness of that Light of God which shines above the Mercy Seat, we have come only by virtue of the infinite merit of our Lord Jesus. The lowest form of communion in the outer court must be by the sacrifice of Jesus. And the highest form of communion, even that which is most intense and most delightful, is still by Christ. The incense sets forth His merit and that is not without blood, for once in the year the horns of the altar were smeared with the blood which had been carried within the veil. There was no coming within the veil without passing by the incense altar, even as there is no access to God but by the all-powerful mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ! Let us never forget this. Simple as the Truth of God is, we are apt to pass it by as of no force.

I am afraid we are apt to put the most important Truths into the background because they seem to be so elementary. But we ought to remember that they are elementary only because they are essential from first to last. Never try to draw near to God in prayer, or praise, or meditation, or Scripture reading, or holy service apart from Jesus Christ, or your attempt will be a failure. Through the wall of fire which surrounds the Throne of God, you can only pass by way of the one Door, namely, the body and blood of our great Mediator, Sacrifice and Substitute! Is not that Door sufficient? Why should we climb up some other way? If I am very heavy of heart, do not let me try to raise my spirits and so come in the power of human courage—let me but come just as I am, made bold through Him whose comforts delight my soul! If I feel that I have been sinning, do not let me try to get rid of my sin by some other process and then draw near to God. Let me come, sinner as I am, in the name of the sinner’s Savior, and so draw near to God, having washed my robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Jesus says, “I am the way”—why should we seek another? Have nothing to do with an absolute God—only deal with Him through a Mediator— and keep to that way, for no man comes unto the Father but by the Lord Jesus! Oh, you most experienced and privileged ones, take good note of the golden altar! And whenever you approach the Mercy Seat, let the cloud of its incense cover you and perfume your prayers! Hard by the golden altar, which was nearest to the Holy of Holies, stood the golden candlestick with its seven branches—these two instructive types were set near each other for a purpose which I would open up today. This candlestick was a matter of daily ordinance as much as the bronze Altar of Sacrifice, or the golden Altar of Incense—it was for continual use and was, therefore, dressed twice each day. We have a continual need of the precious Atonement of Christ, of the intercession of Christ and of the light of God’s Holy Spirit. These are not things for once in a year—these are matters for every day and all day—and, therefore, they were attended to both at morning and at evening as if to shut in all the hours of the day within two golden doors.

Every morning had its lamb, its burning incense and its lighted lamp. And the same pertained to every evening all the year round. Thus all days were fringed and bordered with this three-fold type—even as, at this time, all our days are sanctified by faith in the effectual expiation, joy in the prevailing intercession and delight in the clear shining of the Spirit which makes glad all who are in the house! This morning I desire to call your attention to the conjunction which was established by the Divine Law between the burning of the incense and the lighting of the lamps—these two things, being both of daily observance—were attended to at the same moment for reasons worthy of our study.

I. And first I call your attention to THE WONDERFUL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST FOR US AND THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN US. See how, on the grandest scale, the incense of intercession and the lamp of spiritual illumination are set side by side. He whose merit brings us life is in Divine alliance with Him who brings us light! Indeed, there is such unity between them that Jesus, Himself, is said to be a Light to lighten the Gentiles and the Glory of His people Israel. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ brings with it the communion of the Holy Spirit, for the Father has joined them together!

Note that we have these both revealed in their fullness at the same time. When our Lord ascended on high to plead before the Throne of God, the Spirit descended to abide in the Church! After the Lord was taken up, the disciples received the promise of the Father and were illuminated by the Holy Spirit! Jesus, our great High Priest, presented the sweet savor of His own Person and work before the eternal Throne of God and then came the Spirit of God as tongues of fire lighting up the sons of men and making them to be as candles of the Lord! Well said the Apostle at Pentecost— “This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being exalted by the right hand of God and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has shed forth this, which you now see and hear.” I say the two come historically together and we must forever connect in our meditations the ascended Savior’s intercession and the illumination of the saints by the descended Spirit.

Now, as they were connected historically, so are they continually connected as a matter of fact. At this day it is as it was at Pentecost—our Lord has not ceased to intercede and the Spirit has not ceased to illuminate! Herein lies our hope for our own eternal salvation, in the ceaseless plea and the quenchless light! For the working out of that which God is working in us, both to will and to do of His own good pleasure, we have these two guarantees and helps—the Savior praying and the Spirit shining! Jesus is pleading and, therefore, our faith fails not when Satan sifts us as wheat. The Spirit is working and, therefore, the light of our faith is sustained by a secret mystic oil which prevents the enemy from putting it out. This is also our two-fold confidence when we go forth into the world to preach the Gospel! Unto the Lord Jesus, all power is given in Heaven and in earth, and He is “able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.”

The Church of God must succeed in her mission because her errand is the object of the continual prayers of her living Lord. But she has her second help, namely the Comforter, who abides with us and goes forth with the Word that we preach, making it potent for the conversion of the sons of men. We have the incense of Christ’s merit pleading with God and the light of God’s Spirit pleading with men—we have Christ as an Advocate with God and the Holy Spirit as an Advocate with men! What more is needed? What joy and confidence we ought to feel in the work of the Lord since Jesus is pleading and the Spirit is striving at the same time—the incense rising, filling earth and Heaven with its sweetness—and the Spirit brightly shining to the comfort and delight of those who go forth into the darkness with the name of Jesus on their lips! Joy to those who sit in darkness and in the valley of the shadow of death, for even for them is this seven-fold Light shining! And to their dank, pestilential abodes there comes the healing breath of sweet perfume from the Redeemer’s merits.

Furthermore, this conjunction, as it is a matter of history, and as it is continuous, will always be seen by us, personally, when our prayer is the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man that avails much. It needs the Trinity to make a Christian; it needs the Trinity to make a Christian prayer! The Father must hear us, else of what use are our cries? But the ordained Mediator must also stand between us and the Father, presenting His merit like the smoke of sweet incense, or else our prayer can never be accepted of God. And to come down closer to ourselves, the Spirit of God must also help our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, so that, whenever we pray, we must have these two in happy conjunction—intercession and enlightenment—incense and light!

My prayer as my own prayer is a poor, vain, defiled thing unless Jesus perfumes it! And it is a poor, dark, blind thing unless the Spirit of God has enlightened it! The Holy Spirit teaches us what to pray for and how to order our words aright. In His light we see light. We are in the dark till He shines like the golden candlestick and enables us to see our own need and the fullness of God’s Grace. It is His light that makes our heart to see the Lord in prayer, so that we seek the Lord by the light of His own Spirit. When prayer is the work of the Spirit in the heart, we are absolutely certain that it must succeed because the Spirit makes intercession in the saints according to the will of God. The Holy Spirit is one with the Father and He is most truly God, so that whatever He prompts us to pray for is the same thing which the Father has already decreed and eternally determined to bestow!

Our wishes and desires might never succeed with God if they were that and no more, for our thoughts are not His thoughts, neither are our ways His ways. But the thoughts and purposes of God, when these are photographed upon our spirit by the Holy Spirit, are the pictures of that which is assuredly to be, the prophecy of the determinate purpose and foreknowledge of God! What is written in yon sealed Book, upon which no human eye can gaze, is transcribed and written by the Spirit of God upon our hearts—and thus we pray for that very thing which God designs to give. There is an assured certainty of success to the prayer that is made in the power of the Spirit of God! While praying in the Holy Spirit we have the petition which we have asked of the Lord.

But then there is our second comfort, that Jesus stands ready to take every prayer of ours, however imperfect in knowledge, however feeble in expression, however marred with sorrow—and He presents the purified and perfected prayer with His own merit—and it is sure to speed. The sins of our holy things are seldom absent and, therefore, the constant need is that we have an Advocate. Blessed be God for that inspired Word, “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” True prayer is the offering to God of the merit of the Lord Jesus and, therefore, it must be accepted. What can be refused to merit such as His? True prayer is presented always by the Lord Jesus and, therefore, again, its certainty of efficacy—how can the Father deny anything to the Well-Beloved? It is written in the book of the Revelation—“And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.”

Can we doubt the success of prayers presented by the Angel of the Covenant? Assuredly not! There is such excess of perfection in Christ that it covers all our imperfection. There is such delicious sweetness in Christ to the Father that it effectually destroys the ill savor of anything that comes from us! And by its power, we, ourselves, become unto God a sweet savor—and so, also, are our prayers when they are presented by Jesus Christ! I like to think of the incense and of the lamp and, best of all, of the two together, for these two enable me to come boldly to the Throne of the heavenly Grace to obtain mercy and find Grace! Acceptance through sweet savor and light through Divine teaching are both mine as my soul waits upon God, with her expectation turned towards Him. Nor ought I to pass away from this first head without noting that in God’s drawing near to man there is the same conjunction of incense and light.

If the Glory of God were to come forth from between the cherubim. If it should come past the veil to be revealed throughout the world, that Glory would pass by these two, the golden Altar of Incense and the golden lamp of light! I mean this—God can have no dealing with men at all except through the merit of Christ and the light of the Spirit. As for the work of our Lord Jesus, you and I believe in the special Substitution of Christ for His elect—what we call, “Particular Redemption,” is held most firmly by us, for we believe that He redeemed us from among men and that He laid down His life for the sheep. Yet there are many passages of Scripture which speak of the work of Christ as having a universal scope. He is, “the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours, only, but for the sins of the whole world.” We are told that, by the Grace of God, “He tasted death for every man.”

Now, the Atonement of Christ is many-sided and may be viewed in very different lights. And while I trust we shall never be shaky about the question of His literal and effectual Substitution for His own chosen, whereby He offered for them a most sure, effectual and perfect satisfaction, so that no sin may ever be laid to their charge, yet there is, on the other hand, a general and universal view of His atoning work. God could not have dealt with the world at all in the way of mercy apart from the Sacrifice of Christ. The only thing which could have been done with the race of man was to have crushed it out forever if Christ had not stood for them as an Interposer. God was, in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. For the sake of the Man, Christ Jesus, God was able to look upon the fallen race in justice and yet prepare mercy for the guilty. Men owe their lives to the Sacrifice of Christ! Men owe the various alleviations of their sorrows by God’s gracious tenderness in Providence to the Sacrifice of Christ!

Above all, that free and honest proclamation of salvation to every man that will believe in Christ Jesus is rendered possible by the wondrous, perfect, unlimited, illimitable merit which resided in the Person and work of such an One as Jesus our Lord! The picture before you is a very beautiful one. Here are spices of the most precious kind, made up into a compound such as never was compounded for any other purpose. This Divinely-appointed mixture of sweet odors is placed in the censer upon the golden altar—that is to say, eternal acceptance is found in the Person of Christ. The incense is kindled with fire from on high. What follows? The spices begin to burn and up ascends a pillar of smoke. See how it rises high into the clear air! And as it rises it expands like a cloud, covers the sky, is wafted all around and perfumes the whole air with its own exceeding fragrance.

It rises and rises till it enters Heaven—yes, and the Heaven of heavens! Its sacred odor is recognized in every golden street! It fills every chamber of the glorious “house of God not made with hands!” It ascends to the Throne of His excellent Majesty and the Lord is well pleased with it—and again is fulfilled the words which are written concerning the burntoffering of Noah—“The Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in His heart, I will not again smite everything living as I have done.” Such is the merit of Christ, that through its sweet savor God looks down upon the world and treats it with long-suffering, tenderness and mercy. Is it not a blessed picture? As a just and holy God, He could not deal with a guilty race except through a mediatorial Sacrifice which should wrap mankind in its cloud of merit and reconcile the world unto Himself!

And now, you and I may follow in the tracks of God and go out and preach the Gospel to every creature without the slightest fear because the whole air is perfumed with the incense of a Savior’s mediatorial work! Although not perceptible by carnal sense, yet the inward spirit in the soul of the Believer perceives the grateful odor of the finished work of the everliving Savior sweetening all things, so that now we call nothing common or unclean, but are prepared to deliver our message to the vilest of the vile! God, in Christ, is kind, even, to the unthankful and the evil, and wills that supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men—and to every creature the Gospel should be preached. We shall not, however, proceed to any practical purpose unless we remember, next, that when God comes to deal with men, it is with the light of the Spirit as well as with the merit of Christ.

The golden candlestick is as necessary as the golden censer—for God’s work among men is always by His Spirit. He is seeking out His people as the woman sought for her lost piece of money and it is significant that it is written, “She did light a candle and sweep the house.” God, in His work of salvation, comes to men with the candle of His Word lighted through the Holy Spirit—and through the teaching of His Word from day to day, that Spirit shines as from a lantern among the sons of men! If you and I would follow in the tracks of God, as His dear children, imitating Him, we must take with us the light of the Gospel or the Glory of God and, by the power and light of His Spirit we must make known to men the unsearchable riches of Christ. To us Jehovah is our light and our salvation—and when we go in His name we must not go without the Light of God. Thus you see we come to God by the incense and the light—and even so does God come down to man to bless Him.

II. Secondly, our text seems to me to teach THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PRAYER AND KNOWLEDGE. The golden altar represents intercession offered by Christ and, also, the prayers of all the saints which are accepted through His intercession. And, as the candlestick stood side by side with it, and represented the light of the Spirit of Truth, so must true prayer and true knowledge never be separated. So I gather, first, that prayer should be attended with knowledge. It is evil when men worship, they know not what. God is Light and He will not have His people worship Him in the dark. When they burn the incense, they must also light the lamp.

In the Romish Church the mass of the people repeat prayers in an unknown tongue, having no idea of what their meaning may be—this is both a grievous wrong to the people and a mockery of God! What can be the good of such prayers in the sight of Him who seeks those to worship Him who worship Him in spirit and in truth? Mere sounds without meaning are not prayer! Understanding, desire and heart must go with every word, or else the prayers are vain repetitions such as the heathen employ. Supplicants must know what they are asking, or they are not really asking. And you, dear people of God, please notice that the more Divine knowledge you get, all things being equal, the more complete will your prayers become.

“Grow in Grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”—light the lamp at the same time that you kindle the incense. For instance, when you pray, what prayer can there be without knowing God, our Father? How can you pray aright to an unknown god? The more knowledge of God, the more correct does prayer become! He that comes to God must believe that He is and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. What prayer can there be apart from the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ? If we know nothing of Him by whom we pray, how full of sins of ignorance will our prayers be! It is well, also, to have a deep, sensible knowledge of sin. Penitential prayers are impossible without this—and how can prayers be accepted if penitence is not mixed with our petitions?

We need, at the same time, that we have the knowledge of sin to have a knowledge of our own weaknesses. The man who is consciously weak, prays for strength, but he who dreams that he is strong, will not do so. You need to study yourselves before you pray, so as to ask for those things in which you are most deficient and for protection against those constitutional tendencies or besetting sins to which you are most subject. The prayer of ignorance is like an arrow shot by a blind man, which is not likely to hit the mark. In proportion as petitions arise from a heart fully instructed in its own necessities will they be likely to ask for the right blessings—and to be prepared aright before the Lord. David wished his prayers to be accepted and, therefore, he cried, “Let my prayer be set forth before You as incense.”

A supremely excellent piece of knowledge is to know the promises which we are to plead. Here you have the very sinews of prayer. When a man knows the promise suitable to his case and lays it before God, saying, “Do as You have said,” he presents the best form of supplication. Remember how Jacob pleaded with the Lord the sacred word of promise, saying, “You said, I will surely do you good”? When we have looked at all the bearings of the petition so as to make quite certain that it is a petition, the fulfillment of which will glorify God—when we see that it must be consistent with the Divine will because of the various statements which God has made in His Word and because of promises which He has given concerning the matter—then, with the lamp shining clearly upon us, we shall kindle the incense the more discreetly and boldly, and both our prayers and our meditations will be the more accepted of the Lord!

Do try, especially, dear Brothers and Sisters, you that pray in public, to light the lamps when you kindle the incense! It will be for the good of us all if petitions are thoughtful, suitable, Scriptural and withal fresh and hearty. Let us never degenerate into repeating the same expressions till they grow to be cant. Let us never drop into the use of hackneyed prayers for everything in general and for nothing in particular! But as instructed men, having thought of what we are going to say; having adapted our prayer to our circumstances and needs, let us order our case before the Lord and fill our mouth with arguments! Burn the incense of prayer in the light of the Spirit of Revelation, praying in the Holy Spirit!

But now turn the thought round the other way—knowledge should always be accompanied by prayer. Whenever we are taught of God, His teaching almost always comes in connection with prayer—but lest we should solely try to learn and forget to pray—let me remind you of a few particulars. Dear Brothers and Sisters, as a Christian you are a disciple, or student—be also a suppliant. When you are impressed with the greatness, or the goodness, or the immutability, or the faithfulness of God, straightway turn your impressions into supplications! Pray the great God to be gracious to you. Ask the unchangeable God to be the same to you— be the faithful God to keep His promises to you! Implore the mighty God to uphold you. As you learn more and more of God, place the light near the incense by using your knowledge in your pleadings. To employ all your knowledge as fuel for prayer will be the best way of utilizing your acquirements—it will stamp the Truth of God firmly on your memory and it will sanctify your heart.

When you know more of the Savior, pray your way to Him by it, as ships move into port by their sails. If you have seen His Manhood, go and plead His sympathy with you in your weakness! If you have thought more of His Deity, go and worship Him more reverently and pray that His Glory may be seen among the sons of men. Whatever point in the unutterable Glory of His perfection breaks most upon your mind, pray most that way—opening your window towards the sunrise. So will the Lord teach you more and so shall you have profited by that which you have learned. If, from day to day, my Brothers and Sisters, you learn more of your sinfulness, then you have more errands with which to come to the Mercy Seat. And if you make a new discovery by experience of your corruption and indwelling sin, fly at once to the Throne of Grace with your discovery lest it weigh you down and drive you to despondency.

Make a ladder of your needs with which to climb nearer to Heaven. The more your necessities, the more urgent let your importunity be! Cry mightily to God because of the greatness of your poverty. I do not think there is anything in the Scriptures which we cannot pray over. If we learn the devices of the devil, let us pray against them! If we learn the depravity of mankind, let us pray God’s Holy Spirit to create men’s hearts anew! Everything from the first of Genesis to the end of Revelation, when we truly know it, furnishes us with fresh arguments for drawing near to God. Revealed Truths of God are as a Church bell summoning us to come into the Presence of the Lord and bow the knee before Him.

As you hear a sermon, turn it into prayer! Even if you find that there is nothing in the sermon, it may benefit you if you pray God to feed His poor famished people. If you will pray all through his discourse, every preacher will minister to your edification directly or indirectly. If you are set upon praying by the lighting of the tiniest candle that ever glimmered, there will at least be sweetness in the incense even if there is no brilliance in the lamp.

III. I desire, in the third place, to show SOME SPECIAL PRACTICAL CONNECTION BETWEEN THE INCENSE AND THE LAMP. Let us read the text again—“And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresses the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it.” So, then, there should be prayer, especially at the dressing of the lamps, that is to say, when preparing our minds for that ministry by which we enlighten the people among whom we dwell we should be specially earnest in prayer. Preparation for preaching and teaching is most important! God’s work is not to be done carelessly as boys shoot arrows at random in their play. We must prepare both by reading and pleading—we must, like the Apostles, give ourselves to the Word of God and prayer.

We are told by ancient Rabbis that when the priest who was appointed for that office went into the Holy Place, he took with him the golden snuffers, the golden snuff dishes and a vessel full of pure olive oil and, by the help of these, he attended to the trimming of the golden lamp. There were seven lamps on the candelabra—some of these might have gone quite out during the night—he would have to take away whatever of snuff remained, wipe out the lamp, place a new wick, fill it up with fresh oil, and then kindle the flame anew. In another lamp it may be the light was still burning but feebly—he might have simply to snuff it, take away the “the superfluity of naughtiness” in the golden snuff dish and make all things clean and right. Sometimes the light might be burning well and nothing was needed but to replenish it with oil. Thus all was set in order for another day. The same was done in the evening.

In the process of trimming lamps there is a measure of offense—snuffs do not give forth a very dainty perfume—and the smear and smelt of oil are not altogether of sweet savor. Therefore, before he trimmed the lamps, the priest kindled the incense. No snuff would then be offensive, for the overpowering fragrance of the incense killed it all and prevented the prevalence of any odor unfit for the House of God. When we go into our studies to try and trim our lamps, let us remember that our first business is to pray. Alas, we have much of smoking wick about us! We have much negligence, much ignorance, many mistakes and errors and, thereby, we shall grieve the Lord if Jesus is not called in to cover all. When we are preparing, in secret, to serve the Lord in public, we shall make poor work of it if we do not, beforehand, draw near to God in prayer!

We need that our garments should be made to smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia by being covered with the merit of Jesus, or else we shall offend, even while engaged in the holy act of preparing to spread abroad the light of Divine Truth! You have to trim your lamps, Brothers and Sisters, when you go into the Sunday school—at least, I hope you do. I hope you do not run into your class with anything which first comes to hand! If you do not snuff your candles and feed your lamps with fresh oil, your children will sit in darkness before a lamp which does not shine! No, there ought to be careful preparation, according as your time and ability will allow and, above all, the pouring in of the holy oil of the Holy Spirit by fresh fellowship with Jesus. In that process one of the chief elements is prayer.

Dr. Adam Clarke used to say to young ministers, “Study yourselves dead and then pray yourselves alive, again,” and that is an excellent rule. Work in your study as if it all depended upon you and then go forth and speak, trusting in God because all depends upon Him! Remember that the chief part of all study of God’s Word must be prayer. This is the boring rod and the powder by which we burst open the great rocks of the Truths of God. “To have prayed well is to have studied well,” said Martin Luther, and so, most certainly, it is. Therefore let none of us, when we dress the lamp, forget the incense.

What a double privilege comes of this! This priest, you see, had thus two things to do for the Lord. If he was called only to light the lamp, that would have been one happy, blessed service—but if he must burn the incense, too, he has a double portion of honor in thus doubly serving the Lord, his God! So when you are preparing to light up the people, or preparing to enlighten your children in class, what a happy necessity it is which calls upon you, at the same time, to pray! It is one of the greatest privileges of preachers and teachers, that they are driven to pray more than other people, for they have greater necessities—they have necessities that come upon them because of their office and these drive them to more frequent supplication—and so their labors become a means of Grace to their own souls! Let us thank our Lord Jesus that He has made us kings and priests unto our God and that He permits us, both to let our lights shine before men and our prayers ascend before God.

One thing more, this burning of the incense was not only at the dressing of the lamps, but also at the kindling of the lamps, when they began to shine. I want to plead, dear Friends, very heartily with you that when it is my privilege to come here this week and at all other times to light the lamps, you, who are my beloved helpers, will take care to burn the incense at the same time! We need the incense of prayer more than ever in these latter days. Did you ever notice in Ezekiel 41:22 that an altar of incense is spoken of, but its dimensions are twice as great as those of the golden altar in the Tabernacle? It was as if, say some, to teach us that in these Gospel times prayer would become more abundant and would be offered up more frequently than ever.

The Gentiles have an altar which presents more incense to the Lord than that which was served by Aaron! And, inasmuch as it is more purely spiritual, it is all the more acceptable with God. The altar mentioned by Ezekiel was of wood, as if to show that our worship is to become more simple and to be more divested of everything that is pompous and showy—indeed, the altar disappears, and we read—“This is the table that is before the Lord.” You will guess the meaning. Malachi has a glorious prophecy. “For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My name, and a pure offering: for My name shall be great among the heathen, says the Lord of Hosts.”

Are you not charmed by the Divine prophecy? Will you not, yourselves, help to fulfill it? We know that this Altar of Incense meant prayer because the Jews, themselves, so interpreted it. In the first chapter of Luke we read of Zacharias, that it was his turn, in the order of his course, to go into the Holy Place to offer incense, and it says, “And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the time of incense.” Just so, the offering of incense clearly means prayer and, therefore, I plead with you that while we are lighting the lamps by preaching the Gospel, you will burn the incense by being constantly in prayer! Brothers and Sisters, pray for us! Paul spoke thus. How much more may I plead that you dismiss me or intercede for me!

Joshua could not prevail except as Moses held up his hands. Our lamp-lighting will not succeed unless you burn the incense. Peter’s sermon at Pentecost did not derive its force from Peter’s zeal, or from its own eloquence, but from another Source. Of course, all the power came from the Spirit of God, but why did the Spirit of God work so mightily on that day? Surely it was because the entire Church was earnestly praying while Peter was preaching. “They were all with one accord in one place”— nobody was away, they were all there and when the one man stood up to preach, he might well light 3,000 lamps, for all the fervent company of the faithful were causing the incense of prayer to ascend to Heaven!

I need your prayers for tonight’s sermon. You will not be here, for strangers are invited to occupy your seats and, therefore, I beg you, in your houses, to cry unto the Lord for me that the Word may have free course and that my hearers may feel its power! It might be the most profitable expenditure of time that ever happened to you if you would spend the whole evening in prayer. Beseech the Lord to bring the people to this house and to bring the right sort of people, rich and poor, Believers and infidels, moral people and the depraved! We do not know who will come. Some of them do not know whether they will come, themselves, or not! But the Lord may influence, in various ways, those individuals to come whom He designs to bless. Pray that the fish may come in shoals round the boat!

When the congregation is gathered, pray that the speaker may be guided of the Holy Spirit to a right theme. The preacher has no manuscript, so that there is room for the Spirit’s guidance, and he may be led to say what he never thought of saying—the right word may thus be spoken in the right way so as to reach the heart! Then pray that there may be given the willing ear, the receptive mind, the retentive memory—that impressions may be made, tonight, and at all other times, such as even Satan cannot remove. And, oh, pray that tonight many who have been halting between two opinions may decide for God! Pray that many who have not, before, found the Savior’s face will be converted! Pray that many who have been, up to now, of a sorrowful spirit, will be led into the joy of the Lord!

I shall feel it a joyous work to be the lamplighter, tonight, for my Master, if I know that I have you at home pleading earnestly on my behalf! Give me this aid this morning, too. Pray God to bless each word that has been spoken. Pray that some poor sinner’s soul may be perfumed by the merits of Jesus and illuminated with the Divine Light! Pray for this and it shall be done, for the Lord hears His people! We need, more and more, to be a praying Church—and then we shall be a growing Church! Up to now we have had a great blessing, but the windows of Heaven are wide enough for a greater one to come down through them! The more we plead with God and the more we set forth the light of the Gospel, the more will God be with us and build up, in this place, a temple for His praise! May His love be with you. Amen.

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MEDIATION OF MOSES  
NO. 2398

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1895. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 17, 1887.

**“And the LORD repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people.” Exodus 32:14.**

I SUPPOSE that I need not say that this verse speaks after the manner of men. I do not know after what other manner we can speak. To speak of God after the manner of God is reserved for God, Himself, and mortal men could not comprehend such speech. In this sense, the Lord often speaks, not according to literal fact, but according to the appearance of things to us, in order that we may understand so far as the human can comprehend the Divine. The Lord’s purposes never really change. His eternal will must forever be the same, for He cannot alter, since He would either have to alter for the better or for the worse. He cannot change for the better, for He is infinitely good—it were blasphemous to suppose that He could change for the worse. He who sees all things at once and perceives at one glance the beginning and the end of all things, has no need to repent. “God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent,” but, in the course of His action, there appears to us to be, sometimes, a great change, and as we say of the sun that it rises and sets, though it does not actually do so, and we do not deceive when we speak after that fashion, so we say concerning God, in the language of the text, “The Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people.” It appears to us to be so and it is so in the act of God, yet this statement casts no doubt upon the great and glorious Doctrine of the Immutability of God.

Speaking after the manner of men, the mediation of Moses worked this change in the mind of God. God in Moses seemed to overcome God out of Moses. God in the Mediator, the Man Christ Jesus, appears to be stronger for mercy than God apart from the Mediator. This saying of our text is very amazing and it deserves our most earnest and careful consideration.

Just think, for a minute, of Moses up there in the serene solitude with God. He had left the tents of Israel down below and he had passed within the mystic circle of fire where none may come but he who is specially invited. And there, alone with God, Moses had a glorious season of fellowship with the Most High. He lent his listening ear to the instructions of the Almighty concerning the priesthood, the tabernacle and the altar. And he was enjoying a profound peace of mind, when, all of a sudden, he was startled. The whole tone of the speech of the Lord seemed changed, and He said to Moses, “Go, get you down; for your people, which you brought out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves.” I can hardly imagine what thoughts passed through the great leader’s mind! How Moses must have trembled in the Presence of God! All the joy that he had experienced seemed suddenly to vanish, leaving behind, however, somewhat of the strength which always comes out of fellowship with God. This Moses now needed, if ever he needed it in all his life, for this was the crucial period in the history of Moses! This was his severest trial, when, alone with God on the mountain’s brow, he was called to come out of the happy serenity of his spirit and to hear the voice of an angry God, saying, “Let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them.”

The language of God was very stern, and well it might be after all that He had done for that people! When the song of Miriam had scarcely ceased. When you might almost hear the echoes of that jubilant note, “Sing you to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea,” you might quickly have heard a very different cry, “Up, make us gods!” And, in the presence of the calf that Aaron made, the same people blasphemously exclaimed, “These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt.” Such a prostitution of their tongues to horrid blasphemies against Jehovah! Such a turning aside from the Truth of God to the most gross of falsehoods, might well provoke the anger of a righteously jealous God!

It is noteworthy that Moses did not lose himself in this moment of trial. We read at once, “And Moses besought Jehovah, his God.” He was undoubtedly a man of prayer, but he must have been continually in the spirit of prayer, or else I could conceive of him, at that moment, falling on his face and lying there in silent horror! I could imagine him flying down the mountain in a passionate haste to see what the people had done— but it is delightful to find that he did neither of these two things—rather he began to pray! Oh, Friends, if we habitually pray, we shall know how to pray when praying times become more pressing than usual! The man who is to wrestle with the angel must have been familiar with angels beforehand! You cannot go into your chamber, shut the door and begin a mighty intercessory prayer if you have never been to the Mercy Seat before! No, Moses is “the man of God.” You remember that he left us a prayer, in the 90th Psalm, bearing this title, “A prayer of Moses, the man of God.” There is no man of God if there is no prayer, for prayer makes the man into “the man of God.” So, instinctively, though startled and saddened to the last degree, Moses is on his knees, beseeching the Lord, his God.

I. This, then, is the scene I have to bring before you, and my first observation shall be that NOTHING CAN HINDER A TRULY LOVING SPIRIT FROM PLEADING FOR THE OBJECTS OF ITS LOVE.

There were many things that might have hindered Moses from making intercessory prayer and the first was, the startling greatness of the people’s sin. God Himself put it to Moses in strong language. He said, “The people have corrupted themselves: they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These are your gods, O Israel, which have brought you up out of the land of Egypt.”

This terrible accusation from the mouth of God, spoken as God would speak it, must have impressed Moses greatly with the awful character of Israel’s sin, for, farther on, we find Moses saying to God, “Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold.” It has happened to you, I suppose, as it has to me, that in the sight of a great sin one has almost hesitated to pray about it. The person sinned so wantonly, under circumstances so peculiarly grievous, transgressed so willfully and so altogether without excuse that you felt thrust back from the Mercy Seat and from pleading for such a sinner! But it was not so with Moses. Idolatry is a horrible sin, yet Moses is not kept back from pleading for its forgiveness. It astounds him—his own wrath waxes hot against it—but still, there he is, pleading for the transgressors!

What else can he do but pray? And he does it after the best possible fashion. Oh, let us never say, when we see great sin, “I am appalled by it! I cannot pray about it. I am sickened by it, I loathe it.” Sometime ago we had revelations of the most infamous criminality in this great city which we cannot, even now, quite forget, and I must confess that I sometimes felt as if I could not pray for some of the wretches who sinned so foully. But we must shake off that kind of feeling and, even in the presence of the most atrocious iniquity, we must still say, “I will even pray for these Jerusalem sinners, that God may deliver them from the bondage of their sin.”

A second thing that might have hindered Moses was not only the sin, but the manifest obstinacy of those who had committed the sin. Moses had it upon the evidence of the heart-searching God that these people were exceedingly perverse. The Lord said, “I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people.” Poor Moses had to learn, in later years, how true that saying was, for though he poured out his very soul for them and was tender towards them as a nurse with a child, yet they often vexed and wearied his spirit so that he cried to the Lord, “Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that You should say unto me, Carry them in your bosom, as a nursing father bears the sucking child, unto the land which You swore unto their fathers?” He was crushed beneath the burden of Israel’s perversity, yet, though God, Himself, had told him that they were a stiff-necked people, Moses besought the Lord concerning these obstinate sinners!

Then, thirdly, the prayer of Moses might have been hindered by the greatness of God’s wrath, yet he said, “Lord, why does Your wrath wax hot against Your people?” Shall I pray for the man with whom God is angry? Shall I dare to be an intercessor with God who is righteously wrathful? Why, some of us scarcely pray to the merciful God in this Gospel dispensation in which He is so full of goodness and long-suffering! There are some who profess to be God’s people who make but very little intercession for the ungodly. I am afraid that if they had seen God angry, they would have said, “It is of no use to pray for those idolaters! God is not unjustly angry. He knows what He does and I must leave the matter there.” But mighty love dares to cast itself upon its face before even an angry God! It dares to plead with Him and to ask Him, “Why does Your wrath wax hot?” although it knows the reason and lays no blame upon the Justice of God! Yes, love and faith together bring such a holy daring into the hearts of men of God that they can go into the Presence of the King of kings, and cast themselves down before Him even when He is in His wrath, and say, “O God, spare Your people; have mercy upon those with whom You are justly angry!”

Perhaps it is an even more remarkable thing that Moses was not hindered from praying to God though, to a large degree at the time, and much more afterwards, he sympathized with God in His wrath. We have read how Moses’ anger waxed hot when he saw the calf and the dancing—do you not see the holy man dashing the precious tablets upon the earth, regarding them as too sacred for the unholy eyes of idolaters to gaze upon? He saves them, as it were, from the desecration of contact with such a guilty people by breaking them to shivers upon the ground! Can you not see how his eyes flash fire as he tears down their idol, burns it in the fire, grinds it to powder, strews it upon the water and makes them drink it? He is determined that it shall go into their very bowels— they shall be made to know what kind of a thing it was that they called a god!

He was exceedingly angry with Aaron, and when he bade the sons of Levi draw the sword of vengeance and slay the audacious rebels, his wrath was fiercely hot, and rightly so! Yet he prays for the guilty people. Oh, never let your indignation against sin prevent your prayers for sinners! If the tempest comes on and your eyes flash lightning, and your lips speak thunderbolts, yet let the silver drops of pitying tears fall down your cheeks—and pray the Lord that the blessed shower may be acceptable to Himself—especially when you plead for Jesus’ sake! Nothing can stop the true lover of men’s souls from pleading for them! No, not even our burning indignation against infamous iniquity! We see it and our blood boils at the sight, yet we betake ourselves to our knees and cry, “God be merciful to these great sinners, and pardon them, for Jesus’ sake!”

A still greater hindrance to the prayer of Moses than those I have mentioned was God’s request for the pleading to cease. The Lord, Himself, said to the intercessor, “Let Me alone.” Oh, Friends, I fear that you and I would have thought that it was time to leave off praying when the Lord, with whom we were pleading, said, “Let Me alone: let Me alone.” But I believe that Moses prayed the more earnestly because of that apparent rebuff. Under the cover of that expression, if you look closely into it, you will see that Moses’ prayer was really prevailing with God. Even before he had uttered it, while it was only being formed in his soul, Jehovah felt the force of it, otherwise He would not have said, “Let Me alone.”

And Moses appeared to gain courage from that which might have checked a less earnest suppliant—he seemed to say to himself, “Evidently God feels the force of my strong desires and I will, therefore, wrestle with Him until I prevail” It was a real rebuff and was, doubtless, intended by the Lord to be the test of the patience, the perseverance, the confidence, the self-denying love of Moses. Jehovah says, “Let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them.” But Moses will not let Him alone! O, you who love the Lord, give Him no rest until He saves men! And though He should seem to say to you, “Let Me alone,” do not let Him alone, for He wishes you to be importunate with Him, like that widow was with the unjust judge! The wicked man granted the poor woman’s request because of her continual coming—and God is testing and trying you to see whether you really mean your prayers. He will keep you waiting a while, and even seem to repulse you, that you may, with an undaunted courage, say, “I will approach You! I will break through all obstacles to get to You. Even if it is not according to the law, I will go in unto the King of kings and if I perish, I perish! I will pray for sinners even if I perish in the act.”

And, dear Friends, there is one thing more that might have hindered the prayer of Moses. I want to bring this all out, that you may see how tender-hearted love will pray in spite of every difficulty. Moses prayed against his own personal interests, for Jehovah said to him, “Let Me alone, that I may consume them.” And then, looking with a glance of wondrous satisfaction upon His faithful servant, He said, “I will make of you a great nation.” What an opportunity for an ambitious man! Moses may become the founder of a great nation if he wills! You know how men and women, in those old days, panted to be the progenitors of innumerable peoples and looked upon it as the highest honor of mortal men that their seed should fill the earth. Here is the opportunity for Moses to become the father of a nation that God will bless! All the benedictions of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are to be met in Moses and his seed! But no, he will not have it so. He turns to God and cries to Him to bless the sinful people! It seems as if he passed over the offer that God made, sub silentio, as we say. Leaving it in utter silence, he cries, “Spare Your people and bless Your heritage.”

II. Now I introduce to you a second thought, which is that NOTHING CAN DEPRIVE A LOVING SPIRIT OF ITS ARGUMENTS IN PRAYER FOR OTHERS.

It is one thing to be willing to besiege the Throne of Grace, but it is quite another thing to get the ammunition of prayer. Sometimes you cannot pray, for prayer means the pleading of arguments, and there are times when arguments fail you—when you cannot think of any reason why you should pray. Now there was no argument in these people, nothing that Moses could see in them that he could plead with God for them—so he turned his eyes another way—he looked to God and pleaded what he saw in Him!

His first argument was, that the Lord had made them His people. He said, “Lord, why does Your wrath wax hot against Your people?” The Lord had said to Moses, “Get you down, for your people have corrupted themselves.” “No,” says Moses, “they are not my people—they are Your people.” It was a noble, “retort courteous,” as it were, upon the Ever-Blessed One. “In Your wrath You call them my people, but You know that they are none of mine—they are Yours—You did choose their fathers and You did enter into Covenant with them. And I remind You that they are Your chosen ones, the objects of Your love and mercy and, therefore, O Lord, because they are Yours, will You not bless them?” Oh, use that argument in your supplications! If you cannot say of a sinner that he is God’s chosen, at least you can say that he is God’s creature and, therefore, use that plea, “O God, suffer not Your creature to perish!”

Next, Moses pleads that the Lord had done great things for them, for he says, “Why does Your wrath wax hot against Your people, which You have brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?” “I never brought Israel out of Egypt,” says Moses, “how could I have done it? I did not divide the Red Sea! I did not smite Pharaoh! You have done it, O Lord! You, alone, have done it and if You have done all this, will You not finish what You have begun?” This was grand pleading on the part of Moses and I do not wonder that it prevailed! Now, if you see any sign of Grace, any token of God’s work in the heart, plead it with the Lord. Say, “You have done so much, O Lord. Be pleased to do the rest and let these people be saved with Your everlasting salvation!”

Then Moses goes on to mention, in the next place, that the Lord’s name would be compromised if Israel should be destroyed. He says, “Why should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth”? If God’s people are not saved, if Christ does not see of the travail of His soul, the majesty of God and the honor of the Redeemer will be compromised. Shall Christ die to no purpose? Shall the Gospel be preached in vain? Shall the Holy Spirit be poured out without avail? Let us plead thus with God and we shall not be short of arguments that we may urge with Him.

Moses goes on to mention that God was in Covenant with these people. See how he puts it in the 13th verse—“Remember Abraham, Isaac and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own Self, and said unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of Heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever.” There is no pleading with God like reminding Him of His Covenant! Get a hold of a promise of God, and you may pray with great boldness, for the Lord will not run back from His own Word—but get a hold of the Covenant and you may plead with the greatest possible confidence! If I may compare a single promise to one great gun in the heavenly siegetrain, then the Covenant may be likened to a whole park of artillery— with that you may besiege Heaven and come off a conqueror! Moses pleads thus with the Lord—“How can You destroy these people, even though You are angry with them, and they deserve Your wrath? You have promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that their seed shall inherit the land, and if they are destroyed, how can they enter into Canaan and possess it?” This is grand pleading! But what bravery it was when Moses dared to say to God, “Remember Your Covenant and turn from Your fierce anger, and repent of Your thoughts of evil against Your people”! O Lord, teach us, also, how to plead like this!

Nor was Moses without another argument, the most wonderful of all! If you read in the next chapter, at the 16th verse, you will notice how Moses says to God, in effect, “I cannot be parted from these people! With them I will live. With them I will die. If you blot their name out of Your Book, blot out my name, also. If Your Presence goes not with me, carry us not up from here. For how will it be known, here, that I and Your people have found Grace in Your sight? Is it not in that You go with us?” See how he puts it—“I and Your people…You go with us.” “No,” says Moses, “I will not be favored—I will sink or swim with these people.” And I think that this is how the Lord Jesus Christ pleads for His Church when He is interceding with God. “My Father,” He says, “I must have My people. My Church is My bride, and I, the Bridegroom, cannot lose My spouse. I will die for her and if I live, she must also live. And if I rise to Glory, she must be brought to Glory with Me.”

You see, it is, “I and Your people.” This is the glorious conjunction of Christ with us as it was of Moses with the children of Israel! And, Brothers and Sisters, we never prevail in prayer so much as when we seem to link ourselves with the people for whom we pray. You cannot stand up above them, as though you were their superior, and then pray for them with any success—you must get down by the side of the sinner and say, “Let us plead with God.” Sometimes, when you are preaching to people, or when you are praying for them, you must feel as if you could die for them, if they might be saved, and if they were lost it would seem as if you, too, had lost everything! Rutherford said that he would have two heavens if but one soul from Anwoth met him at God’s right hand, and, doubtless, we shall have the same, and we have sometimes felt as if we had a Hell at the thought of any of our Hearers being cast into Hell! When you can pray like that, when you put yourself side by side with the soul for which you are pleading, you will succeed! You will be like Elisha, when he stretched himself upon the Shunammite’s son and put his mouth upon the child’s mouth, his eyes upon the child’s eyes, his hands upon the child’s hands and seemed to identify himself with the dead child. Then was he made the means of quickening to the lad! God help us to plead thus in our prayers for sinners!

There is one other thing which I think has hardly ever been noticed, and that is the way in which Moses finished his prayer by pleading the Sovereign Mercy of the Lord. When you are pleading with a man, it is sometimes a very wise thing to stop your own pleading and let the man, himself, speak, and then out of his own mouth get your argument. When Moses pleaded with God for the people, he had, at first, only half an answer. And he turned round to the Lord and said, “You have favored me, and promised me great things. Now I ask something more of You. ‘I beseech You, show me Your Glory.’” I do not think that was idle curiosity on the part of Moses, but that he meant to use it as the great masterplea in prayer. When the Lord said to him, “I will make all My goodness pass before you,” I think I see the tears in the eyes of Moses and I seem to hear him say, “He cannot smite the people. He cannot destroy them! He is going to make all His goodness pass before me and I know what that is—Infinite Love, Infinite Mercy—mercy that endures forever.”

And then, when the Lord said, “I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy,” how the heart of Moses must have leaped within him as he said, “There it is! That glorious Truth of Divine Sovereignty! The Lord will show mercy on whom He will show mercy. Why, then, He can have mercy on these wicked wretches who have been making a god out of a calf and bowing before it!” I do delight, sometimes, to fall back upon the Sovereignty of God and say, “Lord, here is a wicked wretch. I cannot see any reason why you should save him! I can see many reasons why you should damn him, but then You do as You will. Oh, magnify Your Sovereign Grace by saving this great sinner! Let men see what a mighty King You are and how royally You handle the silver scepter of Your pardoning mercy.”

That is a grand argument, for it gives God all the Glory! It puts Him upon the Throne, it acknowledges that He is an absolute Sovereign who is not to be dictated to, or held in with bonds and cords. Shall He not do as He wills with His own? We need to often listen to the sublime Truth that thunders out from the Throne of God, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So, then, it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” Out of this Truth of God comes the best plea that ever trembles on a pleader’s lips. “Great King, Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, have mercy upon us! Divine Sovereign, exercise Your gracious dispensing power and let the guilty rebels live!”

III. Now, in the third place, let me say that NOTHING CAN HINDER A PLEADING SPIRIT OF SUCCESS. The text says, “The Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people.”

If you and I know how to plead for sinners, there is no reason why we should not succeed, for, first, there is no reason in the Character of God. Try, if you can, to got some idea of what God is, and though you tremble before His Sovereignty and adore His Holiness and magnify His Justice, remember that He is still, first and foremost, Love. “God is love,” and that love shines in all the Divine attributes! It is undiminished in its glory by any one of them. All the attributes of God are harmonious with each other and Love seems to be the very center of the circle. Let us never be afraid of pleading with God! He will never take it ill on our part that we pray for sinners, for it is so much after His own mind. “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 Character of God is infinitely gracious, even in its Sovereignty. It is Grace that reigns, therefore let us never be afraid of pleading with the Lord! We shall surely succeed, for there is nothing in God’s Character to hinder us.

And, next, there is nothing in God’s thoughts to hinder the pleader’s success. Look at the text—“The Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people.” I will, therefore, never be hindered in my pleading by any idea of the Divine purpose, whatever that purpose may be! There are some who have dreaded what they call, “the horrible Decrees of God.” No Divine Decree is horrible to me! And it shall never hinder me in pleading with the Lord for the salvation of men. He is God and, therefore, let Him do what seems good to Him—absolute authority is safe enough in His hands. But even if He had thought to do evil to His people, there is no reason why we should cease from praying! We may yet succeed, for so the text has it, “Jehovah repented of the evil, which He thought to do unto His people.”

I will go yet farther, and say that there is nothing, even, in God’s act to hinder us from pleading with success. If God has begun to smite the sinner, as long as that sinner is in this world, I will still pray for him. Remember, how, when the fiery rain was falling upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and the vile cities of the plain were being covered with its bituminous sleet, Zoar was preserved in answer to the prayers of Lot? Look at David—he was a great sinner, and he had brought upon his people a terrible plague, and the destroying angel stood with his drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem—but when David saw the angel, he said to the Lord, “Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done?” So the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel. Why, if I saw you between the very jaws of Hell, so long as they had not actually engulfed you, I would pray for you! God forbid that we should sin against any guilty ones by ceasing to pray for them, however desperate their case! My text seems to me to put this matter with astonishing force and power—the evil which God had thought to do was prevented by the intercession of His servant, Moses.

IV. I had many more things to say to you, but I must leave them unsaid and conclude by reminding you, in only a sentence or two, that NOTHING IN THE MEDIATION OF MOSES CAN MATCH OUR GREATER INTERCESSOR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Remember, Brothers and Sisters, that He not only prayed and willingly offered Himself to die for us, but He actually died for us. His name was blotted from the book of the living—He died that we might live. He went not to God saying, “Perhaps I may make Atonement for the guilty,” but He made the Atonement and His pleading for sinners is perpetually prevalent. God is hearing Christ at this moment as He makes intercession for the transgressors! And He is giving Him to see of the travail of His soul. This being the case, nothing ought to prevent any sinner from pleading for himself through Jesus Christ! If you think that God means to destroy you, yet go and pray to Him, for “The Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people.” Thus may He deal in mercy with you, for His dear Son’s sake! Amen.

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

Verse 1. And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. What a terrible speech to be made by the people whom God had chosen to be His own! “Make us gods. Make our creator.” How could that be?

2. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. Poor Aaron! He never had the backbone of his brother, Moses. He was a better speaker, but oh, the poverty of his heart! He yields to the will of these idolatrous people and bows to their wicked behests at once!

3. And all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. Idolaters spare no expense—there is many a worshipper of a god of wood or mud who gives more to that idol than professing Christians give to the cause of the one living and true God! It is sad that it should be so.

4. And he received them at their hands and fashioned it with an engraving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt. This was an Egyptian idolatry, the worship of God under the fashion of an ox, the emblem of strength. But God is not to be worshipped under emblems at all! What a poor representation of God any emblem must be!

5. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD. They were going to worship Jehovah under the emblem of an ox! This is what you will hear idolaters say—they do not worship the image, they say, but the true God under that image! Yet that is expressly forbidden under the Second Commandment!

6. And they rose up early on the morrow and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. Lascivious games were sure to accompany idolatrous worship, for idolatry always leads to filthiness in some form or other, as if it were inevitable!

7. And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get you down; for your people, which you brought out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. How startled Moses must have been when Jehovah said this to him!

8, 9. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These are your gods, O Israel, which have brought you up out of the land of Egypt. And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Moses, perhaps, begins to lift his voice in prayer, and God says—

10. Now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of you a great nation. “I will keep My promise to Abraham by destroying these rebels, and taking you, his true descendant, and fulfilling the Covenant in you.”

11-13. And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why does Your wrath wax hot against Your people, which You have brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own Self, and said unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of Heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and you shall inherit it forever. What a brave prayer this was! Here is a wrestling Moses—true son of wrestling Israel—and he brings his arguments to bear upon Jehovah when He is angry! And, by God’s Grace, he succeeds in turning aside the Lord’s wrath!

14, 15. And the LORD repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people. And Moses turned, and went down from the mount. An unhappy, broken-hearted man, going from the closest communion with God, down into the midst of a wicked people!

15-17. And the two tablets of the Testimony were in his hand: the tablets were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tablets were the Work of God, and the writing was the Writing of God, engraved upon the tablets. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. Joshua had probably waited lower down and he met Moses in his descent. He heard with the quick ears of a soldier and his thoughts went that way.

18, 19. And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear. And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses’ anger waxed hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands, and broke them beneath the mount. This is he who had been praying to God and saying, “Why does Your wrath wax hot against Your people?” Now he is in deep sympathy with God and he is, himself, angry with the idolaters. He cannot help it when he begins to see their sin. Before, he had only thought of the people, but now he looks at their sin. When you see sin, if you are a man of God, your wrath waxes hot and you get into sympathy with that Holy God who cannot be otherwise than indignant at iniquity wherever it may be.

20. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and scattered it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it. See the power of this one man who has God at his back and God in him! While the people are dancing around their idol, he tears it down, grinds it to powder and says, “You shall drink it, every one of you.” Why, there are millions to one—but what cares he about their millions? God is with him and he is God’s servant and, therefore, they all tremble before him!

21-24. And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto you, that you have brought so great a sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: you know the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Whoever has any gold, let them break it off so they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf. That was a lie, for he had made the calf and shaped it himself. Aaron had not any backbone, nor any principle—he could not be stout-hearted for God! What a poor little man he seems by the side of his great brother! How he shrivels up under the rebuke of Moses!

25. And when Moses saw that the people were naked, (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies). Moses does not spare Aaron. He lays at his door the guilt of the great sin he had committed—“Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies.”

26, 27. Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, Who is on the LORD’S side? Let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus says the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man, his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. This is the man who pleaded for them on the top of the mount! See how he acts in the sight of their sin, by Divine Authority! He smites them right and left. Possibly, those who were slain were the men who refused to drink the water on which the powder had been sprinkled, or those who continued in rebellion against the Lord.

28-30. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that He may bestow upon you a blessing this day. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, You have sinned a great sin; and now I will go up unto the LORD; perhaps I shall make an atonement for your sin. I will be bound to say that this was said after a sleepless night. The people’s sin is now so vividly before him that he begins to feel that God will be just if He punishes them and does not grant them any forgiveness. So he goes, once more, up that steep climb to the top of Sinai with a trembling heart—and with only a, “perhaps,” on his lip.

31, 32. And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if You will forgive their sin— There he broke down, he could not finish that sentence!

32. And if not, blot me, I pray You, out of Your Book which You have written. “Let me die in their place!” But God could not accept one man in the place of another! There is a great Substitute, ordained of old, but He is more than man and, therefore, He can stand in the sinner’s place.

33-36. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whoever has sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My Book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto you: behold, My Angel shall go before you: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them. And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made. Moses had only half success in pleading for the people. They were not to die as yet, but God declared that He would visit their sin upon them.

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Sermon #1531 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

ON WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU?  
NO. 1531

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 4, 1880, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, Who is on the Lord’s side? Let him come unto me.”  
Exodus 32:26.**

DURING the last few days in which the stir of a general election has moved the most quiet of our streets, every one of you must have been asked, many times, on which side you are. Some are enthusiastic on this side and some are quite as warm on the other and the interest of all ranks and classes is awakened. Now that the Lord’s Day has come I hope you will forget all about politics and listen to me while I ask a far more important question, namely, “Who is on the Lord’s side?” May God grant us Grace to give an honest answer and may that answer be, “Yes, Lord, You know all things, You know that I love You.”

May thousands of you say to the Lord what Amaziah and his band said to David, “Yours are we, David, and on your side, son of Jesse.” Before I enlarge upon this exceedingly personal and practical question, I must ask you to remember the man who asked it. It was Moses who put this question, “Who is on the Lord’s side?” and he put it to Israel when sin was rampant in the camp. It is well to remember that he stood there as a lone man, the solitary champion of Jehovah and challenged the whole nation to decide for God! His own brother had practically deserted him and become the means of making the golden calf. The 70 elders who ought to have been by his side were, none of them, present with him except his lieutenant Joshua.

He stood alone in the midst of the multitude just when they were intoxicated with their lustful pleasures and their fanatical worship. He was equal to the emergency! Thoughtless altogether of his own safety, dauntless, brave and bold, he dashes down their idol and commands it to be ground small and cast into the water of which the nation would drink. He upbraids them to their faces and strides among them, as much superior to them all as a shepherd is superior to the flock he tends. You have to admire his courage! You wonder at his supreme power and you inquire for the secret of such sovereign strength. Moses must have worn about him a dignity most commanding, a royalty far superior to that which comes of birth or office!

Don’t you know where he derived that majesty? He had been, for 40 days, alone with God! Heavenly communion makes a man strong. He had been in the secret place of the Most High. He had spoken with God, face to face, as a man speaks with his friend, and it was not likely that he should fear the face of man after having seen the face of God! He had been familiar with the sublime and when he came down to the infinite littleness of men who had dared to liken the Glory of God to the image of an ox that eats grass, he wore about him a natural superiority before which they all trembled and slunk away in fear!

Moses was also a man of prayer. He had stopped the hand of the Almighty on the mountain’s brow till even God, Himself, had said, “Let Me alone”—wondrous though it may seem, the man, Moses, by his holy faith had even put a restraint on God Himself! Be you sure of this, that the man who has power with God will have power with men. If we have power with God for men, we shall have power with men for God! He that can overcome Heaven by prayer—what is there that he cannot conquer? There stood Moses, like a lone rock in the midst of the tempestuous sea! The tumult of the people raged around him, but he was firm and unmoved. He became, indeed, the one fixed point upon which the very existence of true religion depended. All the partisans of godliness remaining in the camp, hidden and concealed, rallied to his call and the one man saved the cause.

So has it been in history, not once nor twice, but many a time! A single determined man, full of God’s Spirit, has confronted the whole mass of the people—has breasted the rushing torrent of popular prejudice and has not only stemmed the current, but turned it in the opposite direction even as Moses did! Being girt with the power of God and having learned to dwell on high, the one Believer has become the heroic leader of a band of earnest hearts. Brothers and Sisters, we need, in these days, men and women of fixed principles! We need individuals of enlightened mind and determined will! We need those who know what is right and will not deviate from it even though they should risk their lives! We need to have, not one or two, but multitudes of steadfast men and women, who, when they put their foot down, mean to abide there and cannot be pushed from off their standing-place.

If any of you aspire to lead your own families and to influence your own connections in the right way, you must possess personal strength of mind of the right sort and you must get it where Moses gained his power. You must be much alone with God and mighty on your knees. Come forth to face the wicked world with your faces radiant with the light of God! Communion with Heaven must win for you Divine help, that you may not be overcome by evil, but may overcome evil with good. Thus much concerning Moses. God make us to be like he.

Let us now consider Moses’ question and command—“Who is on the Lord’s side? Let him come unto me.” I think I see here three very important points. The first is decision—a man must be on the Lord’s side. Secondly, here is acknowledgment, “Let him come unto me”—if he is on the Lord’s side, do not let him skulk away in his tent, but let him confront the adversary. And, thirdly, here is consecration, for those on the Lord’s side were to come to Moses that they might do the Lord’s bidding and fight the Lord’s battles at all costs.

I. First then, here is DECISION, or being on the Lord’s side. It is a decision upon the most sublime and important theme which can ever come under a man’s notice. Here are the two camps, God and Satan, truth and falsehood, holiness and sin. On which side are we? When I see a man pausing, as it were, between the two hosts and saying to himself, “Which shall have my heart? Which shall command my service?” I feel that he tarries in a position at once hazardous and sublime, for whichever that choice shall be, it means eternity—it means Heaven and all its glories—or it means Hell with all its terrors.

Whether the man shall be for God or for God’s enemies will mean, for that man, kinship with angels, or league with devils! It shall mean for him the white robe and the everlasting song of adoring praise, or it shall mean the blackness of darkness and the perpetual wailing of unending misery. Hence a man is placed in a most solemn position when this question is put to him, “Are you on God’s side, or are you His enemy?” About all other matters, you should go to work with such a measure of consideration as they deserve. But to this business you must bring your weightiest thought. You must concentrate all your wit and wisdom and judge and decide upon this matter with all calmness and deliberation—but with all solemnity of resolution and sternness of determination, so that, having once made your choice by the directing Grace of God—you may stand to that choice world without end.

Are there any here who have not decided upon this point? As the question goes round, “Who is on the Lord’s side?” are some of you obliged to say, “I have not made up my mind yet”? It is time you did, for it is a dreadful thing for a man to be standing there, as I said, midway between God and the devil, between Christ and Belial, between Heaven and Hell, for, whether he knows it or not, that midway place which he thinks he occupies is really on the wrong side! So our Lord Jesus judges it—“He that is not with Me is against Me and he that gathers not with Me scatters abroad.” This decision, dear Friends, so important and weighty, should be made as early as possible. It is not a matter which we can afford to leave in the balances, hanging in suspense.

Oh that young people would think of this and not waste the best part of their lives in stammering between two opinions! When Aerials came to the borders of Macedon, he sent the terse message—“As friends or as enemies?” The answer was, “We must stop awhile and take advice.” His reply was, “While you advise, we march.” Happy is that young man who can say to others, “While you are considering, I have decided! While you are hesitating, I have pushed on and given my heart to God! While you are temporizing, I have already entered into conflict with sin and death and Hell! While you are counting the cost, I have already reckoned the reproach of Christ to be greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt!”

Happy is he who first crosses the Rubicon of decision, drawing his sword against sin and throwing away the scabbard, that he may never make a truce or treaty with the foe. It is a decision that should be made at once, O man, for death is near you and eternity begins to dawn! Wait not, young man! Wait not, young woman! Every hour renders it more likely that you will make a foolish choice. Delay is dangerous, for it is breeding in you the disease of trifling. Take heed lest you grow into a procrastinator and halt and halt and halt till you become such a cripple that you will halt through life and never march with the armies of the Lord! Oh that Divine Grace would lead each one to decide upon the spot! This is a decision of the greatest importance, for it will influence every subsequent decision throughout life.

If God’s Grace shall lead me to say, “Yes, write my name down in the roll of champions on the Lord’s side,” then from that day forth every other question will be read in the light of that decision. You will henceforth give your love to the Truth of God in rags and not to falsehood in silk apparel. You will henceforth favor Righteousness when she walks in the mire and abhor Injustice when he rides in the high places of the earth. If you are on God’s side, whatever things are pure, honest and of good report will find a friend in you. You will never be on the side of drunkenness, nor on the side of oppression, injustice, or war—for in being on the side of God you are the advocate of sobriety, justice and peace.

The side of God is, in the highest and best sense, the side of mankind. We best promote the interests of nations when we advance the cause of God. I pray that our piety may be of such a practical kind that we may carry it with us into everything that we do. I like not that religion which lives in churches and is glorious on a Sunday, like the parish official in his fine coat, but falls back into its ordinary shabby wear when the service is done. Give me that godliness which finds itself at home at the fireside and is in its right place in the counting house and the work room. True religion is meant for field and street, for polling booth and the market. True religion gives a tincture to everything with which the man comes in contact and, find him where you will, you see that he is on the Lord’s side because he is on the right side! The follower of Jesus takes that side which for a season may be unpopular, but which is, according to the Law and to the Testimony, right in the sight of God. Take care, then, how you make your decision as to God, since on that pivot your whole character will turn.

As to this decision there ought to be no possible difficulty. A man should decide for God since He is his Creator. Dare you think of being opposed to Him that made you and who can crush you as easily as a moth? He is our Redeemer, the Lord that bought us with His blood! Is it possible that we can be on any other side than His? He is our daily Preserver, in whose hands our breath is—can we live in antagonism to Him? Our relation to our God ought to be an easy question to decide when we remember our obligations. We are not only indebted to God for our being, but for every favor which we now enjoy or ever hope to possess. Should not a man be on the side of his friend? On the side of the best of friends? Think of our responsibilities as they arise out of all the blessings which God bestows and there should be an instant verdict of the heart for God and for His Christ.

It should not be difficult to any right-minded man to say, “ Yes, I am on the side of truth,” and because God is Truth, we should be on His side. Every right principle demands that we yield ourselves to God. His is the just side, the true side, the side which must ultimately conquer, the side deliberately adopted and earnestly upheld by all holy angels and perfected spirits. Should our decision need much considering? Who needs time to debate when the way is plain? And yet it is sadly true that, through our sinfulness, an honest, sincere, practical decision is not soon arrived at. No, it will never be arrived at unless the Holy Spirit shall influence our minds and deliver us from the thralldom of our sinful lusts! Oh, that the Spirit of God might lead us to choose God’s side although it is not the side of self, but directly the opposite!

The most of men are swayed by their own interests—“Which is the be side for me? Which will bring me the most wealth, or the most esteem, or the most quiet?” But he that is on the side of God scorns such selfish considerations and favors not that which is profitable for the present, but that which is just and right. Alas, many are influenced by the fear of men. What a potent factor is this evil element in directing human affairs! Men would do right, but they dare not! They would avoid that which is wrong, but then they might be ridiculed for too great precision and, therefore, they indulge the side which their conscience condemns.

My Brothers and Sisters, may the Lord give us a different mind from this. May the opinion of men have small weight with us. Let us not be afraid to make enemies rather than disobey God! I would have you of the same mind as the old Spartan who said the question with him never was, “How many are my enemies?” but, “where are they?” Yes, that is it, “Where are they?” That is all. We are ready for them and do not count the odds. If adversaries to the Truth of God and righteousness abound, never think of them! Do not calculate their strength, nor estimate what an attack upon them may cost you, but at once throw down the gage of battle and for God and for righteousness—take the right side.

One other remark must be made—this decision involves but one alternative. If we are not on God’s side, we are on the opposite side. All through the Word of God there is no preparation made for a third party. There is a very numerous body of people who try to inhabit the “Betweenities.” They will, if they can, go on both sides, or on neither side—they want to be left alone—they wish to keep themselves to themselves and say nothing and do nothing either way. Now, there is no preparation made for you, either in this world or in the next! There is no synagogue of the undecided on earth and no “purgatory” of middle men in the unseen world.

As to this world, there is no comfort held out to you. You are not praised, but you are denounced by the Scriptures and even cursed most bitterly for not coming to the help of the Lord against the mighty. You are regarded as enemies to God until you are His friends and it must be so, for he that is not honest is dishonest! He that is not chaste is impure and He that is not for God is necessarily against Him. It is a matter about which a soul cannot be colorless, so far from this even being possible. This matter is one about which there is usually much intensity of feeling one way or another—God has fervent friends and bitter foes. All great questions raise in men’s minds strong movements one way or the other and this greatest of questions is sure to do so.

Though at present, my Friend, you feel no strong movement in the wrong direction, yet that which can produce a great evil movement is lurking in your spirit and if it is not slain, by the Grace of God leading you to be on God’s side, one of these days that slumbering sin of yours may awaken itself to an awful display of power. As when a viper, which before was numbed by the cold, is warmed into vitality and stings all who are near it, so does sin when its hour comes. As the lion cub which has not tasted blood is tame as a cat and yet, by-and-by, it assumes all the fury of the beast of prey, so is it with the demon of iniquity which hides within the human spirit! One way or another you must have God and His Christ, or you must be the servants of Satan—holiness must hold you or sin will bind you—Heaven must win you and attract you to itself—or Hell will mark you for its own and down you will descend!

There, then, I leave the matter of decision, praying earnestly that all who have decided may stand to it and that those who have not decided may be led of the Spirit to make up their minds at once.

II. Secondly, let us consider the ACKNOWLEDGMENT. “Who is on the Lord’s side? Let him come unto me.” The Hebrew is more sharp. It reads like this—“Who is on Jehovah’s side? To me.” It is like the cry of one who strikes the first blow in war and, unfurling the standard, summons men to enlist. “For God—to me.” “If you really are His servants, come and gather to me.” In this acknowledgment there is, first of all, a coming out. They were to come out from among the idolaters. You who are on the Lord’s side, away in your tents where you have gone that you might not join with the riotous crowd—come to me! You that are away there in the furtherest limits of the camp who have gone to be quiet from all this noise and uproar—come into the gate of the camp to me and show yourselves! None must hide their colors this day.

Now then, I say this morning to you who are on God’s side, do not conceal your religion! Be not wickedly reticent. Be not ungratefully retiring, but come forward. “Come you out from among them! Be you separate; touch not the unclean thing.” There is too little separation from the world, nowadays, among Christian professors. I do not wonder at the question a little girl asked of her mother when she had been reading the New Testament, “Mother, don’t you think it would be very nice if we could all move away and go and live where there are Christians?” Her mother said, “Why, there are many Christians around us.” “Oh no, Mother, not like those I have been reading of in the New Testament.”

I am afraid the child was right, though there are some New Testament Christians even here. I wish there were many more who, in all things, followed not the fashions of the world and the follies of the times but walked with God in the separated path where Jesus’ footsteps are seen. This avowal, however, was not only a mere coming out—they were to come to the leader. Moses stood there and said, “Let him come unto me.” He stood there as God’s representative and seemed to say, “I am on God’s side; there is no question about that, though I stand alone—now let others who are on God’s side come to me.”

“Ah,” you say this morning, “We wish we had a leader bold and brave to whom we could come.” I reply, you have such a leader! Where is He? He is gone into the highest heavens, but your faith may see Him! It is the Lord Jesus Christ who is first and foremost on God’s side! He proved it by His life and proved it by His death and this morning He bids all that are on God’s side to come to Him! Come and let Him be your Master and Lord! Come and imitate His example and keep His precepts! Come and proclaim His Gospel and defend His Kingdom! He that is on the Lord’s side let him come to Christ and follow the Lamb wherever He goes!

And yet there is this much more about it. Those who were to come to Moses were, of course, to come to one another. When Moses said, “Who is on the Lord’s side? Let him come unto me,” He was virtually gathering a Church and enlisting an army of men whose hearts God had touched. Such came forth at Moses’ call. Come, then, you that love the Lord, come and join with others who think as you do! Do not birds of a feather flock together? If God has made you birds of Paradise, hasten to fly like doves to your windows! Friend, if I am on the Lord’s side and you are on the Lord’s side, why should we be strangers to one another? There are few enough to stand up for Christ! Surely they ought to be knit together in closest affection.

Unity is strength and as we have no strength to spare, let us be united. Come forth you that know the Lord and acknowledge your allegiance by joining with others who love your King! Enlist under the same Captain and inscribe your names in the same muster roll. I cannot give out this call with all the energy I would, or I would publish it from every market. I beseech those who are not on the Lord’s side not to attempt to unite with any visible Church, for that would be rank hypocrisy! But I would encourage and invite and entreat and almost go the length of commanding those who are on the Lord’s side to declare themselves! Come you to us, for we, also, are on the Lord’s side. Lend us your help. Afford us your company. Let us enter into fellowship with one another and let us be banded together for everything that is good and true because we are on the Lord’s side. Attend to this, I pray you and make an acknowledgment of your decision for God as speedily as possible.

III. In the third place, with this acknowledgment should come CONSECRATION. Those who are on the Lord’s side should not merely give their names, but give themselves. When we are on the side of Christ we belong to Christ. Every man who really is on the Lord’s side should feel that he is bound to obey God’s will. I thank God that I learned this lesson when I first knew the Savior. I did not think that in matters of religion I was to follow my father, or any other good man. It seemed to me that God had put into my hand the Bible and I was to read it—I was to find out with diligent searching whatever the Lord taught me in that Book and I was to believe and to do as His Word taught me.

I feel it now to be a great comfort to my heart that I took nothing at secondhand. I received my doctrine not of men, neither was I taught it, but I went directly to the wellhead and drank from the source itself, by the teaching of the Spirit of God. I want you all to do this. Do not follow a Church—do not follow any great preacher—pin yourself to no man’s sleeve. To the Law and to the Testimony, if men speak not according to this Word of God it is because there is no Light of God in them. If everybody would do this, there might still remain diversities of judgment, but I am inclined to think that unity in doctrine and in practice would be far sooner attained by this habit than by any other means.

If each one would go to the Word for himself and no longer settle down in an “ism” learned from somebody else, we would know the Truth of God and come together in our views of it. Following in a certain track because you happen to be put in it by the circumstances of your birth and education is not the way of a candid and enlightened mind! I care not for the decrees of Churches, or the dogmas of men. I honor both Churches and holy men, but not as dictators to my faith! This one book, the Bible, contains the religion of the true Christian, so far as it can be described by letters and the Spirit of God has promised to enlighten us as to its meaning.

God grant we may never say, “I do such-and-such because it is in the Prayer-Book” or, “Because it is according to our denominational standards.” What have you to do with any book but the Bible, or with any denomination but the Church of Christ, unless it is that the book and the denomination are scriptural? See you well to this, for careful obedience to God is much needed in these times. I have referred to a Spartan once or twice this morning, for something of the Spartan spirit would do well if saturated with the spirit of Christ. A Spartan in the midst of battle was about to kill his foe. His sword was lifted up as the trumpet sounded a retreat and he drew back his weapon. And when one asked, “Why did you allow him to escape?” he replied, “I would sooner obey my general than kill an enemy.”

For a Christian there is nothing like obedience. “To obey is better than sacrifice and to listen, than the fat of rams.” Let us learn that. When we come to be on the Lord’s side we are not only to be willing to obey His will, but we are to serve Him actively and energetically. Moses said to these men, “Gird every man his sword upon his thigh.” You are not to enlist on the Lord’s side to idle away your time. Hosts of people think when they get into the bosom of the Church that they are to sleep there like babies in their mothers’ arms. The Gospel coach goes by and they climb to a box seat if they can, and ride. But the idea of ever driving the coach—the idea of working for the Master—never enters into their heads. It must not be so with us. We must throw our activities and our energies into the side which is God’s, even as the tribe of Levi fought valorously against the rebellious people. And we must do this at all risks and costs.

These men had a very painful duty to perform. They were made executioners of their relatives who were found guilty of high treason against God, their King. It cost their hearts much to kill, every man, his brother or friend. But if they found them obdurate in their idolatry, they were commanded to slay them without mercy and they did so. Their hands did not spare, neither did their eyes have pity upon any who persisted in rebellion. See what Moses said of them—“Of Levi he said, let your Thummim and your Urim be with your Holy One, whom you did prove at Massah and with whom you did strive at the waters of Meribah. Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed Your Word and kept Your Covenant.”

They were thorough with God and so must we be. When you join Christ’s Church there must be a cutting off of right arms and a plucking out of right eyes if necessary. There must be a mortifying of the flesh with its affections and lusts. We are called to a battle and we must prepare for it and not be afraid. Now, because these men were thus faithful to God, they were made the teachers of Israel forever afterwards. Let me continue to read to you what Moses says of them, in Deuteronomy 33:10, because they had impartially executed the sentence of the Lord. “They shall teach Jacob Your judgments and Israel Your Law; they shall put incense before You and whole burnt sacrifice upon Your altar.” Furthermore, they were to be preserved and made more than conquerors because of their stern faithfulness.

They had smitten through the loins of God’s enemies and now the prayer of the man of God breathes this blessing over them—“Bless, Lord, his substance and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him and of them that hate him, that they rise not again.” Levi smote God’s enemies—God will smite his enemies. Those who mind God’s work shall find that God works for them. They did their duty with stern integrity and, therefore, God makes them leaders of His people, teachers of His nation and they shall henceforth triumph over all their adversaries. I would have every man who is on the Lord’s side and who has acknowledged it, follow the Lord’s Word in all things, cost what it may. You will find, in the Bible, doctrines which the world will denounce as harsh—hold them and let them call you cruel if they please!

You will have to publish stern doctrines which will smite the tall crest of human pride and thwart the pleasing inclinations of fleshly minds— publish them, nevertheless! God will justify you in so doing and vindicate you from all aspersions. Allow no reservations. Make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof. If you are “a soldier of the Cross, a follower of the Lamb,” it is yours to do what God bids you. Yours not to reason why, yours, if necessary, to dare and die and still in all holy meekness and gentleness to maintain Truth, rough and rugged though it seems to the dainty philosophers of our day. Be ever on the side of right! May the Spirit of God help us in all this, for unless He helps us, I am sure we shall fail. But if He is with us, we shall conquer!

Those of you who are as yet little in Israel should take care that you do your work well for God in your obscure places and then you shall be lifted to more prominent positions. These Levites were made teachers because they had dared, at God’s bidding, to be executioners, a work associated in men’s minds with dishonor. They were bold enough, though but a few, to confront the whole camp and now they shall be made wise enough to teach all the tribes. Use well the lowest position and do it honor. Aerials the Spartan, when they placed him in a back seat, took no umbrage at it, but said, “I will honor the seat if the seat does not honor me.” So, if you are placed in the lowliest place in Christ’s house, do honor to it and, byand-by, when the King comes in to see the guests, He will say, “Friend, come up higher.”

If you are faithful over a few things, He will make you ruler over many things. Only take heed to it that you fully consecrate yourselves to Him on whose side you are. I wish, in conclusion, to show the suitability of my subject to this present time. I am sure it is not out of season. “Who is on the Lord’s side?” let him come to Christ and consecrate himself this day to Him. For first, the worship of the golden calf is pretty general now. Men are esteemed according to the amount of money which they possess. Indeed, we say a man is “worth so much.” Though the man may not be worth a pair of old shoes, yet if he has a big house, a fair estate and a huge capital, he is said to be worth so much. Poor little creature! In many cases his worth might be written on your thumbnail.

It is not the man that has worth—his house, his lands and his gold have the worth—not the man! There is far too much bowing down and cringing before the golden calf in all classes of society. No end of dodges are tried to get a scraping of one of the creature’s hoofs! Brother, you must sooner endure poverty than do a wrong thing for the sake of riches and you must learn to value men for what they are, not for what they have! It needs not Christianity to tell you that some of the worthiest, noblest and most kingly of men earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. When you meet them, love and honor them. On the other hand, you must know that some of the vilest of men have, at times, climbed to high places of wealth and power. Do not cringe to any man, but least of all bow to a mere moneybag. Value men by their characters and not by their positions. God grant that none of us may ever be found worshipping the golden calf!

Yet to get into society the meanest things are done. I do not know what sort of thing society may be, but I have heard that it is a very wonderful achievement to get into society—to have the privilege of enjoying the empty ceremonies and hollow shams of stupid splendor! To have the privilege of talking to those persons who spend more on their dress than on their religion. From what little I do know of this wonderful thing called, “society,” I have felt no ambition to partake in its felicities. And yet to get into society I have seen men fling away their principles, forsake their friends, stifle their consciences, abandon their Church fellowship and become traitors to their God! Indeed, they are successful in business and hope to rank among the county families and so they leave those who love them to entertain, at lavish cost, those who sneer at them! The Lord save those of you who are prosperous from being thus degraded.

The next thing you need to be firm and strong about is the superstitions which are too often associated with religious worship. Remember, God is to be worshipped and only God. That is the essence of the First Commandment. And God is to be worshipped in His own way—that is the essence of the Second Commandment. The first is, “You shall have no other God,” and the second, virtually, is, “You shall not make any graven image to represent God, nor bow down to it, nor worship it.” Moses made the rebellious people drink their god as a punishment. But in these times persons live among us who literally eat their god as an act of devotion!

The high spiritual mystery in which we are described as spiritually feeding upon our Lord Jesus has my deepest and most solemn reverence, but the superstitious opinion that men can and do literally eat the flesh of Christ under the form of consecrated bread awakens my abhorrence and disgust! The worship of what is called the “Blessed Sacrament” is as vile an idolatry as the worship by the Egyptians of onions and other pot herbs which grew in their own gardens! There is not a pin to choose between the one and the other and yet this is getting to be common! Bread, which is nothing but bread and when you have said all you can say over it still remains bread, must not be produced in a court of law, or if it is so produced, a great bishop, who should know better, assures his brethren that he has taken care that it is reverently consumed!  
I wonder what became of the moldy bread? Oh, that ever I, an Englishman, should be forced to believe that another Englishman in this 19th century reverences the baker’s paste! Great God in Heaven, is this the country of Latimer? Is this the land of Gospel Light? Or have we clean gone back to Rome and all its idolatries? I want you to be very stiff and straight about this! Do not pay religious honor to anything which can be seen by the eyes! Worship no symbol, however ancient! Worship only God! Abhor every act which approximates to reverence paid to pictures, images, crucifixes, pyxes, wafers, chalices, or altars! Away with the whole idolatrous business—no epithet of scorn will be misapplied if it is turned against these superstitions! I will not now quote the words of ridicule which our fathers poured upon this wickedness, but I beseech you follow them in sternly refusing by word, or look, or sign, to pay the slightest regard for objects of superstitious reverence, lest by mingling with the heathen you incur their guilt!

These idolatrous Israelites would have pleaded that they did not worship the golden calf but they worshipped Jehovah under the figure of a bull—and then they said, “See what a beautiful emblem it is! The bull is the image of strength and God is almighty! How instructive it is! The ox plows our fields and so produces our harvests—what a teaching symbol of the goodness of God! Many of the common people will learn more from this than from a sermon.” Certain artistic people would add, each one in his own manner, “This symbolic worship is so tasteful that it helps me to worship. When I was in the camp and there was no golden image, I could never enter into such a bare worship, but I greatly admire this decorous and hearty service. The extemporary prayers of Moses and his brother were too poor for me. That beautiful bull is aesthetic and awakens thought and emotion and the ceremonies of Apis is to my mind quite a model. Give me a little of Israelite-Egyptian, in which you have the old embellished by the new and, by the help of music and genuflections I can, indeed, adore.” You know who they are who talk in this fashion nowadays!

Afterwards came the popular sports—for it is written of the people “they ate and they drank and they rose up to play”—the superstitious are usually fond of vain amusements. The Laudean churchman admired The Book of Sports. The Book of Sports usually gets upon the same shelf as the Book of Ceremonies. “Oh, that is the religion for me,” cries one, “none of your straight-laced talk about worshipping God in spirit and in truth.” My Brothers and Sisters, I want you to feel that you are on God’s side about this, for every symbol, I repeat it, whether image, picture, bread, or whatever you please, must be denounced if it is set up as an object of worship. Whereas the bread and wine are appointed by our Lord Jesus to be used for a memorial of Him, they are so to be used with loving thoughtfulness, but we must not, we dare not, pay the slightest worship to them, for that were to make sin of the blackest dye out of the most tender of all memories.

The next point is, I would to God we were on the Lord’s side in view of the sinful amusements which appear to have such charms for many that even Christian people go quite as far as they should in reference to them. When they had bowed before this golden calf they “rose up to play,” and very pretty play it was. It does not bear explanation. There is about the world a good deal of this “playing.” Beware, I pray you, of every amusement which prevents your redeeming the time, or tends to pollute the mind. There are recreations of a healthy, manly, refreshing kind—but those which are of no possible service to you are unprofitable. The same spirit which made the Puritan refuse to reverence the so-called holy days and holy things of superstition led him so to reverence God and His sacred Law that he would not join in the debasing amusements of the period, which were, indeed, so gross, as a rule, that even irreligious people would not, in these times, endure them.

We have somewhat of the same protest to bear and we must not flinch from it. We have better joys than the wanton and the foolish can bring to us. We say of a pastime—if this is pure and clean, if this is health-giving to the body, or restful and invigorating to the mind—we are not led by any old-fashioned whim to denounce it and we do not denounce it. But if about it there is a taint of vice or a temptation that way, or if it is mere folly, we cannot endure it. We venture not where Jesus would not have gone. We would not go where we should be afraid to die, or should tremble to hear the trumpet announcing the coming of the Lord. This is stern teaching—are you enough on the Lord’s side to bear it? I pray God to put backbones into modern professors! Every other part of their bodies seems to grow firm except their spinal column, which remains soft and easily distorted. We need to be made resolute and faithful on the Lord’s side!

“Oh,” says one, “these are small points.” Yes, but I want you to be like the Spartan who painted on his shield a fly. “Your escutcheon is very small,” said one. “True,” he said, “but I hold it very close to the enemy.” If our points of conscience seem to be small, so much the more need that we hold them in the very faces of those who think little of the things of God! A small point where God is involved is a great matter! Trifling with small things leads to trifling with great things! Lastly, we need firm decision for God and bold acknowledgment of it in this day of general tampering with principle. Numbers of people whom we meet say, “You are right, no doubt, but—.” Now, the Christian way of talking is, “If it is right we know no, ‘but’!” “Oh, yes,” says one, “I agree that it is the straight thing and yet—.” A genuine Christian has no, “and yets.”

If words plainly mean such-and-such a thing, he uses them in that sense and not in an unnatural sense. And he never dares to say, “I know that such-and-such things are wrong and they trouble my conscience, but still, you see, I am doing a vast amount of good and we must submit to a little evil in order to gain a great good.” The plain Christian will do no evil that good may come—he loathes the Jesuitical notion! He believes that it is a great evil to attempt to do good by doing evil. To him, truth, right, the teaching of God, the will of Christ are supreme objects. Oh, that you all possessed this spirit and were steadfast in it! In your family circle; in your business—everywhere—be true, be thorough, be upright, be godlike, be Christ-like and may the Divine Spirit help you to this, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

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“WHO IS ON THE LORD’S SIDE?”  
NO. 2884

A SERMON  
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**DELIVERED BY C H SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, APRIL 9, 1876.

**“Then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, Whoever is on the LORD’S side—come to me!  
And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him.” Exodus 32:26.**

THOSE idolatrous people seem to have been awestruck by the appearance of Moses in their midst. You can picture them gathered around Aaron, worshipping the golden calf and performing their unclean rites—but, as soon as ever Moses marches into the camp, they recognize his commanding presence and his kingly authority. “Drag down that abomination,” he cries! “And break it in pieces.” And though, just now, they were adoring it, they implicitly obey him. The calf is hurled from its pedestal, burnt in the fire, ground to powder and mingled with the water that the idolaters drank. Then rings out the grand challenge of our text. The brave man who seems to stand like a solid rock amid the raging billows, feels it necessary to strike a decisive blow for Jehovah—and once and for all put an end to that shameful idolatry. So, taking his stand, as though to lift up the banner of Jehovah, he cries, “‘Whoever is on the Lord’s side—come to me!’ And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him”—the men who afterwards became the priests of the Most High God. Then came that just but terrible command to execute the idolaters—and three thousand of the people perished as a warning to the rest—and that cursed image-worship was stamped out of the camp, at least, for a time.

Now, dear Friends, very much as Moses did on that occasion, needs to be done very frequently in every age. It is necessary that a banner should be displayed because of the Truth of God and that men should be called out to rally around it. And those who do so, those who are the most fearless and the most faithful, shall receive a great reward, even as we read in the Book of Deuteronomy that Moses bestowed a special blessing upon the tribe of Levi because its sons were faithful in that trying and testing time—“And of Levi he said, Let Your Thummim and Your Urim be with Your holy one, whom You did prove at Massah, and with whom You did strive at the waters of Meribah; who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed Your word and kept Your covenant.” Blessed are they, also, who in these days bow not down before the modern idols that so many worship! Blessed are the brave men who never question whether a certain course will “pay” or not, but who do the right thing, whatever the consequences of their action may be! These are they who, amidst the bright ones in Heaven, shall be doubly bright and who, here below, shall be the officers in the army of the Lord who shall be called to lead the way in the day of battle. I would that we had many among us who would come forward with brave decision and yield themselves up, without doubt or fear, to follow wherever the God of Truth and the Truth of God should lead them. High shall their renown be and great shall their reward be, even as it was with these courageous sons of Levi who so promptly responded to the challenge of Moses, “Whoever is on the Lord’s side—let him come unto me!”

What I am going to try to do is, first, to describe the conflict and show which is the Lord’s side. Secondly, to point out to the Lord’s followers what they must do. Thirdly, to remind the Lord’s hosts of their encouragements and, fourthly, to repeat the question of the text—and to put forward proposals for enlistment in the army of the Lord.

I. First, then, I have TO DESCRIBE THE CONFLICT WHICH IS NOW GOING ON AND TO SHOW YOU WHICH IS THE LORD’S SIDE. That is not a very difficult task and the conscience of each one of you ought to help me in its accomplishment.

This is where “the Lord’s side” begins— Belief in God against Atheism and other forms of unbelief. Infidelity assumes many forms—the doubt as to whether there is any God at all—the daring defiance of God if there is a God. Or the indifference which utterly neglects God, not caring about Him either one way or another. Believers are on the opposite side to all of these and you know that the side they are on is “the Lord’s side.” To fear Him, to reverence Him, to trust Him, to love Him, to serve Him, to worship Him—that is being on “the Lord’s side.” On which side are you, dear Friend? Are you a believer, a fearer, a truster, a lover, a worshipper of God, or are you a neglecter, a rejecter, a hater of Him?

Here again are two sides— obedience to the commands of God, or a determination to please ourselves. Are we endeavoring to obey the moral law or are we pouring contempt upon that law and seeking to be happy by having our own way? How is it with you, my dear Friend? Are you making yourself into your only god? Are you allowing your own lusts and passions to be the supreme governing influence over you? Are you saying to yourself, “I will have my own way. I will do as I please. As long as I can make myself merry, I care nothing whatever about the commands of God”? If that is the way you talk, it is quite clear on which side you are. Between the will of the flesh and the will of God, there is no possible question as to which is “the Lord’s side.”

Here is another battleground— Christ and His righteousness, or your self-righteousness—cleansing in Christ’s blood and covering with His perfect righteousness, on the one hand and—on the other, salvation by your own works, salvation by your own prayers, salvation by your almsgiving, or by anything of your own. You know, at once, which is “the Lord’s side” out of those two, for the Lord is always on Christ’s side. Indeed, Christ, Himself, is God! Justification by faith is the side on which God is, but justification by the works of the Law is a lie—in fact, it is an impossibility! Now, dear Friends, on which side are you with regard to this matter of salvation by Christ or salvation by self? Are you “on the Lord’s side” of that question?

Here is yet another point from which to view this great conflict— the Gospel of the Grace of God, or the superstitions and lies of men. The Bible teaches us that sinners are saved by believing in Jesus Christ, but superstition says, “No, they are saved by being sprinkled with water through the subtle influences that trickle from priestly fingers. They are saved by baptism, saved by sacraments. Here, then, is a sharp conflict between salvation by Christ and salvation by priests. We know which is “the Lord’s side” of that controversy, but, dear Friend, on which side are you? Do you go directly to the Lord Jesus Christ as your Great High Priest and do you trust alone to the merit of His atoning Sacrifice, or will you go crouching to your fellow creature and pour the infamous story of your sin into his ear and so defile him even more than he already is? And then will you come back deluded with the false notion that you have obtained “absolution” at his hands? We know that none can forgive sins save God, alone—this is the Lord’s way of making reconciliation through the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son. So, Friends, are you for Zion or for Rome? Are you on the side of Christ or on the side of antichrist?

There is a fierce battle still raging in the world between Scripture and tradition—between this Grand Old Book and certain things which have been handed down by tradition from the fathers. They are said to be customs of the early church, or to have been ordained by various councils, or decreed by “infallible” popes. Well, dear Friends, are you on the side of God’s Word or of man’s word? Is your rule of life, “Thus says the Lord,” or, “Thus say the fathers,” or, “Thus say the councils,” or, “Thus say the popes”? Who is on the Lord’s side in this matter? There is a stern fight still to be fought over this question—the battle has long been raging and it will continue to rage until the victory is won by the Truth of God. I am looking forward to the time when there will be only two parties left to fight—the men who will have this text emblazoned on their standards, “One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism,” and who will have nothing but the Bible for their rule of conduct—and those bearing the other banner in praise of the inventions of men and the traditions of the fathers. They will cling to their errors, I have no doubt, as long as they can, but the Lamb will overcome them—and they who are on “the Lord’s side” will also come off more than conquerors through Him that has loved them!

There are two sides to all the moral questions in the world. There is holiness, for instance. You all know on whose side that is. And there is unholiness—and you have no difficulty in deciding on whose side that is! Then, as to order, peace, quietness, love, generosity and so on, you all know on whose side they are. And you equally know on whose side disorder, strife, disaffection, tumult, selfishness and covetousness are. You are well aware, Brothers and Sisters, that wherever there is anything that is right, true, pure, holy and of good report, that is “the Lord’s side.” Therefore, always be on that side. But if there is anything that is impure, unchaste, unlovely, unjust—that is not “the Lord’s side” and it should not be His people’s side. At the present time this dear land of ours seems as if it were going to be swallowed up by the demon of drunkenness. Temperance, righteousness, sobriety—these are all on “the Lord’s side” of that question, so let every Christian see that he takes the same side as the Lord does. I need not go into all the questions that are prominent at the present time because they keep on changing their positions—and sometimes it is one question that is most prominent and sometimes another—but to almost every question which comes up, there is “the Lord’s side” and there is another side. And the question must always be asked, “Which is the Lord’s side?” And I trust as soon as that question is answered, you will say, “That is the side for me to take—the side upon which the Lord is.”

II. Now, secondly, I am TO POINT OUT TO THE LORD’S FOLLOWERS WHAT THEY MUST DO TO SHOW THAT THEY ARE ON HIS SIDE.  
And the first thing is, they must acknowledge it. The Truth of God deserves to have bold adherents and brave proclaimers. Righteousness ought not to be claimed as the portion of men who are ashamed to acknowledge it. Suppose that those sons of Levi had slunk away to their tents and had said, “Oh, yes, we are on the Lord’s side, but we do not mean to expose ourselves to any risk in dealing with these idolaters.” That would have been like the coward spirit of a soldier who shirks his proper place on the field of battle. He is too modest, too retiring to fight— that is only another way of saying that he is a coward and unworthy of the uniform he wears! In like manner, it is a mean, beggarly spirit that will not lay down life and limb, substance and honor—and everything else that one has—for the cause of God and His Truth. Oh, for more of the true spirit of chivalry among those who call Jesus their Lord and Master! It is a shame that they should ever blush to acknowledge His name! They might rather blush with shame to think that they have ever been ashamed of Him! I count it nothing, Brothers and Sisters, to speak for the cause that everybody thinks to be good, or to float with the stream by agreeing with what the multitude reckons to be right. Every timeserver can do that! But, to swim against the stream, to speak unpopular Truths of God, to declare that which God has taught you, even though nobody else believes it, to beard the lion in his den, to stand—like Athanasius—against the whole world for God and for His Christ—this is being a man, indeed! No, more—this is being a Christian! And the time shall come when this shall be reckoned the noblest kind of man whom even God, Himself, has made. So, if you are on God’s side, admit it!  
Then, next, rally to the standard. Moses cried, “Whoever is on the Lord’s side—come to me!” If you are a Christian, you should unite with other Christians. I believe, Brothers and Sisters, that it is the duty of all converts to test the various sections of the professing church by the Word of God and then to cast in their lot with that part which holds the Truth of God most fully and clearly. And, having conscientiously done that, to rally with the hosts of God in the great battle against wrong. Oh, you converts who have never joined the church, what are you doing? I beseech you, think over this matter, pray over it and remember that in the olden times, they first gave themselves to the Lord and afterwards they gave themselves to His people—according to the will of God. And so ought you to do. Believers ought not to be solitary stones, lying by themselves—they should be built up into “a holy temple in the Lord, built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.” So, dear Friends, if you are on “the Lords side,” admit it and join with those who also are on that side.  
Then, next, if you are on “the Lord’s side,” be willing to be in the minority. It is true that minorities have generally come in for kicks and blows rather than kisses and caresses, but, at the great Day of Judgment, all such wrongs will be righted. And, after all, it has often been a minority— yes, and even a minority of one—that has done great things for God, after all! Just now I mentioned Athanasius. You remember that when the whole of Christendom seemed to swing round to Arianism, it was Athanasius, standing alone, “Athanasius contra mundum,” as he truly said, who brought the Church back to belief in the Deity of Christ! And in the days of Luther, who can ever tell what a pivot and hinge that one lone man was for Germany and Europe? And in Scotland, what force there was in the one brave man, John Knox, whose preaching and prayers Queen Mary feared more than an army of soldiers! Few followed these brave leaders at the first, for following meant the stake, the scaffold, prison, suffering, shame, reproach and death—yet these were the men and women who did the true work of God, after all, and who fought the good fight of faith!  
Be you followers of them. Run not with the multitude to do evil— rather choose the narrow way that leads unto life, though few there are that find it. From the days of Noah the followers of the Lord have usually been in the minority. If the rightness of any course could be decided by the counting of heads, the devil would mostly be in the right—but we do not count in that way. We test every question by the Word of God, not by the votes of men! If the Lord has said anything, believe it, even if no one else does. If the Lord has revealed any Truth to your conscience, hold to it, even though, to all others, it should seem to be a lie and, verily, I say unto you, you shall have your reward! The sons of Levi were in a minority in comparison with the great host of idolaters in the camp of Israel, yet they came out boldly for the Lord, and are, therefore, held in honor even to this day!  
Further, you must be aggressive if you are on “the Lord’s side.” These sons of Levi, as soon as they declared that they were on the side of Jehovah, had to come forth to smite and slay His enemies. So must you, if you are a follower of the Lord. There is nothing that the devil likes better than to be left alone. I am often asked, “Why do you not preach what you believe and leave other people’s doctrine alone?” Ah, just so! Why don’t I? And why did not the Lord Jesus Christ let the devil alone and let false teachers alone? And why does not the Gospel let error and falsehood alone? When the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world, one part of His work was to destroy the works of the devil. The demons said to Him, “Let us alone: what have we to do with You, You Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us?” His answer was, “Hold your peace and come out of him.” And when the demons say to us, “Leave us alone,” we reply, “That is the very thing that we cannot do and that we dare not do!” We must not let falsehood, and sin, and error alone! Christ Himself said, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.” His faithful servants are to follow His example—to quarrel with error, to fight against sin—to be aggressive against everything that is opposed to our Lord and His Truth!  
The devil is quite ready to make a league of peace with us, or to agree to a truce and say, “Now, do not go on fighting any longer. Let us shake hands and be friends. There can be no reason why I should not continue to be the prince of the power of the air, and Christ should also have His disciples—only let them be very decorous and quiet—and mind their own business.” But we will make no such wicked league or truce as that, for we are to resist the devil! As Peter writes, “whom resist steadfast in the faith.” The sons of Levi had to kill the adversaries of God and so must you, spiritually, who are on “the Lord’s side.”  
You must also let love to God rule all nature’s ties if you are on “the Lord’s side.” Moses expressly commended Levi for this—“Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children.” They were so jealous for the Lord of Hosts, that they would not tolerate idolatry in their nearest kith and kin! Happily, Brothers and Sisters, we have not to fight anybody with a sword of steel. God forbid that any of us should ever take the life of a fellow creature! Our one weapon is the two-edged sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God! The force we use is the force of the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. But, I charge you, never do a wrong thing, or even a questionable thing in order to please father, or mother, or wife, or child. And never allow any wrong to go unrebuked in the dearest friend you have, for, “faithful are the wounds of a friend.” Some have condoned sin to please a wife or a husband, but they who are faithful to God must also be faithful to the members of their own household. This may involve persecution for themselves, but they must be willing to bear it for Christ’s sake—and they must not yield an inch, or an iota, in any matter of principle, or any question of truth and right, even to the beloved of their heart. Can you do this? If so, you are worthy to be counted among those who are on “the Lord’s side.”  
Once more, they who are on “the Lord’s side” must do as they are told. They must be prepared to obey all Christ’s commands to the letter—and also in the spirit of them—right to the end of life. I am ashamed of the way in which some professing Christians ignore so much of the Bible, shutting their eyes to Christ’s commands, or, like, Nelson, turning their blind eye to those they don’t wish to read. Finding themselves in a certain community, they believe what the community believes without ever testing it and trying it by the Word of God. They do not want to know too much and if anybody tries to teach them a Truth of God which they do not know, they are unwilling to learn it lest it should unsettle them in their ecclesiastical position. I bless God that when I was converted to Christ, I laid down this rule for myself—“Whatever the Lord teaches me in His Word, I will follow. If it should lead me into a path where I shall be quite alone because I can find nobody to believe as I believe, yet will I believe and teach that which the Holy Spirit reveals to me in the Word.” At this moment I have not an atom of respect for any authority in matters relating to Divine Truth except the authority of God—and I would strongly urge all young people to try all catechisms, creeds, customs, doctrines, practices and everything else by that Infallible test—“To the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light of God in them.”  
III. Thirdly, I am to remind THE LORD’S HOSTS OF THEIR ENCOURAGEMENTS.  
First, we may be encouraged to be on “the Lord’s side” because it is the cause of right and truth. To me it seems to be a sufficient reward to a man to know that he is defending a right cause even if he has to die for it. Do you crave the applause of human hands and voices? Do you covet the glance of approving eyes? If so, your self-respect has already fallen below the point which it ought to mark. Are you right in the course you are now pursuing? If you are, you need not ask for anything more. To be right and yet to be poor—to be right and to be abused, or even to be put to death—is, surely, sufficient for any follower of the Lord!  
Better still, if there can be any better, remember that you are on God’s side. He who is Almighty looks upon you as His friend! Or, rather, say that He who is Almighty is your Friend! He is much more than that, for He is your All-in-All. You may shelter yourself beneath His wings. Behind the bosses of His buckler you may hide yourself in perfect security!  
Moreover, Jesus the Crucified is with you if you are on “the Lord’s side.” There He stands, whose head was crowned with the cruel thorns and whose hands and feet were pierced by the terrible nails. Blessed is every soldier of the Cross, for he has Christ for his Captain and where His flag waves, victory must surely come!  
Further, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ, all the saints of God are with us—the countless hosts of the redeemed before the Throne of God, above, are all on His side and ours—and so are all the holy angels “that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His Word.” All the unfallen intelligences in the universe are on “the Lord’s side.” Therefore let us not be afraid, who are enrolled beneath the banner of the Cross, and let others cast in their lot with us, for they will be siding with a noble host that has gone on before us! The lineage of the saints of God is a very high one. Talk of the blood royal or imperial—bah, a single drop of the blood of the martyrs flowing through our veins is far more to be desired! To walk as they walked, “of whom the world was not worthy”—those first confessors of the destitute, afflicted, tormented”— this is to be a member of the blood royal of Heaven, the highest nobility that can be gained in this world! How many of you, young men and young women, or older men and women, are ready to say, “We are on the Lord’s side”? The air all around us is crowded with the spirits of just men made perfect! They are watching to see how we run the Christian race and wrestle for the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus! And they sing a new song of praise unto the Lord as He leads one and another to contend earnestly for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints—to stand out boldly for Christ and Him crucified—and to speak, or serve, or suffer as best shall glorify the Lord Most High!  
IV. Time and strength both fail me, so I cannot say more upon that point, though much more might be said. I am, in closing my discourse, TO REPEAT THE QUESTION OF THE TEXT AND TO MAKE PROPOSALS FOR ENLISTMENT IN THE ARMY OF THE LORD. I should like to act as a recruiting sergeant and to enlist some new soldiers for King Jesus.  
“Whoever is on the Lord’s side? Well,” says one, “I wish to be.” Well, I will gladly help you enlist. You know what the sergeant does when he enlists a young man—the first thing he does is to give him something—a shilling. And if you intend to be a follower of the Lord, you must receive something or, rather, you must receive SOMEONE—even the Lord Jesus Christ, for, “as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” You cannot be on “the Lord’s side” unless you receive the Lord’s Christ as your Savior! But as soon as you accept Him as the free Gift of Jehovah’s Free Grace, you are enlisted into the army of the Lord! Will you take Him on those terms? Will you have the Lord Jesus Christ as your Captain? I pray His gracious Spirit to make you say, “Yes, that I will, by His Grace.”  
Next, the sergeant puts the ribbons in the young man’s hat and, if you receive Christ, the next thing you have to do is to confess Christ openly by being baptized. Our Captain’s own words, as recorded in the Gospel according to Mark, are these—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved”—and what He has joined together, no one has the right to put asunder. So, get the colors in your hat, young recruit, if you really are enlisted on “the Lord’s side.”  
When you have done that, the next thing for us to do is to take you to the barracks and drill you. You will not be fully fitted to fight the Lord’s battles until you have been drilled and trained by your new officers. So, submit yourself to the discipline of the Church of Christ. Be willing to take your place in the ranks with your Brothers and Sisters, to follow the New Testament Church order, to be taught what are the first principles of the Christian faith and to be instructed yet further in the things of God, so that, afterwards, you may be able, in your turn, to instruct others. Christ’s commission runs thus, “All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth. Go you therefore, and teach (make disciples of) all nations, baptizing them (those who are 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.” So, you see, we are to teach before we baptize and afterwards still further to teach those who have been made disciples and who have been baptized into the triune name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
Then, we shall want you to put on your full regimentals. What are the regimentals of a Christian? The garments of holiness, the livery of love and the whole armor of God. We pray the Lord to clothe you from head to foot in the Divine Panoply wherein all the warriors of the Cross should be arrayed—the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the Gospel of Peace, the shield of faith, “the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God.” There is nothing like having your Bible always with you and being able to turn to any passage that you need when you are confronting the foe, for, “It is written,” is a wondrous weapon against the devil, as Christ Himself proved! Satan flees from this sharp sword. And other adversaries of the Lord and His people feel the force of the Word when they will not yield to anything else.  
Then, when you are fully armed, drilled and trained, we shall expect you to wage war for King Jesus. And the first war must be a civil war— war within your own soul—war to the bitter end against every sin, every evil habit, every false word! All iniquity must be driven out of your spirit at the point of the bayonet, and no quarter must be given to any enemy of the Most High God. Then even while the civil war is raging, we shall want you to carry the war into the enemy’s territory. Attack the foe on all sides—speak to your friends about Christ. So live that they will see Christ’s life reproduced in you, at least in a measure. Plead with those with whom you work or live—the servants in the house, or your companions, all sorts and conditions of men—tell them all about Jesus Christ! If we were once to have a church fully awakened and zealous for Christ and His Truth, we would soon have the persecuting times back again. The early Christian Church was very enthusiastic—they went everywhere preaching the Word. Somebody says, “Ah, they lived in the days of persecution.” But it was not the persecution which made them enthusiastic— it was their enthusiasm that brought upon them persecution for Christ’s sake! And probably if we were as good Christians as we ought to be, we would not be half as well liked by the world as we now are! And if there were more noise and opposition made against the followers of Christ, it would not be at all a bad sign! If those who hate righteousness, hated Christians more heartily than they now do, it might be a token that God was more manifestly at work in us, making us more “out-and-out” for Him than we are at present.  
Now, then, you who are on “the Lord’s side” in this congregation—you who really believe in Jesus—I invite all of you to confess your faith in Him if you have not already done so. No, more than that—in the name of Jesus in whom you believe, I exhort and command you to confess your faith in Him! Be not ashamed to avow your convictions. Do not try to conceal yourselves from your fellow Christians. Come out and come out soon—and may the numbers of this church, or of some other church be greatly swollen by the addition of those who are truly upon “the Lord’s side.” I wish I could persuade some of you not to put off this confession any longer, but to say, “I love my Savior, and I mean to come out and confess that I am on ‘the Lord’s side.’ I have been far too long hesitating and halting between two opinions, but I will not let another week go by without saying, as plainly as words can say it, ‘I have given myself to Christ and now I wish to give myself to His Church.’” May God bless you all for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**EXODUS 32:1-29.**

Verse 1. And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron and said to him, Up, make us gods which shall go before us, for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. They needed something to look at—something visible that they could adore. It was not that they meant to cease to worship Jehovah, but they intended to worship Him under some tangible symbol. That is the great fault of Ritualists and Romanists—they aim at worshipping God, but they must do so through some sign, some symbol, some cross, some crucifix, or something or other that they can see.

2, 3. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. People are often very generous in their support of a false religion and, to make idol gods, they will sacrifice their most precious treasures, as these idolaters willingly gave their golden earrings!

4. And he received them at their hand and fashioned it with a engraving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt. No doubt they copied the Egyptian god which was in the form of a bull, which the Holy Spirit, by the pen of Moses, here calls a calf. The Psalmist probably also alludes to it when he speaks of “an ox or a bullock that has horns and hoofs.” It seems strange that these people should have thought of worshipping the living God under such a symbol as that!

5. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD. “To Jehovah.” They intended to worship Jehovah under the form of a bull—the image of strength! Other idolaters go further and worship Baal and various false gods, but, between the worship of a golden calf and the worship of false gods, there is very little choice. And between the idolatry of the heathen and Popery, there is about as much difference as there is between six and half a dozen!

6. And they rose up early on the morrow and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. It was usual to worship false gods with music and dancing and with orgies of drunkenness and obscene rites—and the Israelites fell into the same evils as they had seen among their neighbors.

7. And the LORD said unto Moses. Just in the midst of his hallowed communion, the Lord said to him.  
7. Go, get you down; for your people, which you brought out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. God would not acknowledge them as His people. He called them Moses’ people—“your people, which you brought out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves.”  
8-10. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto and said, these are your gods, O Israel, which have brought you up out of the land of Egypt. And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people: now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of you a great nation. For Moses began at once to pray for the people—to interpose between God and the execution of His righteous wrath and, therefore, the Lord said to him, “Let Me alone...that I may consume them.”  
11. And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why does Your wrath wax hot against Your people? See how he dares even to say to God, “They are Your people, though they have acted so wickedly. ‘Why does Your wrath wax hot against Your people?’”  
11-13. Which You have brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Therefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from Your fierce wrath and repent of this evil against Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own Self, and said unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of Heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever. Moses pleaded the Covenant which the Lord had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Israel—and there is no plea like that. Although it might have been to his own personal interest that the people should be destroyed, Moses would not have it so. And he pleaded with God for the sake of His own honor, His faithfulness and His Truth, not to run back from the Word which He had spoken.  
14, 15. And the LORD repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people. And Moses turned and went down from the mount. Does it not seem sad for Moses to have to go down from the immediate Presence of God and to stand among the idolatrous and rebellious people in the camp? Yet that is often the lot of those whom God employs as His servants—they have, as it were, to come down from Heaven to fight with Hell upon earth.  
15-17. And the two tablets of the testimony were in his hands: the tablets were written on both sides, on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved upon the tablets. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. For Joshua was a younger man than Moses, and also a soldier, so his ears were quicker to hear what he took to be “a noise of war in the camp.”  
18. And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear. Moses knew that it was not a battle-cry either of the victors or the vanquished—but the song of idolatrous worshippers.  
19. And it came to pass, as soon as he came near unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing and Moses’ anger waxed hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands, and broke them beneath the mount. In righteous indignation, preserving those sacred tablets from the profane touch of the polluted people by dashing them to fragments in his holy anger

20. And he took the calf which they had made and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strew it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink it. Think of the courage of this one man to go singlehanded right into the middle of the idolaters’ camp and deal thus with their precious god!

21-24. And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto you, that you have brought so great a sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: you know the people, who they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Whoever has any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it to me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf. Which was a lie. Aaron was a poor weakminded creature, easily persuaded to do wrong. And when his strongerminded and more gracious brother was absent, he became the willing tool of the idolatrous people—and yet Aaron is called, by the Psalmist, “the saint of the Lord,” and so he was, taking him as a whole. One black spot on the face of a fair man does not prove him to be a Negro. And so one sin in the life of a man who is usually holy, does not put him among the ungodly.

25-28. And when Moses saw that the people were naked, (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies) then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, Whoever is on the LORD’S side—come to me! And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. And he said unto them, Thus says the LORD God of Israel, Put every man, his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses. The rebellious, the idolatrous, the men who had defied the authority of God were to be summarily executed on the spot.

28, 29. And there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that He may bestow upon you a blessing this day. Such a colossal crime as that must be expiated before the Lord could again bless the chosen race.

—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 #1583 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

CHOICE FOOD FOR PILGRIMS TO CANAAN  
NO. 1583

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
“And He said, My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” Exodus 33:14.

MAY the inexpressibly precious promises of our text be fulfilled to every one of you throughout the whole of your lives. What could heart desire, or mind conceive beyond the heaped-up blessedness of my text? God’s Presence and God’s rest—a ring of finest gold set with the choicest pearl! The benedictions are worthy of God, Himself, and such as only His boundless love could have uttered. Think them over and use them as food for your souls—with them you may well be content even if the preacher’s lips should be shut up as a spring, a sealed fountain! You do not need any sermon—only let the Holy Spirit speak these words with power as coming directly from the great Father’s lips to you and your inmost soul will be satisfied as with marrow and fatness!—

*“Enough, my gracious Lord,  
Let faith triumphant cry!  
My heart can on this promise live,  
Can on this promise die.  
‘My Presence will go with you,  
And I will give you rest.’”*

It is instructive to remember that a very short time before this promise was given, the Israelites had greatly grieved their God by setting up an image of gold before which they prostrated themselves, saying, “These are your gods, O Israel.” They had seen the greatness and Glory of God at the Red Sea and during their journey in the wilderness up to that time—and yet they were so foolish that they bowed in worship before the image of an ox which eats grass! We do not marvel that the living God was angry, but we are filled with astonishment that, after such wanton provocation, He should, nevertheless, turn away His wrath from them and say to them— for the promise was not to Moses only, but to them as a people—“My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

Will God, then, go with sinners? Will He go with those who have provoked Him so grossly, with those who have sinned against Light and knowledge in so shameful a manner? Will He put away the iniquity of great offenders and speak comfortably to them? Yes, He will, for He is slow to wrath and bears with our ill manners for many a day. Here are His own words—“For My name’s sake will I defer My anger and for My praise will I refrain for you, that I cut you not off” (Isa. 48:9). O my Brothers and Sisters, what a consolation it is to us, while laboring under a sense of sin, that the Lord is able to put away sin so that we shall not die and He will come and walk with us and dwell in the midst of us, notwithstanding all our former wickedness!

You know what a righteous God He is and how jealous He is, especially of those He loves. And yet, for all that, though He is a consuming fire, He is so gracious that, passing by transgression, iniquity and sin, He will still return unto His people and again speak comfortably to them. There is a secret, however, which must never be forgotten, namely, that Moses had made mightily prevalent intercession for the people, crying with many tears, “Oh, this people has sinned a great sin and has made them gods of gold! Yet now, if you will forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray You, out of Your Book which You have written.” He had gone up into the fiery mount, even up into the eternal Presence and there he had in will, though it was not accepted in deed, offered himself as a sacrifice for the nation in that memorable sentence, “If not, blot my name out of the Book which You have written.”

Though the Lord could not accept the substitution of Moses, yet He remembered a greater One—He remembered One that was then, to Him, as much present as if it had already taken place, for He sees the end from the beginning and the Sacrifice of Christ was always present in the mind of God, before whom His Son, Jesus, is “the Lamb slain from before the foundations of the world.” If, then, we carefully search to the bottom of things we shall find that it was by virtue of the Mediator that this promise was given to Israel and God thus spoke to Moses and the people! Atonement had been made, intercession had been offered and, therefore, the Lord’s Presence was guaranteed and rest was promised. This is the only ground upon which God can dwell with you and with me and give us rest—an Advocate, one of a thousand—has stood in the gap, presented His life for our life, obtained favor of the Lord and turned away indignation by the power of His intercession!

God in Christ Jesus has come down to dwell with sinful men! And that Presence will never be removed from us, for He says, “I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you.” He invites Himself into our company. He offers to sup with us. Do not our hearts cry, “Come, Lord, manifest Yourself to us, we pray You, and let the promise which has been read in our ears be now fulfilled in our hearts by the power of Your Spirit!”—“My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” It may be that I am addressing some who are about to leave this congregation for other assemblies at a distance and, if so, I hope I may be the bearer of seasonable comforts. I have spoken to some, just now, whose faces we may not, perhaps, see again, who are going far away to their great sorrow and to our intense regret.

I saw the tear when they bade good-bye to us and to the house they have loved so well. Go in peace and God be with you, my Beloved! What more can I say? You are going to leave your native land—whether you shall ever return to it again is written in the decree of Providence—but is all unknown to you. Little need you care, for we are all exiles and are journeying towards the dear Fatherland where we shall be at home forever! Others, it may be, are now making a very important change in life— shifting their habitation, or looking out for another occupation altogether. Many of us here who are serving the Lord are going forward to fresh work, planning new service for the Lord. At such a time, this Word of God will be peculiarly precious to all in a changing state if the Holy Spirit will lay it home to their hearts—“My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

Come, then, you who bid farewell to old England’s shores, you who move to a strange family, you who, in any sense remove your tents and advance toward the unknown land—come, I say, and listen to these gentle accents, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” We will think of the subject in this way—First, what are the benefits of this Presence? Secondly, to be practical, what are the demands of this Presence if we come to enjoy it? And then, thirdly, what is the choice blessing which is appended to this Presence—“I will give you rest”?

I. First, then, WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE WHICH IS HERE PROMISED? “My Presence will go with you.” The first is manifest in the chapter. It is the acknowledgment of the people as being peculiarly the Lord’s. Notice Moses puts it thus, “Wherein shall it be known here that I and Your people have found Grace in Your sight? Is it not in that You go with us? So shall we be separated, I and Your people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.” This clearly shows that the Presence of God with His people is God’s way of acknowledging them and saying to all mankind and to themselves, “These are My people and I am their God.”

Now, my dear fellow Believer, what clearer acknowledgment of you by God can you conceive of than that God should be present with you? I think you cannot ask a surer, better seal than this and if you have it not, I cannot see what can be a token of peace to you at all. Is God never with you? Are you never conscious of His Presence? Let me ask you to judge your case as if it were mine—can I be a sheep in His fold if the shepherd never comes to me? Can I be a child of the family if I have never had my heart warmed with my Father’s love and have never heard my Father’s voice speaking comfortably to me? The saints are married unto Christ, but that were a strange union in which there was no sort of converse or communion whatever!

If I am unable to see my Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus, because my soul is in darkness, I must walk by faith—I must not think the darkness light and try to be comfortable without Him! I must feel that until the daystar shines again and Christ’s Presence returns, I must be unhappy and I must search the city and go about the streets, saying, “Have you seen Him whom my soul loves?” But if I have never at all enjoyed His Presence—if never once I could say, “He is near me. He is with me”—then how can it be possible that I am His? If I go forth to the business of the day and never recognize God. If I come home at night and have never seen God’s hand with me. If I go to my bed and never, before I sleep, have a kind word from Him then, surely, I cannot be one of His! I lack the acknowledgment which the great Father must and will give to His own children!

I do not see how a man can feel at all certain, no, how he can entertain the hope, even, that he belongs to the Lord, except as he enjoys His Presence. Every true child of God needs His Father’s company. Every true wife desires the presence of her spouse. Our Lord’s Presence is life and light, health and wealth, strength and song to us! Our prayer is—If Your Presence go not with me, carry me not up, for I should go forth a sheep untended to stray where grievous wolves watch for their feeble victims! That is the first benefit of the Presence of God. It is the glory which lights up the soul of the Believer and marks it as the special property of Heaven!

Secondly, it is by that Presence that we are preserved and protected. When Israel came out of Egypt, the Egyptians followed hard behind them. Pharaoh was fierce to slay them or to drive them back, but he could not touch them. They came not near one another all that night because the Lord descended and, like an impenetrable shield of darkness, turned Himself upon the enemy—while like a sun He turned the brightness of His Glory upon His people! The Presence of God enabled Israel to pass through the sea on dry foot and that same Presence brought down the floods upon their foes and swept them away! All through the wilderness they might have been fallen upon by the wandering tribes, especially of the Amalekites, but the camp of Israel was never stormed by an orderly army, nor even plundered by a marauding band!

Never did an invader’s foot plant itself within those streets of canvas! There were no bastions and fortifications, but the Presence of the Lord was a wall of fire round about His people. None could touch them so long as the Lord was there. It was true that Amalek fell upon them once upon their march and slew the hindermost of them, but this showed that those farthest off from God are in the greatest danger! But even these would not have been overthrown had not Israel sinned. Even their hindermost would have been secure if they had walked aright with God. Who can harm those whom Jehovah ordains to keep? Who shall fight against the Invincible and Omnipotent God? If enemies come out against His chosen, He will utterly destroy them! Who shall break through ramparts of fire to touch the sons of God? I think every child of God must acknowledge how safe he has been when he has enjoyed the Divine Presence.

When you get out of that Presence, you are liable to temptations which, in the Divine Presence scarcely come to you, or, if they come, they are shaken off as trifles which have no power over you. When we dwell near God, the baser passions lie still—like the beasts in Noah’s ark, they cause no uproar. But when God is gone, those baser passions rush to the front and the inferior appetites and propensities try to get the mastery over us and cause us all sorts of trouble. While we are in the Presence of God, we may safely stand in the midst of wicked men if Providence calls us there and we shall keep our tongue with a bridle and baffle all their cunning. Yes, our soul may be among lions, but no lion can touch us when God is with us in the den! We may go into the furnace of Nebuchadnezzar, but the glowing coals cannot leave, even, the smell of fire upon us while God is with us in the flames!

We are always safe in the Presence of God in any place and in any work. But, if the Lord is withdrawn from us, then in His sanctuary we shall be tempted to transgress like Eli’s sons—and in His Temple the devil will meet with us and ply his horrible temptations. In the most common transactions of life we shall blunder and transgress if we move without the Lord, for the Presence of God is the only protection of saints. Our sanctity depends upon communion with God! Like the moon, we are bright while the sun shines on us—all our glory is borrowed from our Lord. Oh, how blessed is the promise, then, if we view it in that light, for we all wish to be preserved from the defilement of the world and this is the one golden method of sanctity, “My Presence will go with you.”

There is a third privilege which the Presence of God brought to Israel and brings to us. It is that of direction and guidance. Their route lay through a wilderness without a trail and they could not have known which way to go except the fiery cloudy pillar, which was the index of the Presence of God, had gone before them. Their path was a very strange one as it was, winding in and out, backwards and forwards, but, “He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.” Such is our pathway to the skies—a maze, a tangle, to ourselves—but all plain to the All-Wise! You and I know nothing of what is going to happen to us between here and Heaven. No, we cannot tell what will occur within the hour—but some amazing blessing may come!

I have no doubt you, my Brothers and Sisters, have had in your own lifetime, days of surprises. You have been jogging along the ordinary road of life pretty comfortably. You never thought of what was going to happen, but you have come to a place where the road suddenly diverged and from that instant new scenes have opened up before you. You hardly knew whether you were to go to the right or to the left and you were at your wits end as you pulled up, for there was no signpost and no mark to guide you. At such times, if the Presence of God has been with you, you have not been left to ask the way—but that ancient promise has become true in your experience. “Your ears shall hear a voice behind you saying, This is the way: walk in it.”

You could not explain to other people why you took that particular road, but you can see that if you had taken any other your whole life would have been darkened! After a fashion you explain to yourself why you did this, rather than that. But if you had talked about it to your most intimate friend, it is just possible he would have replied, “Don’t you think there may be a touch of fanaticism about your action? Is there not a little superstition in your reasoning?” So it might be thought, but there is a secret something between you and your God which is the key of the position and accounts for acts which otherwise were unaccountable! If God were not there it would have been superstition—but as God was really there and you are one with whom He has become so graciously familiar that He gives you the Urim and the Thummim and reveals to you His Light and His Truth to guide you—there was no superstition or fanaticism in it!

O the soft, sweet guidances of the royal Presence! They have made my life radiant! Like all His other gentlenesses, they have made me great! “He leads me,” and yet again, “He leads me,” is one of the most joyous notes of my song of love! Ah, if the Lord is not with us, it is extraordinary what muddles we make. I have sometimes had very, very difficult things to do and I have accomplished them with ease under the Lord’s own eyes. But if I am without my Lord’s Presence, I give very bad advice and I most judiciously do very stupid things and most prudently follow a course which everybody would say was prudent but which turns out to be imprudent!

I have noticed—and I often have to bless God for it—that when I have felt myself to be quite done over and nonplussed, I have simply asked guidance and something has occurred to me which I had never thought of before—or something which I had thought of and rejected, but which was the best, has occurred strongly to my mind again. Or somebody else has come in and taken the leadership and put me aside—and somehow or other God has been glorified and I have been happy when I have had His Presence! I am sure that every Believer will find it so in daily life. Therefore the first thing is not to have commonsense and to be wise, as some say, but to have a sense of God’s Presence which is better than commonsense! And to trust in Him for guidance which is better than being shrewd!

He will make the young men wise and prudent. He will give to babes knowledge and discretion if they are but willing to be led by His Divine instruction. You will find it so if you have His Presence with you. But if you have it not, you will do just as the Israelites did about the matter of the Gibeonites which seemed too simple to pray about. You will be taken in with those moldy crusts and those cracked shoes and those crafty rascals that say, “We come from a far country.” And, without taking counsel with God, you will find yourself in fellowship with a brood of scheming Canaanites who will entangle you and do you no end of harm!

You will say, “Oh, but they are such nice old people and it is amazing how religiously they talk and how nicely they persuade me to their side.” Yes, when Satan would deceive, his traps are very simple ones, such as you would never think to be traps at all! When you are quite clear about a thing, pray about it! When you are in difficulty, do as you like. I believe in that fine piece of advice—“When it is a fine day in this country, carry an umbrella with you. When it is raining hard, do just as you like.” I put it into another shape and beg you to remember it. “Why,” you say, “the matter is as plain as the nose on my face.” Then pray to God about it, for the nose on your face may bring you trouble! He that trusts to his own understanding may turn out to have very little understanding to trust to! Take plain matters to God. Get into the Presence of God and stay there and see all things in the Light of that Presence—that will be to you instinct, commonsense, judgment, wisdom!

We have thus seen that rich blessings are found in the Presence of God—Divine acknowledgment, Divine protection and Divine direction. But there was another thing that Israel had by virtue of the Presence of God and that was real worship in the wilderness! Their sacrifices could not have been presented if God had not been among them! There would not have been the Tabernacle with all its accessories if God had not been there. God would not have commanded them to build Him a house that He did not intend to inhabit and He would not have instituted ordinances which He did not mean to fill up by His Presence! If it is imaginable that there should be a Tabernacle with all its outward gear and sacrifices, even until rivers of the blood of fed beasts should be poured out, yet it would have been all an empty, hollow sham if God had not, Himself, been there!

Brothers and Sisters, we cannot worship God in spirit and in truth if we feel Him to be absent! We must believe that He “is” and it is a part of the, “is,” that He is everywhere present! We must believe that God is here, at this moment, or we are quite unable to pray to Him. To pray to a God who is many leagues away is like the worshipper of Baal who says, “Perhaps he is on a journey or he is hunting, or he sleeps and must be awakened.” Elijah never thought that of Jehovah. When he stood by the altar and began to plead with the Lord God of Israel, it never entered into his head that He was sleeping and must be awakened, or that He was up among the stars and needed to be awakened by shouting! The Prophet knew that he spoke right into the eternal ear and talked right into the Divine heart, for he felt that God was there! No worship will do us good, or can be accepted by God except the Lord is present with us in it.

When you live in the Presence of God, how delightful worship is! You can right jubilantly sing songs upon your stringed instruments when the Lord Jehovah hears your praise. The same is true of prayer. You can wrestle with the Angel and hold Him when you are sure He is there. But if He is not there, you cannot wrestle with Him, or even hold Him! You can go forth to preach right bravely when you go in the strength of the Lord God to make mention of His righteousness, even of that only. But if the Lord goes not with the minister what a vain-glorious place the pulpit is and what empty stuff our talk must be! How delightful to come to the Lord’s Table if the King sits there and His spikenard gives forth a sweet perfume! But what is bread and what is wine—and what is the table—if the King, Himself, is not there? The Presence of Jesus consciously enjoyed is the sweetness of our worship and all goes awry where this is not found. Oh, that we may never attempt to do anything for God except with God, or think that we can worship at all unless the Spirit of God is in the worship prompting and quickening it!

Once more, if God had withdrawn from Israel there would have been no communion with Him. God’s Presence meant communion with God. The Israelites could speak with God through their priests when He was in the midst of them, but if He had departed, all fellowship would have closed. And is not that one of the greatest enjoyments of a child of God—that he can speak to his Father whenever he desires it? No child, I think, as a rule asks permission to speak to his father, but feels an unquestioned freedom on that point. I did go, some time ago, into a house where I sat with the head of the family and heard a humble knock at the door. It was his wife who asked if she might come in, but her lord and master spoke somewhat sharply and she went away. I heard, afterwards, one of the girls come to knock at the door to know whether she might come in and I wondered at it, because it is rather unusual, nowadays, for a man to be lord enough, but this gentlemen was lord too much by a long way!

I thank God that I have never seen more than one instance in which a wife or a child was called upon humbly to knock at the door before she could come into the majestic presence of her husband or her father! I have always enjoyed the respect of my sons, but it has never occurred to them to ask permission to speak to me! Yet many professed Christians treat their heavenly Father in that way—they are afraid of Him and dare not tell Him all their hearts—but this is just the sweet privilege of a dear child, that he may turn his eyes to the great Father whenever he pleases and have a private audience with the King of kings at any hour of the day or night! Strangers may not do this! Strangers must get an introduction. Strangers must come with a great deal of ceremony if they want to see a king, but the little prince does not need any usher of the black rod to introduce him to his father.

The Believer’s relation to his Father is a key which opens every door. We are on familiar terms with the great God, as it is written, “I will dwell in them and walk in them and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” In another place He puts it thus—“They shall be My sons and daughters.” Oh sweet words—“My sons and daughters!” This is a privilege which is secured to us by the Presence of God! If any of you have lost the Presence of God, I have no doubt you have some kind of awe that makes you stand a long way off as Israel stood at a distance from the burning mount of Sinai. But if God is with you, then no notion of standing a long way off need come to you. “In Him we live, and move, and have our being.” We eat and drink and sleep eternal life! Whatever we do, we do all in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the power of His abiding Presence!

The Presence of God comes to be as palpable to us as the air we breathe, perhaps more so. It is as certain to us as the life we live. We know Him to be with us and we are as much in the habit of speaking with Him as with our dearest friends! No, much more because we must be parted from the dearest friend, at times, but from our God we are never divided! Wherever we may be and in whatever frame of mind we may be, we can always speak with Him! “When I awake I am still with You.” “I fall asleep and He is at my bedside. I wake up at any hour of the night and there He is.” “He that keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.” He is always ready for fellowship with His people! May you have this everenjoyable, always encompassing Presence with you all the year round!

May the Spirit of God put it to those whom I have mentioned, who are moving or shifting their place by taking a long journey, or who are about to take the last long journey—who feel that the sentence of death is written upon them—is not this Presence all that your spirits can possibly crave? Even death will give you no alarm if this sweet text is fully enjoyed by you—“My Presence will go with you.” Certainly the hardships and dangers of emigration dwindle into insignificance before this promise—“My Presence will go with you among strangers. My Presence will go with you across the sea. My Presence will go with you to the bed of sickness. My Presence will go with you through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” That is the first point.

II. The second head shall not occupy much time, but I hope that it will be hammered out into a lifelong sermon preached by yourselves. WHAT ARE THE DEMANDS OF THIS PRESENCE? Supposing that the Divine Presence shall go with us, what then? Why, first it is necessary that we rely upon it. Beloved, if the Presence of God is with us, do not let us act as if it were not with us, or as if it were not worth much although it is with us! If God’s Presence is with us, what have we to be afraid of? Where is the excuse for our spirit being cast down? If God’s Presence is with us, why do we talk about difficulties? That word should not be in our dictionary, now that Omnipotence is at our right hand! If God’s Presence is with us, why should we speak about fears? Whom shall we fear? “Your are the strength of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid?”

Oh, let this Presence of God be real to you, if you are enjoying it! Do not talk about it and then speak as if you were all alone and go forth to your work, saying, “I am not strong enough.” What? Even if the Lord is with you? Set your God at a right figure in all your calculations. That is to say, if you can find a figure that will represent Him. What is your strength? A unit? Well, if you like, you may make a cipher of it, for that is nearer the truth. But what is God’s strength? Oh, you may carry it up to the nth, as we say in algebra. You may work it out to the utmost conceivable limit, but you will never get a figure that will come near expressing the power of the Presence of God! “I am with you”—“I,” and the universe echoes to the voice, as the words, “I AM,” roll in thunder peals along the heavens!

“I have formed the earth and laid its foundations and reared up the arches of the sky. I am with you, with My Omnipotence, Omniscience, AllSufficiency.” Well, if that is so, rely upon it! Stay yourself upon God and do not play the fool by being dismayed and cast down. “I am with you.” Away with melancholy! Should a little child be always trembling and sobbing out, “Mother, I am alone and I am afraid”? Her mother says, “I am with you, dear child. I am with you.” Will she not have done with her sobbing? So does the Lord say, “How can you fear? How can you fall? I am with you.” If we have His Presence, let us treat it as a matter of fact and be filled with rest!

In the next place, if we have His Presence, let us use it. Every now and then we meet with persons who have thousands of pounds and yet are half starved. We have heard of two great lords who were spending the evening together at a coffee-house and the bill came to an odd sum and they quarreled about who should pay the odd farthing till one of the waiters said, “Look up here! Here are two lords worth 50,000 a year each and they are quarrelling about a farthing!” That was a strange sight, but have you not seen Christian people behaving quite as inconsistently? They have the revenues of the universe to spend and yet they starve themselves by the little enjoyment that they dare to take! Of heavenly food they live upon a crumb a day.

They are just like the elder brother who said to his father, “These many years have I served you. I have neither transgressed your commandments at any time and yet you never gave me a kid that I might make merry with my friends.” You remember his father’s answer? He said, “Your are always with me and all that I have is yours. If you have not eaten all the goats, it is your own fault. You might have been as merry with your friends as you liked, for all that I have is yours.” And so may the Lord often reproach His people. “I am with you, but you do not use Me. You do not exercise faith in Me as to the mountains which lie before you which would become plains if you left them to Me. You do not leave Me your sycamine trees for me to pluck them up by the roots. I can do all things and here you are using this poor feeble arm of yours with all its wasting, aching sinews— when there is an everlasting arm which would be made bare for your defense and which would shake Heaven and earth rather than fail to bring you deliverance.” Why, Brothers and Sisters? Why are we so slow to believe? Oh, if you have the Presence of God, utilize it!

And then, next, if you have the Presence of God, do not grieve Him. Do not lose it. In the presence of a king, men behave themselves. Have you never known, as a boy, when you have been up to some little trick, someone has said, “Hush, here is Father coming”? Why, you stopped your game at once! Oh, how reverently, how cautiously, how jealously, how holy ought we to behave ourselves who are in the Presence of God! It is amazing what God will do for us. He often surprises us with what He does. He seems to be inventive in the liberality of His Grace. He will make our path smooth though before it had been roughness itself! Often and often does He enrich our way as though we were like the lepers who followed the Assyrians when they threw away their silver and their gold!

We are surprised to find what goodness His mercy has scattered for us. Do we not feel that we must walk tenderly towards One who deals with us so gently? Such mercy as His should make us fear and tremble because of the great goodness of God! It must be, I was going to say, a terrible thing to be a king’s favorite but what a terribly blessed thing it is to be the favorite of God—to be lifted up so near to Him as to enjoy the light of His Countenance! We ought to look at all our words before we speak them when we are in His Presence and stop our thoughts before we think them, if such a thing could be, lest any of them should vex His Spirit and prove unbecoming in the Presence of His Majesty.

And, oh, when you have the Presence of God, take care to glorify Him all that you possibly can! Does He deign to dwell in you? Then lay yourself out for His honor. Seek out those who have lost His company and go and cheer them. Find out all the daughters of sorrow, all the backsliders and wanderers, all the poor sinners that are on the wild mountains and seek to bring them where you are, yourself—into the Presence of the gracious Three in One! I think that if we do not work at any other season, we certainly should do so when we are abiding in the light of His Countenance. If my soul keeps no holiday at any other time, she shall certainly be dressed in her bravest and shine in her best when the King, Himself, visits me! It is a grand thing to go to work for God with the Glory of God about your brow, the love of God warming your heart, the strength of God making your spirit courageous and the wisdom of God directing you in the choice of words! Thus shall you work to purpose and a work shall be done which will redound to the eternal Glory!

And thus you see that the Presence of God has its demands. III. My time has gone and, therefore, I must say only two or three words about that last word of promise. WHAT IS THE CHOICE BLESSING WHICH IS APPENDED TO THIS PRESENCE? “My Presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.” In this particular text we must confine the, “rest,” to the end of the journey, for Israel was to have their rest in Canaan and so the promise was, “My Presence shall go with you through the wilderness, and I will give you rest in the land that flows with milk and honey.” Beloved, it were no narrowing of the promise if we were to limit it to that sense, tonight. If God’s Presence is with us here, we shall be in God’s Presence hereafter—and there we shall have rest!  
Some of you good workpeople come in here on Thursday nights and cannot come in quite on time. Well, never mind, you can come late. I would sooner have you for 10 minutes than not at all. A piece of a loaf is better than starving. I know that to many of you the idea of rest must be very sweet. To those who work very, very hard, as some of you do, the thought of an everlasting rest is very pleasant. But perhaps some of you have never been converted. I want to put this thought into your mind— Will you rest? Will you rest at last? They will lay your bones in the cemetery and apparently you will rest, but will you rest? Oh, will you rest?  
Do you think you can rest if you die with unforgiven sin? Can you rest if you die unreconciled to God? Ah, no. “There is no peace,” says my God, unto the wicked. “They are like the troubled sea which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.” Only imagine if that should be your portion forever and ever—never to rest, but to be like the troubled sea, foaming, raging and tossed about throughout eternity! God grant, dear Hearer, that such a fearful unrest may not be your portion!  
But oh, if you will trust in Jesus and value His Presence with you here, what sweet rest there will be above! I have heard some people speak about the rest of Heaven as though it were only a bribe to lazy people. They sneer at the idea of rest, but those people who do not desire rest are unacquainted with hard work! I am persuaded of that! Your lackadaisical ladies and gentlemen who never did a stroke of work in all their lives and could not if they tried, may despise Heaven as a rest, but to many of us, that Scripture is most pleasant, “There remains a rest for the people of God.” The idea of service is, undoubtedly, very sweet—eternal service— very sweet to the strong, active young Christian.  
But I tell you that when you get older and when your heads often ache with anxious care and oftentimes you are worn down in the service of your Master, you will get more inclined to look upon Heaven as a place of rest. And you will thank God that the Holy Spirit was not quite so hard as these fine ladies and gentlemen, but did speak to us of Heaven as a place where the saints shall rest from their labors and their works shall follow them! We do not know where we shall go between now and Heaven, but we shall get Home, at last, and then we shall rest! We do not know how much more work we have to do. We cannot tell how often the burden will press our shoulders, but we shall rest one day. “I will give you rest.”  
Ah, poor toiler, you shall rest. O poor aching eyes, you shall rest when you shall see the King in His beauty. O poor aching brain, you shall rest when you shall have nothing to do but to joy in God and praise Him day and night in His Temple! But I think that under the Gospel dispensation we may take this promise in a far wider sense. “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest,” even now, for, “we which have believed do enter into rest.” While we are believing we obtain rest, we have not the rest of inactivity, but that of peace! The Israelites kept journeying on and yet the Lord was their dwelling place. We have not the rest of luxury—the Israelites had to tread the barren sand and live in tents. But ours is the rest which is consistent with daily service and with frequent trial.  
We rest in this way—we are perfectly at ease about everything. As to the future, what have we to do with that? We have not yet come to it! God arranges things to come. As for the present, we “cast our care upon Him, for He cares for us.” As to our sins, they are gone—dead, buried, lost— never to be seen again! They cannot be found, for God Himself has cast them behind His back! As for the devil, he is a chained enemy. As for the world, Christ has said, “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” As for the needs of the body, He has said, “Your bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure.”  
As for the needs of the soul, Christ is ours and all things are ours in Christ. As for our eternal safety, “Whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.” He will glorify us as certainly as He has justified us—  
*“All that remains for me Is but to love and sing,  
And wait until the angels come To bear me to the King.”*“My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3330 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

TWO CHOICE ASSURANCES  
NO. 3330

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1912. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. “Fear not, Abram: I am your shield and your exceedingly great reward.” Genesis 15:1.  
“And He said, ‘My Presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.’” Exodus 33:14.

IN the splendid Psalm that sets forth the Divine Glory of the matchless Word of God as compared even with the greatest wonders of God’s visible Creation—that is in the 19th Psalm—we read in the 10th verse, “Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.” This is applied to “the judgments of the Lord” which are “true and righteous altogether.” Of course, this expression sets forth David’s esteem of the Law of God as he knew it—a very small volume compared with our complete Bible—and yet we may surely apply it to the whole of the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments! The Hebrew original has it, “Sweeter than the dropping of honeycombs.” Whereupon gracious Thomas Brookes, the Puritan Divine, observes, “it is sweeter than those drops which fall naturally and instantly from the comb without any force or act, and which are counted as being the purest, choicest and richest honey.” How true is this! There are some texts of Scripture that may yield their treasures of instruction, comfort, or direction after deep study and holy meditation—but there are others which are marvelously free in the giving forth of their sweetness, calling for little else than a heart that loves and longs to hear God speak!

As little children have their own confections that need no vigorous chewing, but will melt in the mouth, so some passages of Scriptures are prepared as choice morsels for the Lord’s children—they have only to receive them by transparent faith and unaffected love—and their enjoyment is great.

I know that some of the words of the Lord are as nuts that need breaking open to secure their nourishment, or as grapes that must be trod in the winepress, for their richest meaning lies not upon the surface and plain to all. But these others of which we speak—as the droppings of the honeycomb—are simple sweetnesses, prepared pleasures. Plain, unmistakable, choice delicacies for God’s loved ones!

To enjoy these, one needs not to be a deep theologian, a learned grammarian, or even much less, a profound philosopher or baffling mystic! The honey of the meaning flows easily and sweetly out of the comb of the words as liquid love, pure joy, choice consolation and perfect Truths of God! The student does not require to pore over his books, or the preacher to search his library, or the hearer to gather up all his knowledge to receive and enjoy these. The dainty comfort offers itself at once to the soul’s receiving and, without effort, the sweetness and savor pervade the whole inner being.

So as the Holy Spirit shall open up the word to me, I hope to be able to give you, Beloved, some honey out of the Rock by dwelling on one or two choice, plain texts that speak their sweetness direct to the heart. Not so much for intellectual gratifying—though that is included—as for spiritual satisfying and stimulating. Some preachers seem to make their main business to be the leading of people among the thorns, to be torn with perplexities, or into the fog to tantalize with uncertainties. Be it ours on this occasion to run as did Ahimahaz by way of the plain—along the level road of gracious and comforting teaching! We do well, sometimes, to let the heart have undivided play and gain, thereby, the solace and joy that we so much need!

The droppings of the honeycomb are not so much for labor and toil as for renewal and delight—that the mere student and man of affairs may for a while come and sit and indulge in holy pleasures!

Let this suffice for introduction to our first word of sacred assurance as given to Abram.  
“Fear not, Abram: I am your shield, and your exceedingly great reward.”  
“Fear not, Abram.” No more necessary or practical word could be spoken to the great Father of the Faithful than this. Fear, alas, is a malaria which haunts all the marshlands of earth! It can beset the king on his throne, the peasant in his cottage, the statesman in his lofty office and the poor old mother who dreads the pauper’s lot and fare. It is the shadow that follows us when the sun is shining brightly before—how to escape it is the problem that perplexes thousands of the saints of God. We might be sure that it was so, when so mighty a Believer as Abram was in great peril of it! Does he need a, “fear not,” from Jehovah’s lips? Then we may be sure that we shall require it, too. I am afraid that wherever there is faith there will also be a measure of fear, though the less of it, the better. How tenderly the Lord quiets the fears of His children and lulls their forebodings to rest! “Fear not, Abram.” As much as if He had said “You are all alone, but fear not, for I am with you. You are in much labor, needing great strength, but fear not, I will help you. You have no portion, but are a stranger and sojourner in this land, but fear not, for I am your God. Do not fear concerning the past, nor the present, nor the future. Fear neither the fury of foes, nor the worse trial—the failure of friends. Be brave, calm, trustful, hopeful, joyful. Fear not, Abram.” “You have just been fighting the kings—you desired to be a man of peace and were not, indeed, accustomed to the deadly strife. But I have given the marauders and plunderers like driven stubble to your bow—and you have brought back Lot and all his train of servants that were taken prisoners. You need not fear even for your relatives! I will bless and keep them for your sake. Besides, since you have borne yourself in a right royal fashion and not touched a thread or a shoe lace of the king of Sodom’s goods, do not fear to enjoy your success, for you shall be safe from all attacks and shall command the respect of the great ones around you.” This blessed “fear not” was a quietus to every form of alarm and misgiving which might come near and threaten this man of God!  
Is not this our Lord’s own message to His children everywhere today? He has scattered His, “fear nots,” all over His blessed Word as some riverbanks are all spread with sweet forget-me-nots! And these “fear nots,” cover every emergency of our life and answer to them with the assurance that His love will never forget or fail us! And if we will but remember this, we shall have no cause whatever to fear.  
But the Lord appears to teach Abram that after his conflict and signal victory he might begin to sink. Such is often the case with the bravest men. The natural reaction, unless special Divine Grace is given, is very great. It was so with Elijah, the Prophet of Fire. Men have little time or space to dread while the fierce conflict is raging—their spirit of dash and enterprise is awakened and equal to the struggle and the danger! But when all is over and strained body and brain and nerves begin to assert themselves, then they greatly need the Lord’s reviving and fortifying, “fear not.”  
Beloved, have you never felt yourself strangely supported under the direst afflictions, so that they seemed not afflictions at all? And yet when pressure has been removed you have been ready to faint like Samson after he had slain the Philistines! Fear is a strange contradiction, a grim inconsistency, for it is apt to be greatest when the reason for it is least and smallest.  
We are often quiet in a storm and distracted in a calm. We are mysteries to ourselves and riddles to our neighbors. Our constitutions and dispositions sometimes appear to be made up of odds and ends and gatherings from all manner of beasts, and birds, and fishes— and none can understand us but the Lord who made us! But, blessed be His name, He knows us altogether and therefore He can and does bring forth at the right moment the exact consolation and the precise heartening that we need, saying, “Fear not,” in the instant wherein we are most likely to fear!  
“Fear not, Abram.” Were there not mainly two things about which the Patriarch might have feared? First, about his own safety. This was met by the assurance, “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield.” When he had no other guard, Abram was garrisoned in God. He was like a sheep in the midst of wolves, a lone stranger surrounded by hostile nations! But a strange Divine spell had fallen upon the Canaanites, for the Lord had made them hear Him saying, “Touch not My anointed and do My Prophet no harm.” The protected of the Lord needed not to wear armor, nor bear a sword, nor have any human panoply, for Jehovah had said, “I am your shield.” Abram possessed no fortress, commanded no army but his few servants. He had not even a permanent house in which to dwell. His tents were frail and undefended and yet so guarded by Heaven, that no one ever broke into them or dared molest or threaten those who dwelt within! No assassin waylaid him, no marauder attacked him—he dwelt at ease, for was he not under the broad shield of the Almighty? He was as safe as if he had been enclosed within walls that reached to the skies! The armor of God covered him from head to foot!  
So, dear Friends, when we seem to have nothing, certainly nothing visible, to protect us, what a blessing it is to know that we are nevertheless completely guarded by the Omnipotent though invisible God!  
The visible is necessarily the limited and finite, but the invisible God is Infinite and there is no searching of His understanding, or resistance to His power. You are infinitely safe if you really trust the living God—your beginning and ending, your waking and sleeping, your resting and journeying, your work and suffering, your honor or your reproach, your poverty or wealth, your success or failure, your life or death—your all forever and ever is most secure when the Lord is your Keeper and your Shield upon your right hand. Be it ours in truest wisdom and sincerest trust to give up our hearts to the repose of simple faith in Him!  
Come, sing with me that verse of the beloved singer Toplady— *“Inquirer and Hearer of prayer,  
You Shepherd and Guardian of Thine,  
My all to Your Covenant care,  
I sleeping and waking resign!  
If You are my shield and my sun,  
The night is no darkness to me—  
And fast as the moments roll on,  
They bring me but nearer to Thee!”*  
We are invulnerable and invincible if God is with us! We may be in the very midst of cruel adversaries, but no weapon that is formed against us can prosper if God is our Shield. Our Lord did not say to Abram, and does not say to us, “I will shield you,” but that I, that am the Almighty, I am your Shield: it is not alone My power, My wisdom, My love which will protect you, but I, Myself, will be your Shield!  
Then Abram may have thought, “I shall be protected, but shall I not spend my life in vain?” He might have feared for his success. He led the life of a gypsy, roaming through a land in which he owned no foot of ground. Therefore the Lord added, “I am your Reward.” Do you see? He does not say, “I will reward you,” but “I am your Reward.” If we who work for Christ see souls saved, how we rejoice, for they are a kind of reward to us—but nevertheless we will not rejoice so much but rather rejoice that our names are written in Heaven! I have in these words quoted an old text, first spoken to chosen men who had healed the sick and cast out devils in Christ’s name. And if many receive our word it is a joy to us, but still we may be disappointed even in professed conversions and, at best, our success will not equal our desires. The only reward that a Christian can fully rejoice in—and without any reservation—is this assurance of his Master and Lord, “I am your Reward.” Did not the father in the parable say to the elder son, when he growled and grumbled at the reception given to his brother, “Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours”? That was reward enough, was it not? It is wealth enough to a Believer to possess his God, honor enough to please his God, happiness enough to enjoy his God. My heart’s best treasure lies here— “This God is our God forever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death.”  
“Oh, but,” you say, “people have been so ungrateful to me.” True, but God is not unfaithful to forget your work of faith and labor of love. “Ah, Sir, but I am dreadfully poor.” Yet you have God All-Sufficient, and all things are yours! “Alas! I am so ill.” But Jehovah-Rophi is the Lord that heals you! “Alas! I have no friends left.” Yet this best of friends changes not and dies not. Is He not better to you than a host of other friends?  
How great is your God? Does He not fill all things? Then what more can you seek? Would you have two persons occupying the same place? If God fills all, what room is there left for another? Is not God’s Grace sufficient for you? Do you bemoan a cup of water that has been spilled at your feet? A well is near! Did I hear you cry, “I have not a drop in my bucket?” A river flows hard by—the river of God which is full of water! Oh, mournful Soul, why are you disquieted? What ails you that you should fret your life into rags?  
Very fitly does the Lord say to Abram, “I am your exceedingly great reward.” He is infinitely more as a reward than we could ever have desired, expected, or deserved! There is no measuring such a reward as God Himself. If we were to pine away into poverty or sickness, it would still be joy enough to know that God gives Himself to be our portion. The tried people of God will always confess that in their sharpest time of sorrow, their joys have reached their floodtide when they knew and felt that the Lord is their Covenant God, their Father, their All! Our cup runs over when faith receives Jehovah, Himself, as the crown of the race, the wages of the service! What more can even God bestow, than Himself?  
Now you see what I meant at the beginning by droppings from the honeycomb. I have not strained after novel thoughts or choice words, but have persuaded you to taste the natural sweetness of this fine Scripture promise. Receive it as God gives it and go your way—and let the flavor of it fill your souls all the week! Fear not, Mary! Fear not, William! Fear not, Sarah! Fear not, John! The Lord says to you, even as to Abram, “I am your shield and exceedingly great reward.” No Scripture is of private interpretation—you may take out the name of Abram and put your own name into the promise if you are of Abram’s spiritual seed—and do not stagger at the promise by reason of unbelief. “If children, then heirs” applies to all the spiritual family and to the pledging of all the promises to them!  
The ground whereon you lie, the Lord your God has given you. If you can rest on this Word of God, it is truly yours to rest upon. The Lord is your Defender and Rewarder and by the double title He designs to shut out all fear and so make your rest and safety to be doubly sure! Therefore, cease you from all anxiety! Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him! This day He bids you dwell at ease and delight yourself in Him!  
But we turn from Abram to Moses and we find this sweetly solacing assurance given also to him in time of special need and strain.  
“And He said, ‘My Presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.’”

It was not a pleasure trip that Moses was taking—it was a journey through the wilderness on most important business—and with a great pressure of burden on his heart. He took his case to his God and earnestly appealed to Him, “See, You say unto me, Bring up this people, and You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, I know you by name, and you have also found Grace in My sight. Now, therefore, I pray You, if I have found Grace in your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You, that I may find Grace in Your sight: and consider that this nation is Your people.”

It is very beautiful to notice the argument that Moses uses. He says, “Lord, You have set me to take care of this people. How can I do it? But they are Your people.” Therefore he appeals to Jehovah, Himself, for assistance. “You have not let me know whom You will send with me” is his complaint, but he seems to always have before him the fact that He, whose people they were, who had put him into commission to guide them, and to bear all their provocations, must intend to give him some very superior help! The answer to that is, “My Presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.” What more could Moses need, and what more can we need? We are so foolish that we look about for strength away from God—but there is none except in Him! For all preachers and evangelists, how precious is this promise! They need Divine help in journeying from place to place—and that help lies in the constant fellowship of heart with their Lord—the continual Presence of God consciously enjoyed! They have a great burden of souls lying upon them—their only strength to bear it bravely and triumphantly is that each hears for himself the promise from God’s own lips, “My Presence shall go with you.” It may not appear to some that the quarter of an hour in the morning spent in looking into the face of God with ecstatic joy can fill us with strength, but we know from blessed experience that there is no strength like it! If the Eternal overshadows us, then Omnipotence comes streaming into us! Jehovah in Infinite, condescending liberality gives forth His might to us!

Notice, Beloved, that Moses was not informed that God would send Hobab, his father-in-law, to go with him. Nor that Joshua, his successor, should accompany him. Nothing either was said about the 70 elders who were, by-and-by, to share the burden of responsibility with him. Moses was, indeed, to have their presence and help, but his true power was to lie in this—“My Presence shall go with you.” The journey upon which he was to start was one of great importance foreseen by God to be a journey of great trial and great provocation—a journey that was to last for 40 years—but this is all the provision that he needs and God, Himself, could give him no more.

And then He adds, “ And I will give you rest.” Little as we sometimes imagine it, yet it is still true, that the most important possession of any Christian worker is rest—deep rest of soul in God—“A heart at leisure from itself.” “I do not expect any rest,” says one, “while I am here.” Do you not? Then you will not do much mighty and effective work for the Lord! Those who work most must learn the holy art of resting in the Lord. Indeed, it cannot be done well at all unless they have plenty of rest. You will notice how people that get greatly excited often talk sad nonsense—and people who are very fretful or fearful do not speak or act as they should. If we are to move others, we must have both feet firmly fixed—there is nothing like having a good grip of the ground if you are to wrestle with and throw your antagonist! My restfulness in God enables me to wrestle and conquer all sorts of difficulty and hard toil that is to be overcome.

“Do you think Moses had this rest?” someone will ask. Yes, I am sure he had because of the meekness of his spirit. You remember how the Lord Jesus said, “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest to your souls.” It is true that meekness of heart produces rest. And yet it is a still deeper Truth of God that rest produces meekness of heart! You can very well afford to be quiet with your fellows when you, yourself, are perfectly restful in the living God. I remember a man being run over in the street one day. Somebody rushed off, post haste, for the nearest doctor. And when the medical man heard of the accident, he went calmly into his surgery, turned over his case of instruments, selected those he thought he might need and then walked quietly to the spot where the injured man lay. The messenger tried to hurry him, but it was of no use. “Be quick, Doctor,” he cried, “the man’s leg is broken, every moment is precious.” Now the surgeon knew that he was doing the very best thing that he could do, and he was far wiser than he would have been if he had rushed off in wild haste, perhaps forgetting the very instrument he most needed, and arriving out of breath and quite unfit for the delicate duty required of him! The doctor’s composure was not the result of coldness of heart, but of the resolve to do the best possible thing in the best possible fashion.

If you are conscious of the Lord’s Presence, you will do the best thing possible by being very calm, deliberate and quiet in His service. “He that believes,” in that sense, “shall not make haste,” but he shall go about the business in a restful spirit.

Mark, too, the kind of rest that is here mentioned. “I will give you rest.” All the rest that God gives we may safely take! No man ever rested too long on the bosom of Jesus. I believe many Christian workers would be better if they enjoyed more. I was speaking to a large gathering of preachers the other day upon this very matter, my subject being the Savior asleep during the storm on the Sea of Galilee. He knew there was a storm coming on, but He felt so happy and restful in His Father’s love and care that He went into the back part of the boat—the best place for sleep—and taking the steersman’s cushion for a pillow, lay down and went to sleep! It was the very best thing He could do. He had been busy all day, teaching and feeding the multitudes, and He felt that it was His duty to go to sleep that He might be ready and fit for the next day’s toil. When you get very weary and perhaps worried as well, the best thing you can do is to go to sleep. Go to bed, Brother, and go to sleep!

It is astonishing what a difference a night’s rest makes with our troubles. I would say this literally to fidgeting, worrying people like myself, “Go to bed, Brother, go to bed!” But I would also say it spiritually to all sorts of people! When you are feeling weak and disturbed, and you do not know what to do for the best, “Go into the Presence of Lord and there get rest.” “My Presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.” I will give you a little bit of worldly wisdom, which is also of Divine inspiring. Whenever you do not know what to do, do not do it! But some people, when they do not know what to do, go and do it, directly, and get themselves into all sorts of trouble. Many of us, like Moses, need to be taught to rest. Moses has to bear two millions of people on his heart—he needs rest. He has to put up with them for 40 years—he needs rest. Never had another man such a family as that! Never was another so likely to be fluttered and worried! And he was a meek-spirited man, too, who could not make a dash as others might have done. This is his strength—that he dwells in the Divine Presence and is, therefore, restful, calm and strong! It is only now and then that he let the human meekness be for a moment clouded. Thus was he enabled to march along, like a king in Jeshurun, as he was—and his soul dwelt in the eternity of God, ever singing amidst ten thousand graves, for he had 40 of his people dying every day!

Shall not we who love the Savior hear this same gracious promise sounding clear and sweet in our souls and trusting in the abiding Presence of God find that He gives the unparalleled rest, the rest that endures? And if, on the other hand, we are strangers to that brave, strong peace, shall we not listen as He calls, “Come unto Me, and I will give you rest”? And answering to it, enter into that rest that always follows true believing! The Lord grant it may be so, with each one, for His name’s sake!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **JOHN 10:1-30; HEBREWS 1:1-14.**

Verse 1. Verily, verily, I say unto you. Now we may be absolutely certain that there is something of the utmost importance wherever Christ uses the solemn phrase, “Verily, verily”—the same word is, “Amen, amen” and it has been well observed that if it were not for Christ’s, “Amens,” our “Amens” would be of little value. It is because He who is the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, pleads in Heaven that our, “Amens,” are accepted there. If, dear Friends, Christ pays an earnest attention to our, “Amens,” how much more ought we to attend to His, especially when He doubles them—“Amen, amen, I say unto you.”

1-3. He that enters not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that enters in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter opens; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out. Here the people of God are compared to sheep. Their harmlessness and gentle character, their feebleness and quiet in the fold, their profitable uses, their defenseless state—requiring someone to always watch over them—the patience with which they are led to the shearer or to the slaughter and the constancy with which they are associated with sacrifice—render sheep a most excellent symbol of the people of God! Doubtless the fold is the Church and within this fold all the saints of God are gathered, not always in the visible, but always in the invisible and indivisible Church of Christ. None may set up to be shepherds of this fold except those who come in a proper and fitting way—and that is not by a pretended Apostolic descent, that is, not by a commission which they have received from their own assumption, but by a commission direct from Christ—coming in through Him as by the Door. The great true Shepherd, the antitype of all shepherds, is Christ, Himself. To Him the porter opens. All the prophecies, which, like porters, kept the gates, opened at once to Christ! All godly hearts, which, like the porters of the gate, were watching for the coming of the true Shepherd, opened at once to Jesus! Whether it were Anna or Simeon, they at once confessed Him. The sheep hear His voice and He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out.

We are told by Eastern travelers that in the large district folds into which the sheep herders put their different flocks, while they are all assembled in one common flock, the shepherd of any one flock has but to make his appearance and begin to speak and his sheep at once recognize him. Though another person should dress up in his garments, they would take no notice of him—they know their shepherd by his voice.

4. And when he puts forth his own sheep, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. The genius of the Law is driving—the spirit of the Gospel is leading! And the joyful imitation follows.

5. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. Heretics attract their companies, but the faithful followers of Christ never go after them. They cleave to the Truth of God, which is the voice of Christ—and they will not be persuaded by the most marvelous lying wonders, nor by the greatest arrogance, to depart from Him who is their All!

6-8. This parable spoke Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which He spoke unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. They made loud professions of being the true Messiah, and some of them gathered great multitudes and rebelled against the Roman power, but the true sheep who waited for the true Shepherd did not hear them!

9-14. I am the door: by Me if any man enters in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief comes not but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees: and the wolf catches them, and scatters the sheep. The hireling flees, because he is an hireling, and cares not for the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known by My own.

This Good Shepherd proves Himself to be so by His actions. Remember, Brothers and Sisters, how carefully He watches His sheep from the tower of the flock, not one of them ever being absent from His eyes for a single moment! How graciously He guides those sheep, leading them always by a right way that He may bring them to safety at the last. How plentifully does He pasture His flock, making them to lie down in green pastures beside the still waters. And oh, how gloriously does He defend His flock, dashing into the thickest of their foes, snatching the lamb out of the jaws of the lion and out of the paws of the bear! And we must not conclude this list of His deeds without remembering how readily He has bought that flock, and how well He has washed that flock in blood flowing from His own veins, that He might present them all at the last, not one of them being lacking, nor one of them impure, but each of them like sheep that come up fresh from the washing! “I know My sheep.” It is not as if salvation was left to haphazard. He knew them before they were created! Having foreordained, He did foreknow. He knew them when they did not know themselves—when they were wallowing in the mire like swine, He still knew them! He knows them now—unknown to fame, unregistered, perhaps, in the books of the visible Church—“I know My sheep wherever they may be.” Then notice the next sentence, for this is the practical way by which you may judge whether you are His or not—“I am known of My own.” They know Him as their only hope and trust. They know the sweetness of fellowship with Him. They know the power of His arm, the efficacy of His blood, the faithfulness of His heart. They know the preciousness of His Cross and the glory of His crown.

15-16. As the Father knows Me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. No recognition of free-will here. Christ speaks as one who has the hearts of men in His control. He knows who are His that as yet are not called. He does not say He hopes they will yield to hear His voice, but they shall. Oh, Irresistible Grace, what can stand against you? The blood-bought shall all be blood-washed; the foreordained and foreknown shall yet know Him who has saved them by His blood. In this we ought constantly to rejoice. The feebleness of the minister is no barrier to the carrying out of God’s purpose, nor is the hardness of the human heart any impediment to the completion of the Divine Decree. “Them also must I bring.” There is a heavenly necessity that all the chosen should be saved.

17, 26. Therefore does My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father. There was a division, therefore, again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, He has a devil and is mad, why hear you Him? Others said, These are not the words of him that has a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind? And it was at Jerusalem the Feast of the Dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the Temple on Solomon’s porch. Then came the Jews round about Him, and said unto Him, How long do You make us to doubt? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and you believed not: the work that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me. But you believe not, because you are not of My sheep, as I said unto you. Believing does not make them sheep, but being sheep by Divine Election proves them to be such.

27-30. 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 Father’s hand. I and my Father are One. Happy are they, then, who have received the character of sheep, for thus they prove themselves to be the chosen of God! And in the hand of Christ, and in His Father’s grasp, they are eternally secure—

*“If in my Father’s love  
I share a filial part,  
Send down your Spirit like a dove  
To rest upon my heart.”*

Hebrews 1. In this Chapter our Savior’s glorious Person is very plainly set before us. And it is made the ground of our faith and a reason why we should give the more earnest heed to His words, lest at any time we should let them slip.

Verses 1:1, 2. God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son. The best last is always God’s rule. “You have kept the best wine until now.” Prophets are a very blessed means of communication, but how much more sure, how much more condescending is it for God to speak to us by His Son!

2, 3. Whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His Glory, and the express Image of His Person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He Had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. You see, dear Friends, how glorious was His original—the “express Image” of His Father’s Person. How lowly did He become to purge away our sins and that by Himself, too, using His own body to be the means, by His sufferings, of taking away our guilt! Not by proxy did He serve us, but by Himself. Oh, this is wondrous love! And then see the Glory which followed after the shame. He has now ascended up on high and sits down at the right hand of God’s great Majesty. Follow Him, Believer, follow Him with the eyes of your faith! Let your soul lovingly track Him in His upward march, and as you see Him, say—“He is my Lord and my God,” and know that all that He did and all that He is, He is—and He did for you!

4, 5. Being made so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said He at any time, You are My Son, this day have I begotten You? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son? They are servants, but they are not sons! They are created, but they are not begotten! You see what He says to the Son—“I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son.

6-8. And again, when He brings in the Only-Begotten into the world, He says, And let all the angels of God worship Him. And of the angels He says, Who makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire? But unto the Son He says, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. So you perceive that Christ is no created angel! He is sometimes compared to an angel. He is sometimes called the Angel of the Covenant, but He is not a created angel. He is higher in nature, higher in rank, higher in intellect and higher in power than they. He is nothing less than very God of very God! The very Man who suffered on Calvary—

*“This is the Man, the exalted Man,  
Whom we unseen adore.”*

9. You have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness, above Your fellows. As Man, Christ claims all men as His fellows, but as God, He counts it no robbery to be thought equal to God. As Man, He is most truly Man, and only superior to man by reason of the purity of His birth and the perfection of His Nature, and the exaltation of His Manhood by God. As God, He is nothing less than God, though He took upon Himself the nature of men.

10-12. And, You, Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Your hands: they shall perish; but You remain, and they all shall grow old as does a garment; and as a vesture shall You fold them up, and they shall be changed: but You are the same, and Your years shall not fail. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever!

13, 14. But to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2811 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

MOVING  
NO. 2811

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, DECEMBER 28, 1902.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 24, 1861

**“If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here.” Exodus 33:15.**

THIS is a prayer which has been used hundreds of times and which is found quite in place on many different occasions. Moses was in the wilderness when he uttered it. He was about to lead the people into Canaan, the land that flowed with milk and honey, yet he felt that he would rather continue to endure the inconveniences of the tent and of the wilderness, with the Presence of his God, than enjoy the rest and the fatness of the land of promise without Him. God had made the desert to become to Moses like a garden, but he felt that all the gardens of Canaan and the vineyards of Eshcol would be as nothing to him if God should withdraw His Presence.

Throughout the history of the Church of Christ, there have been particular places where men of God have been compelled to fall on their knees and pray this prayer of Moses. I can conceive of our Puritan forefathers, when they first left this spot, Southwark, to seek in another land the liberty which they could not find here, bowing their knees before they entered their little vessel, “The Mayflower,” and crying to God, “If Your Presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.” I can imagine John Bunyan—after he had been 12 years in prison and had become almost habituated to it, before he crossed the threshold, when the time of his imprisonment was over—looking upon the cold, damp walls of the prison on Bedford Bridge—and saying to his Lord, “If Your Presence go not with me, carry me not up hence.” The immortal dreamer would rather abide in his “den” with his God than go forth into the world and leave his Master behind him!

Many a time, dear Friends, in your experience and mine, we also have had to feel the force of such a prayer as this. When, rather more than seven years ago, I left my kind and loving little flock at Waterbeach to come and preside over this great assembly, I could not help crying out to God, from my inmost soul, “If Your Presence go not with me, carry me not up hence.” When you, Beloved, have to pass through any changes in life. When, in God’s good Providence, you are removed from one sphere of service to another, I think that you, also, may look up to God in prayer and say, “If Your Presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.” And at last, when you and I shall be about to die, when the hour shall approach for us to leave this world behind us and to wade through the cold stream of death, what prayer can be more appropriate than this, “If Your Presence go not with us, carry us not up hence”? To go anywhere without our God is terrible—but to die without the Presence of God would be awful beyond expression. To go down into death’s dark river with no kind helper, with no loving voice saying to us, “Fear you not, for I am with you; My rod and My staff shall comfort you,” would be sad, indeed. It would be, indeed, a solemn thing to meet death alone, to have no Presence of God to cheer us in the last dread conflict!

I have thus mentioned various circumstances in which we might pray this prayer and expect a gracious answer to it. But I think, as a church and people, such a text as this is peculiarly appropriate at this time. We are about to leave this place, which has, to many of us, very hallowed associations. When some of our older friends left Carter Lane Chapel, which once stood on the site now occupied by the London Bridge railway, I have no doubt that they felt it to be a very dreadful thing to leave the old place. Yet, perhaps, it was one of the best things that could have occurred to the church—that they were obliged to come out and build a larger structure—although it is built, I suppose, in as bad a place as they could have found by a microscopic survey of this entire metropolis.

There are, doubtless, many who will always cherish great love for this place because here Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth before their eyes, crucified among them. I think all of these will join with us, who are younger, and therefore less subject to pain concerning changes, and we will all unite—despite all the advantages which we hope will follow our entering upon a larger and more public place of worship—despite the fact that three or four times as many will be able to listen to the Word of God as can listen to it here. Despite all this, we will unite in saying to our Lord, “‘If Your Presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.’ Here let us abide unless You, who are the true Shekinah, will go with us, and still shine forth from between the cherubim.” I feel inclined to stop my sermon and to bow my head and ask you to bow yours, that we may together present this petition to our God. But, as you have already prayed by the mouth of two or three Brothers, I spread it before you and “stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance,” and urge you to plead it in secret, and at your family altars, before your God—“If Your Presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.”

I will arrange my subject under three heads. First, what the Presence of God always involves. Secondly, what our present move involves. And thirdly, the sins by which God’s Presence may be driven away and the means by which that Presence may still be secured to us.

I. First, then, let us think WHAT THE PRESENCE OF GOD ALWAYS INVOLVES.  
The one great need in the Church of Christ is the Presence of God. What is needed in our places of worship is not that they should be specimens of the highest style of architecture, although, certainly, God’s House ought not to be meaner than our own. It is not necessary that they should be sumptuously adorned, although the greatest riches are not too much to be devoted to the service of God. It is not essential that rich people should be in the congregation, although there is a promise which says, “The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat your favor.” It is not absolutely necessary that the minister should be eloquent or talented, although it is well that if a man has 10 talents, he should consecrate them all to Christ, since talent never glitters so much as when it is consecrated and given up to God. There are many things that the churches may need, or may not need, but, certainly, the one thing they need beyond everything else is the Presence of God! It was better for the Church of Christ in England when her members met together by tens and twenties in the woods and were hunted about by informers, and their ministers hauled off to prison—it was better for them to be persecuted and even put to death, in the conscious enjoyment of the Lord’s Presence, than it would have been for them to have had such soft, gentle days as these, but not to have had their Lord with them!  
It was better for the Church of Christ in Scotland when Cargill read his text by the lightning’s flash and when the Covenanter’s worshipped God in dens and caves at midnight, through fear of Claverhouse’s dragoons—it was better for them to have their Lord with them in the midst of the snow and the tempest than to meet calmly and peacefully in a fine ceiled house from which the Lord Himself was absent! It would be far better for us to go back to the age of old barns, dingy thatched buildings and to the times of an uneducated ministry, when God’s power was manifestly with His servants, rather than to go forward and to become great, mighty and intellectual—but to lack the Presence, power and blessing of the most High God! It is the Presence of God that makes the house glorious. Where He is, there is Glory—and where He is not—“Ichabod” is written on the wall, even though that wall should be covered with pure gold!  
Why is God’s Presence the one thing necessary for His Church? Is it not God’s Presence that makes joy in His sanctuary? When are we most glad? Is it not when we consciously realize the Presence of our God? That puts more joy into our hearts than when our corn, wine and oil are increased. What is it that comforts the mourners in Zion? Is it not a sight of Jesus’ face and a vision of His Glory? What handkerchief can wipe the weeping eyes like that which is held in the hand of a covenant-keeping God? Where is the balm for our wounds and the cordial for our fears, but in Him? “As the hart pants after the water brooks,” so does our spirit cry out for God, even the living God—and unless we have His Presence, our soul refuses to be comforted!  
Further, what is it, but the Presence of God that makes His people holy? Is it not because they see the face of Christ that they are transformed into His likeness? It is not mere teaching that can make a man Christlike. It is beholding Christ—Christ shining upon that man’s face and the man reflecting the Light of God which he has thus received. The Presence of God is absolutely essential for the edification, instruction, growth and perfecting of Believers! If we have not this, the means of Grace are empty, vain and void. Clouds without rain that mock the thirsty land. Wells without water that tantalize the perishing caravan, but yield no moisture to burning lips—a mere mirage in the desert, looking like pools of water and fruit-bearing palm trees—but only mocking the wayfarer’s gaze. We must have the Presence of God for His people’s sake, for without Him they can do nothing!  
And, my Brothers, where is the power of our ministry with sinners unless we have the Presence of God? We sow the seed, I grant you, but who prepares the soil and makes the furrows soft with showers? Who sends the genial sunshine? Would not the seed rot under the clods unless the heavenly Farmer watched over it and took care of it? There was never yet one sinner who was converted by man! It is not in man’s power to create, nor is it in his power to new-create. Let a man first attempt to make a fly and if he succeeds in doing that, then let him try to make a new heart and a right spirit. Go, you who think you can do anything to change human nature, or change the Ethiopian’s blackness into snowy whiteness, or remove the spots from the leopard’s skin—go, check Niagara in its dashing might and make the stream leap upward and return to its source—go, bit the tempest, bind the clouds, bid the winds only howl to music and the waves dance in chorus—but when you have done all this, even then you may not hope to make a new heart and a right spirit by any ministry apart from the Spirit of God!  
Ah, my Friends! We have had the Presence of God here [New Park Street] full often, as many of you can testify. If this were the time and place to do so, there are hundreds of you who could stand up and say, “. Christ met with me here, standing on yon spot where the crowd is now.” Here, or there, or in the schoolroom—yes, and behind the pillar, too! There have been many of you who have heard the Word of God to purpose in this place. Drunks have strayed in here and some arrow from the bow drawn at a venture has reached their heart! The harlot has come into these aisles, on the way to the bridge to destroy herself—and Christ has met with her—and she now lives to praise His name. Here the thief, the burglar, the passer of bad money and the very worst and vilest of men have stepped in—and Christ has met with them, glory be to His holy name! No man shall stop me from this glorying as I remember how God has, right here, plucked brands from the burning. All the philosophers in the world have never, by their philosophy, worked such a work as the Gospel has worked here, for I can point to hundreds—I might probably with truth say thousands—of those who, having before scorned God and scoffed at His name, now love Him with all their heart and desire to live to His Glory—and who would be willing to die for His honor! You may tell this in Gath and publish it in the streets of Askelon—let the mighty men of Philistia tremble and let fear take hold of the sons of Moab, for God has made bare His arm and smitten His enemies—and the old Gospel has proved itself worthy of its ancient prowess! God has triumphed gloriously and put to flight both our sins and our adversaries! But what would we do now without His Presence? It is He who has accomplished all that has been done, so again we cry to Him, “If Your Presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.”  
II. Secondly, consider WHAT OUR PRESENT MOVE INVOLVES.  
We are about to move to our new Tabernacle. We must move. It is not even humane to continue to worship here. On the lowest ground of common humanity, it is not right that such a multitude of people should be crowded into so small a structure. With every attempt that we have made to get proper ventilation, it is not possible, in such a building as this— overcrowded as it is—that persons should be able to breathe in a healthy way. I feel it as the minister and I am quite certain that you must feel it as the congregation. If I ever by chance I see anybody asleep—and that has occurred, I think, only twice in the last seven years—it is no matter of astonishment to me—the wonder is that you do not all go to sleep under the influence of such unwholesome air as is often bred here by the multitudes.  
But, on far higher grounds, we must go hence. Here, every Sabbath night, there are crowds in the streets. Let the faintest gleam of sunshine come out and there are many more obliged to go away than are able to enter this building. It is a pleasing thing that so many are willing to listen to the same minister for seven years right on. The glory must be given to God—but the responsibility is with us. If people will come to hear, the least thing that the Church of God can do is to find accommodation for them! The time was when many of us would almost have plucked out our right eye to get them to come. When they are anxious to come, it is but a small thing that we should provide a suitable structure where they may be housed. The theater services are, no doubt, a great blessing. To my mind, however, they lack one great essential for permanent success— not being connected with any distinct place of worship, whatever good may be done is scarcely heard of—great efforts are put forth with small apparent results. In the theater, the seed is sown, but there is no barn provided in which the harvest can be housed. If some two or three men could be found constantly to preach and if endeavors could be made to induce the people to advance from what is, after all, an irregular form of worship, to some place which should be their own spiritual home where they could worship God constantly, more permanent good to the Church of Christ-at-large would certainly result. We pray God to speed every effort for the proclamation of the Gospel, but we are most glad when there seems the greatest prospect of permanent success.  
We must move, then, to our new Tabernacle, but still the prayer recurs, “If Your Presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.” We are going to a place concerning which we entertain great expectations. We hope to see there vast multitudes attentively listening to the Word of God. We trust that many of these will be converted, that the Church will be largely increased and that out of the Church there will spring up young men who will be good soldiers of Jesus Christ, men who will preach the Truth of God as it is in Jesus, throughout this land! And some of them, we hope, in far distant countries. But if God’s Presence go not with us, our expectations will be vain, we shall have flattered ourselves with a pleasing picture which shall never be completed—we will have raised a cup to our lips, the sweet draught of which we shall never drink if God’s Presence go not with us!  
Next, we are going to a place of great opportunities. What opportunities you will all have for doing good—myself especially, though I certainly do not lack for opportunities. I have always before me a wide and open door. Oh, that I had the strength to do more and that there were more time in which I could work! Still, when some five or six thousand people are constantly being addressed, it is no small opportunity for usefulness. Who can tell how many holy thoughts may be inspired, how many wrong desires quenched, how many evil motives exposed, how many right designs prompted in human hearts? O Lord, You have, indeed, given to Your servant high opportunities, but what are these if Your Presence go not with us? They are opportunities that will be wasted. They are chances of attack upon the enemy that will certainly end in our own defeat if the Presence of God is not with us! It is the same with each of you in your measure—Sunday school teachers, I hope there will open up before you a far wider sphere. Ragged-school teachers, and you who distribute tracts, you who preach in the streets and all of you who feel any desire to do good to your fellow creatures—all of you, I think, will have presented before you a golden opportunity, the like of which seldom occurs! Pray, I beseech you—by all that is good and holy—I implore you to pray to God that His Presence may go with you, for, if not, these opportunities will all be thrown away! It would have been as well for you to have been obscure Christians in some remote hamlet of the Orkneys or Shetlands, where you could not reach a congregation without peril of your lives, as to be members of this largest of Dissenting Churches and yet not to have the Presence of God with you!  
There is a still more solemn thought. Our great house will involve greater responsibilities. Many persons kindly suggest to me the solemnity of my position. I know I do not feel it as I might, but I do realize it as fully as I dare. I sometimes feel, in preaching to such multitudes, as a man must feel who walked along a tightrope and was always in danger of falling—and I shall fail if I look down. But if I look up, I can walk there even though Hell itself is foaming at my feet! There is no need of fear to the man who relies upon his God, but there is every reason for fear to the man who begins to rely upon himself. The Prophet Habakkuk says, “The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and He will make me to walk upon my high places.” So may it be with us, but what an awful responsibility it is! You know how the Lord said to the Prophet Ezekiel, “So you, O son of man, I have set you a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, you shall surely die; if you do not speak to warn

the wicked from his ways, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at your hands.”  
I think I have chewed and masticated that text many times. My deacons know well enough how, when I first preached in Exeter Hall, there was scarcely an occasion in which they left me alone for ten minutes before the service, but they would find me in a most fearful state of sickness produced by that tremendous thought of my solemn responsibility. And, even now, if I ever sit down and begin to turn that thought over, and forget that Christ has all power in Heaven and in earth, I am always affected in the same way. I scarcely dare to look that thought in the face and I am compelled to put my responsibilities where I put my sins—on the back of the Lord Jesus Christ, hoping, trusting, believing, knowing, that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that Last Great Day.  
You also have your responsibilities—you must be a holy people. “A city set on a hill cannot be hid.” I never care what is said of me, except one thing. When I hear that any member of this Church has been betrayed into an unholy deed, that cuts me to the very quick. I had sooner that you should diminish by death one-half, than that there should be even one in a hundred who should fall into sin! It is sorrow enough to bury our friends, but it is a still greater sorrow to have to excommunicate them from fellowship or to censure them for misdeeds. You must be a holy people—nor less must you be an active people. If God has done so much for you and you begin to sleep upon your oars, or to sit still and say, “We have done enough, now we will be quiet,” the curse of God will fall upon you! As surely as you are men or women, He has not brought you to this post of duty that you may cease your efforts or stand still! He puts you into the middle of the battle that you may fight with sterner vigor, that you may deal your blows with both your hands to win the battle for your Lord and Master! There are responsibilities that lie upon you as a Church that will utterly crush you unless this prayer is answered for you, “If Your Presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.”  
III. Thirdly, we are to consider THE SINS BY WHICH GOD’S PRESENCE MAY BE DRIVEN AWAY—AND THE MEANS BY WHICH THAT PRESENCE MAY BE RETAINED.  
We can easily get rid of God’s Presence if we grow proud. Stand inside your new house and say, “This great Babylon that I have built!” “And it will be a Babylon to you at once! Begin to say, “We are a great people, we can do anything that we wish! We have but to attempt and we can accomplish.” Offer incense to your own acts. Bow down and worship your own sword as though it had gotten you the victory and the Lord shall say, and the ears of Christians shall hear it as distinctly as the Jews at the siege of Jerusalem heard the rustling of wings and a voice saying, “Arise, let us go from here.” A proud heart is never God’s palace—and a proud church will never be honored by the Lord.  
Further, you can easily drive away the Holy Spirit by sloth. Be as lazy as some churches are, or do as little as they do. Be as little consecrated, as sleepy, as dull, as cold, as lukewarm as too many professing Christians are and you shall soon find that the Lord has withdrawn Himself from you. It is fire in the church that is constantly needed—Divine energy to quicken the whole man into an intense activity for his Lord and Master’s cause! If you, as a church, fall into sloth, you will hear Him say, “This is not My rest. If it is the place of your sleep, you have polluted it and I will depart from you.”  
Disunion, too, among yourselves will soon cause the Holy Spirit to leave you. It has been my constant joy to see union in the Church. We are men and, therefore, we do not always see eye to eye with one another. But I trust that we are also Christians and, therefore, that we are always willing to bear with one another’s shortcomings. I daresay that you have a good deal to put up with from me—I know that I have, sometimes, a good deal to put up with from some of you! Sometimes there is one person and at other times there is another person who would give offense— and it has been one part of my work, since I have been pastor, whenever the ship has sprung a leak, not to say much about it, but to pick the plug, myself, and to go down and drive it in and so stop the water from coming in at that place.  
There are some of you who have often done similar work. This ship would have been scuttled long ago if it had not been for some loving spirits who would not let other people disagree. If any of you have disagreed, I hope you will settle your disagreements at once. If there are any dissensions, I hope you will leave them all behind at Park Street! If any of you are not perfectly at one with each other, we cannot expect God’s Presence to go with us until these things are once and for all forgiven and forgotten! Let us feel as perfectly one as though we were all perfect men and women and may God always grant us such a spirit of mutual forbearance! May He give to us that charity which hopes all things, believes all things and endures all things—for then we shall have the Master’s Presence. But without this, the Holy Spirit, who is the Dove, will never stay with us!  
Furthermore, if we wish to have God’s Presence taken from us, there is another quick way of securing that end—that is by getting slack and slow in prayer. The Prayer Meeting is the gauge of the Church’s spiritual condition. You may always test our prosperity by the multitudes who assemble to pray. Yes, and if we could enter your families and hear how you pray there—and if my ear could be close to your closet door, that I might hear how you pray for the Church in private—then I would know how the Church will succeed! Grow lax and careless, here—do but cease to entreat the Lord for a blessing—and then He will say, “I will not bless this people. I will not give unto them, for they do not cry unto Me. My door of mercy shall not be opened to them, for they refuse to knock.” O Beloved, let us be instant and earnest in prayer! And let us have more faith. I wish I could leave all my unbelief behind me and I wish you could all do the same—it would be a blessed legacy, I am sure, to this Chapel— and the next person who comes to preach here would, I trust, sweep it all out! Oh, that we could get rid of our wicked distrust of our God and our suspicion of His faithfulness, our doubts as to His veracity, our troubles and our fears about the future! O Lord, help us to stay ourselves on You! May we now, as a Church and people, expect great things, attempt great things, do great things and believe great things! Then shall we see greater things than we have ever yet beheld! Give us more faith, Lord, and drive away our unbelief!  
But how can we keep the Spirit of God with us, now that we are about to go to our new Tabernacle? We can do it by His aid, by cultivating those Divine Graces which are just the reverse of the evils I have mentioned. First, we must be humble. Walk humbly with your God, walk humbly towards one another, be patient towards all men. Brothers and Sisters, we must be willing to be nothing—we shall never be anything till we are willing to be nothing. If any man will be perfectly content to be nobody, he shall be somebody. But he who must be somebody shall be nobody. I have always noticed, in a somewhat wide observation of personal character, that the most assuming and pretentious are the least respected, but the most humble, disinterested, self-denying and even self-detracting, are those whom men delight to honor. Crown yourself and every fool will try to knock the crown off your head! Go crownless and there will be some who will be wise enough to say, “That man deserves a crown. Let us put one on his head.” For Christ’s sake as a Church, let us be humble.  
Then, let us be united. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians, “I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.” They were two women, but even good women will sometimes quarrel. Perhaps you ask, “What did it matter that they were not of the same mind?” Ah, but they were members of the Church at Philippi, and the Apostle Paul did not like for even two women to disagree if they were members of the same Church! What shall I say of two male members of the Church—what shall I say of two aged members of the Church—what if I should look around me and say, “There are some who, I fear, are not perfectly at one with each other”? No, I will not say it. I will suppose that there are none in that condition, but if there are, let me now entreat them to be of the same mind in the Lord! What if one of them has an angry temper and the other has a hard disposition? What if one thinks he has a grievance and the other says that he is the one who ought to complain? What if one of you has spoken ill of another and he has spoken ill of you in return? Do not attempt to revive those old quarrels, but let them be buried! Come, let me throw the first handful of earth upon them. “Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.” Yet I must gratefully confess that I never knew, or heard, or read of a Church more thoroughly and intensely one than this Church is. But it may be that we have, in our midst, some such as I have been describing—and if so, I pray that if you would have the Presence of God to go with us to our new sanctuary, you will see to it that all this evil is done away with once and for all!  
Next to this, my dear Friends, let us go up into our new sanctuary with a mind to work. I do not think I ever have to whip you to work—I do get a great deal of work out of you. I always seek, whenever there is anything extra to be done, to preach Christ to you in such a way that you fall in love with Him over again and you want to do something more for Him than you have ever done before! You hardly know all that you have already done and I believe you are just as ready to build another new Tabernacle, now, as you were when we first began! You would have more faith, I daresay, concerning building a second than you had concerning the first. Let each man who has done nothing for the Master up to now, say, “I must begin to do something at once. Though I have been lazy at New Park Street, I must not be lazy in the new Tabernacle.” You know that we are going near “The Elephant and Castle.” Well, when we once get there, let every elephant carry his own castle, or, in other words, let every man bear his own burden—let every Christian do his own work— whether that service is the offering of prayer and praise, or the hewing of wood and the drawing of water for the House of the Lord.  
Then, again, let us take care that we carry up to that new place, fervent hearts full of prayer. Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us fill our censers afresh before we start. Let us put in the frankincense and all manner of precious spices, and let us plead for the sacred fire to descend! And then let us stand, as long as that house stands, or we live, waving those censers between the living and the dead, praising the Lord for His mercies and praying to Him for yet further favors! I do not know how to plead with you as fervently as I wish to do, but I trust that I have set my text before you in such a way as to make you cry to the Lord, “If Your Presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.”  
Finally, let us ask for greater faith. When sailing in the little ship, you had the little man’s faith. You are about to step on board the larger vessel, so seek to get larger faith in proportion to it. Suppose we all had three times as much faith as we now possess—might we not do three times as much work? Yes, but surely that will not be our limit, will it? No, Lord, give us 10 times as much faith! Take away our unbelief! Help us to believe Your Word and teach us to act as though we believed it! Then shall we see far greater things than we have ever yet seen.  
My dear Friends, after all, the main objective of our ministry is the winning of souls to God. Have I any here who have listened to me for these seven years, but who are still unconverted? Oh, what if this last hour in this house should be the time of your conversion? Soul, are you willing to die without a hope in Christ? Surely not! You know yourself to be lost, ruined and undone. I pray you, just as you are, to make a confession of your guilt and come to Christ’s Cross! He is just as willing to receive you, now, as He was when I first addressed you seven years ago! Though you have refused His invitation all these years, His heart still yearns with compassion over you. He has spared your life until now! He has not cut down the old cumber-ground yet. Sinner, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved! O Spirit of God, change the sinner’s heart! Give him faith that he may now cast himself on Christ! “Come now”—NOW, this moment—“and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” May each one of us now pray the prayer of the penitent thief upon the cross, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom!” Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **2 SAMUEL 7:18-29.**

Verse 18. Then went King David in, and sat before the LORD. This was not the usual Oriental posture of prayer, but David was mingling meditation with his supplication, so that his attitude was not according to ordinary rules.

18. And he said, Who am I, O Lord GOD? Why, you are David, the valiant man who slew Goliath! No, no, no—the man of God is nobody in his own esteem!

18, 19. And what is my house that You have brought me up to now? And this was yet a small thing in Your sight, O Lord GOD; but You have spoken also of Your servant’s house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD? No, it is not the manner of man in general, but it is the manner of the Man Christ Jesus!

20-22. And what can David say more unto You? For You, Lord GOD, know Your servant. For Your word’s sake, and according to Your own heart, have You done all these great things, to make Your servant know them. Therefore You are great, O LORD God: for there is none like You, neither is there any God beside You, according to all that we have heard with our ears. There is some sweet doctrine here! The Lord blesses David, not because of David’s virtue, or David’s merit, or David’s prowess, but for His own sake—“For Your word’s sake, and according to Your own heart, have You done all these great things, to make Your servant know them.” The reason why streams of love flow from God is just this—it is according to His Nature. He is a fountain, so the blessing must flow from Him. He is a sun, so He must shine. It is not only because we need His love, but because, “God is Love,” that His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us. Now what is the inference from all this? Does David say, “Therefore, O Lord, I am great and honorable”? Oh, no! He has nothing to say in praise of himself! He says, “Therefore You are great, O Lord God: for there is none like You, neither is there any God beside You, according to all that we have heard with our ears.”

23-25. And what one nation in the earth is like Your people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to Himself, and to make Him a name, and to do for You great things and terrible, for Your land, before Your people, which You redeemed to You from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? For You have confirmed to Yourself Your people Israel to be a people unto You forever: and You, LORD, have become their God. And now, O LORD God, the word that You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, establish it forever, and do as You have said. What a blessed prayer this is, “Do as You have said”! Get hold of a promise of the Lord, take it to the Throne of Grace and then urge this plea, “Do as You have said.” It is a good argument for every upright man to use when he reminds Him of His promise and asks Him to keep His pledged word. And we certainly may use this plea with the thrice holy God—“Do as You have said.”

26. And let Your name be magnified forever. Or, “be greatened”—be made great “forever.” Notice the way David returns to God the words that were addressed to himself. The Lord said to him, “I have made you a great name, like unto the name of the great that are in the earth.” And David replies, “Let Your name be made great forever. You, Jehovah of Hosts, are God over Israel; if You have made me king, and if my throne shall be established, much more shall Yours.”

26, 27. Saying, The LORD of Hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of Your servant David be established before You. For You, O LORD of Hosts, God of Israel. Notice how the name of the Lord seems to grow in this chapter until here it comes to its full force, dignity and majesty— “You, O Jehovah of Hosts, God of Israel.”

27. Have revealed to Your servant, saying, I will build you an house: therefore has Your servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto You. That is the best place to find a prayer—in your heart—no prayer comes up before God, with acceptance, but that which comes out of the very heart which should be like the sacred ark of old, wherein were hidden Israel’s most precious things. God’s words had gone right down into David’s heart and touched the secret springs of it—and now they welled up in this blessed prayer!

28, 29. And now, O Lord GOD, You are that God, and Your words are true, and You have promised this goodness unto Your servant: therefore now let it please You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue forever before You: for You, O Lord GOD, have spoken it. There is that grand pleading again—“You, O Lord God, have spoken it.” If you can remind God of His own promise, you may have whatever you will of Him. If He has said anything, His word shall surely be fulfilled.

29. And with Your blessing let the house of Your servant be blessed forever.  
END OF VOLUME 48 [SEE VOLUME 7 FOR MANY SERMONS REGARDING THE BEGINNING OF WORSHIP IN THE “METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE PULPIT.”]  
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A VIEW OF GOD’S GLORY  
NO. 3120

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1908. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK. “And he said, I beseech You, show me Your Glory.” Exodus 33:18.

THAT was a large request for Moses to make. He could not have asked for more. “I beseech You, show me Your Glory.” Why, it is the greatest petition that man ever asked of God! It seems to me the greatest stretch of faith that I have either heard or read of. It was great faith which made Abraham go into the plain to offer up intercession for a guilty city like Sodom. It was vast faith which enabled Jacob to grasp the Angel. It was mighty faith which made Elijah rend the heavens and fetch down rain from skies which had been like brass. But it appears to me that this prayer contains a greater amount of faith than all the others put together! It is the greatest request that man could make to God—“I beseech You, show me Your Glory.” Had he requested a fiery chariot to whirl him up to Heaven. Had he asked to cleave the water-floods and drown the chivalry of a nation. Had he prayed the Almighty to send fire from Heaven to consume whole armies, a parallel to his prayer might possibly have been found. But when he offers this petition, “I beseech You, show me Your Glory,” he stands alone—a giant among giants—a colossus even in those days of mighty men! His request surpasses that of any other man—“I beseech You, show me Your Glory.” Among the lofty peaks and summits of man’s prayer that rise like mountains to the skies, this is the culminating point. This is the highest elevation that faith ever gained—it is the loftiest place to which the great ambition of faith could climb—it is the topmost pillar of all the towering structures that confidence in God ever piled! I am astonished that Moses himself should have been bold enough to supplicate so wondrous a favor. Surely, after he had uttered the desire, his bones must have trembled, his blood must have curdled in his veins and his hair must have stood on end! Did he not wonder at himself? Did he not tremble at his own boldness? We believe that such would have been the case had not the faith which prompted the prayer sustained him in the review of it!

From where, then, came faith like this? How did Moses obtain so eminent a degree of this virtue? Ah, Beloved, it was by communion with God! Had he not been for forty days in the council chamber with his God? Had he not tarried in the secret pavilion of burning fire? Had not Jehovah spoken to him as a man speaks with his friend, he would not have had courage enough to ask so large a favor. Yes, more, I doubt whether all this communion would have been sufficient if he had not also received a fresh testimony to the Grace of God in sparing the guilty nation through his intercession. Moses had argued with God—he had pleaded the Covenant—and although God had said, “Let Me alone, that I may destroy them,” he had still maintained his hold. He had even dared to say to the Lord, “This people have sinned a great sin and have made them gods of gold. Yet now if You will forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray You, out of the book which you have written.” He had wrestled hard with God and had prevailed! The strength gained by this victory, joined with his former communion with the Lord, made him mighty in prayer! But had he not received Grace by these means, I think the petition would have been too large even for Moses to dare to carry to the Throne. Would you, my Brothers and Sisters, have like faith? Then walk in the same path! Be much in secret prayer. Hold constant fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, and so shall you soar aloft on wings of confidence! And so shall you also open your mouth wide and have it filled with Divine favors! And if you do not offer the same request, yet you may have equal faith to that which bade Moses say, “I beseech You, show me Your Glory.”

Allow me to refer you to the 13th verse of this Chapter, where Moses speaks unto his God, “Now therefore, I pray You, if I have found Grace in Your sight, show me now Your way.” Moses asked a smaller favor before he requested that greater one. He asked to see God’s way before he prayed to see His Glory. Mark you, my Friends, this is the true mode of prayer. Rest not content with past answers, but go again and double your request! Look upon your past petitions as the small end of the wedge opening the way for larger ones. The best way to repay God, and the way He loves best, is to take encouragement from past answers to prayer and ask Him ten times as much each time! Nothing pleases God as much as when a sinner comes again very soon with twice as large a petition, saying, “Lord, You did hear me last time, and now I have come again.” Faith is a mighty Grace and always grows upon that on which it feeds. When God has heard prayer for one thing, faith comes and asks for two things! And when God has given those two things, faith asks for six. Faith can scale the walls of Heaven. She is a giant Grace. She takes mountains up by their roots and piles them on other mountains and so climbs to the Throne of God in confidence with large petitions, knowing that she shall not be refused. We are, most of us, too slow to go to God. We are not like the beggars who come to the door 20 times if you do not give them anything. But if we have been heard once, we go away, instead of coming time after time, and each time with a larger prayer. Make your petitions larger and larger. Ask for ten and if God gives them, then for a thousand! Then for ten thousand, and keep going on until at last you will positively get faith enough to ask, if it is right and proper, as great a favor as Moses did, “I beseech You, show me Your Glory.”

Now, my Friends, since we have spoken a little upon the prayer itself, we shall have to see how it was received at the Throne. It was answered, first, by a gracious manifestation. Secondly, by a gracious concealment. And, thirdly, by a gracious shielding.

I. First of all, this prayer which Moses offered was heard by God and He gave him A GRACIOUS MANIFESTATION—“And He said, I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.”

I think that when Moses put up this prayer to God, he was very much like Peter, when, on the mountaintop, he knew not what he said. I do think that Moses himself hardly understood the petition that he offered to God. With all the clearness of his ideas, however pure his conception of the Divinity might be, I think that even Moses himself had not adequate views of the Godhead. He did not then know as much of God as he has now learned where he stands before the Throne of the Most High. I believe that Moses knew that “God is a Spirit.” I think he must have been sensible that the mind of man can never conceive an adequate idea of the incomprehensible Jehovah. He must have learned that the God of Mount Sinai, the King whose feet glowed like a furnace and made the mountain smoke, could never be grasped by the sense of a mortal. Yet it is likely, with all this knowledge, that the great Lawgiver had a vague and indistinct idea that it might be possible for Divinity to be seen. My Friends, it is hard for creatures encumbered with flesh and blood to gain a just conception of a spirit. We are so linked with the material that the spiritual is above our reach. Surely, then, if a mere spirit is above our comprehension, much more, “the Father of spirits, the Eternal, Immortal, Invisible.”

The poet sings most truly—  
*“The more of wonderful  
Is heard in Him, the more we should assent. Could we conceive Him, God He could not be— Or He not God, or we could not be men.  
A God alone can comprehend a God.”*

These eyes are but organs to convey to me the knowledge of material substances—they cannot discern spirits! It is not their duty—it is beyond their province. Purer than celestial ether of the most refined nature. Subtler than the secret power of electricity. Infinitely above the most rarefied forms of matter is the existence we call a spirit. As well might we expect to bind the winds with cords, or smite them with a sword, as to behold spirits with eyes which were only made to see gross solid materialism.

We find that Moses “saw no similitude”—no visible form passed before him. He had an audience. He had a vision, but it was an audience from behind a covering and a vision, not of a Person, but of an attribute. Behold, then, the scene. There stands Moses, about to be honored with visions of God. The Lord is about to answer you, Moses! God is come—do you not tremble, do not your knees knock together—are not your bones loosened? Are not your sinews broken? Can you bear the thought of God coming to you? Oh, I can picture Moses, as he stood in that cleft of the rock, with the hand of God before his eyes and I can see him look as man never looked before, confident in faith, yet more than confounded at himself that he could have asked such a petition!

Now, what attribute is God about to show to Moses? His petition is, “Show me Your Glory.” Will He show him His justice? Will He show him His holiness? Will He show him His wrath? Will He show him His power? Will He break yon cedar and show him that He is almighty? Will He rend yonder mountain and show him that He can be angry? Will He bring his sins to remembrance and show that He is Omniscient? No! Hear the still small Voice, “I will make all My goodness pass before you.” Ah, the goodness of God is God’s Glory. God’s greatest Glory is that He is good! The brightest gem in the crown of God is His goodness! “I will make all My goodness pass before you.” There is a panorama such as time would not be long enough for you to see!

Consider the goodness of God in Creation. Who could ever tell all God’s goodness there? Why, every creek that runs up into the shore is full of it where the fish dance in the water! Why, every tree in every forest rings with it, where the feathered songsters sit and make their wings quiver with delight and ecstasy! Why, every atom of this air which is dense with animalcule is full of God’s goodness! The cattle on a thousand hills He feeds! The ravens come and peck their food from His liberal hands! The fishes leap out of their element and He supplies them! Every insect is nourished by Him! The lion roars in the forest for his prey and He sends it to him! Ten thousand thousand creatures are all fed by Him! Can you tell, then, what God’s goodness is? If you knew all the myriad works of God, would your life be long enough to make all God’s creative goodness pass before you?

Then think of His goodness to the children of men. Think how many of our race have come into this world and died. We are of yesterday and we know nothing. Man is as a flower—he lives, he dies, he is the infant of a day and he is gone tomorrow—but yet the Lord does not forget him. O my God, if You should make all Your goodness pass before me, all Your goodness to the children of man, I must sit down on an adamantine rock forever and look through eternity! I should wear these eyes out and must have eyes of fire, or else I should never be able to see all Your goodness towards the sons of men!

But then rise still higher and think of His Sovereign goodness towards His chosen people. O my Soul, go back into eternity and see your name in God’s book of predestinating, unchanging Grace! And then come down to the time of redemption and see there your Savior bleeding and agonizing. O my Soul, there were drops of goodness before, but rivers of goodness roll before you now! When you saw the Son of God groaning, agonizing, shrieking, dying, buried in His grave and then rising again, you saw the goodness of God! “I will make all My goodness pass before you.” I say again, what a panorama! What a series of dissolving views! What sight upon sight, each one melting into the other! Could I stand here this morning and borrow the eloquence of an angel. Could I speak to you as I might wish—but, alas, I cannot break these bonds that hold my stammering tongue! Could I loose these lips and speak as angels speak, then could I tell you something, but not much, of the goodness of God, for it is past our finding out! Since I cannot utter it myself, I would invoke all creation to be vocal in His praise. You hills, lift up your voices—let the shaggy forests upon your summits wave with adoration! You valleys, fill the air with the bleating of your sheep and the lowing of your cattle! You that have life, if you have voices, tune His praise and if you walk in silence, let your joyful motions show the thanks you cannot speak! O you trees of the field, clap your hands! You winds, in solemn harmony chant to His Glory! You ocean, with your myriad waves, in all your solemn pomp, your motion to and fro, forget not Him who bids a thousand fleets sweep over you in vain and write no furrow on your everyouthful brow! And you, you storms, howl out His greatness—let your thunders roll like drums in the march of the God of armies! Let your lightning write His name in fire upon the midnight darkness! Let the illimitable void of space become one mouth for song and let the unnavigated ether, through its shoreless depths, bear through the infinite remote the name of Him who is always good and does good!

I can say no more concerning God’s goodness. But this is not all that Moses saw. If you look to the words which follow my text, you will see that God said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you,” but there was something more. No one attribute of God sets God out to perfection—there must always be another. He said, “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.” There is another attribute of God, there is His Sovereignty. God’s goodness without His Sovereignty does not completely set forth His Nature. I think of the man who, when he was dying, sent for me to see him. He said, “I am going to Heaven.” “Well,” I replied, “what makes you think you are going there, for you never thought of it before?” Said he, “God is good.” “Yes,” I answered, “but God is just.” “No,” he said, “God is merciful and good.” Now that poor creature was dying and being lost forever—for he had not a right conception of God. He had only one idea of God—that God is good. But that is not enough. If you only see one attribute, you only see part of God. God is good, but He is a Sovereign and does what He pleases—and though He is good to all, in the sense of benevolence, He is not obliged to be good to any. “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.”

Do not be alarmed, my Friends, because I am going to preach about Divine Sovereignty. I know some people, when they hear about Sovereignty, say, “Oh, we are going to have some terrible high Doctrine!” But as it is in the Bible, that ought to be enough for you. Is not that all you need to know? If God says, “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy,” it is not for you to say that it is high Doctrine. Who told you it was high Doctrine? It is good Doctrine. What right have you to call one Doctrine high and another low? Would you like me to have a Bible with “H” against high, and “L” against low, so that I should leave the high Doctrine out to please you? My Bible has no mark of that kind! It says, “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.” There is Divine Sovereignty! I believe some are afraid to say anything about this great Doctrine lest they should offend some of their people, but, my Friends, it is true and you shall hear it! God is a Sovereign. He was a Sovereign before He made this world. He lived alone and this thought was in His mind, “Shall I make anything, or shall I not? I have a right to make creatures, or not to make any.” He resolved that He would fashion a world. When He made it, He had a right to form the world in what shape and size He pleased. And He had a right, if He chose, to leave the globe untenanted by a single creature. When He had resolved to make man, He had a right to make him whatever kind of creature He liked. If He wished to make him a worm or a serpent, He had a right to do it. When He made him, He had a right to put any command on him that He pleased. And God had a right to say to Adam, “You shall not touch that forbidden tree.” And when Adam offended, God had a right to punish him and all the race forever in the bottomless pit!

God is so far Sovereign that He has a right, if He likes, to save anyone in this Chapel, or to crush all who are here. He has a right to take us all to Heaven if He pleases, or to destroy us. He has a right to do just as He pleases with us. We are as much in His hands as prisoners are in the hands of Her Majesty when they are condemned for a capital offense against the law of the land—yes, as much as clay in the hands of the potter. This is what He asserted when He said, “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.” This Doctrine stirs up your carnal pride, does it not? Men want to be somebody. They do not like to lie down before God and have it preached to them that God can do just as He wills with them. Ah, you may hate this Doctrine but it is what the Scripture tells us. Surely it is self-evident that God may do as He wills with His own! We all like to do what we will with our own property. God has said that if you go to His Throne in prayer, He will hear you—but He has a right not to do so if He likes. He has a right to do just as He pleases. If He chooses to let you go on in the error of your ways, that is His right. And if He says, as He does, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” it is His right to do so. That is the high and awful Doctrine of

DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY. [This subject is further discussed in the following Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon—#77, Volume 2—DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY; #442, Volume 8—GOD’S WILL AND MAN’S WILL and #553, Volume 10—ELECTION NO DISCOURAGEMENT TO SEEKING SOULS—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

Put the two together, goodness and Sovereignty, and you see God’s Glory! If you take Sovereignty alone, you will not understand God. Some people only have an idea of God’s Sovereignty and not of His goodness— such are usually gloomy, harsh and ill humored. You must put the two together—that God is good and that God is a Sovereign. You must speak of Sovereign Grace. God is not gracious alone, He is sovereignly gracious! He is not Sovereign alone, but He is graciously Sovereign. That is the true idea of God. When Moses said, “I beseech You, show me Your Glory.” God made him see that He was glorious and that His Glory was His Sovereign goodness. Surely, Beloved, we cannot be wrong in loving the Doctrine of free, unmerited, distinguishing Grace when we see it thus mentioned as the brightest jewel in the crown of our Covenant God! Do not be afraid of Election and Sovereignty. The time has come when our ministers must tell us more about them or, if not, our souls will be so lean and starved that we shall mutiny for the Bread of Life! Oh, may God send us more thorough Gospel men who will preach Sovereign Grace as the Glory of the Gospel!

II. The second point is, there was A GRACIOUS CONCEALMENT. Read the next verse. “He said, You cannot see My face; for there shall no man see Me, and live.” There was a gracious concealment and there was as much Grace in that concealment as there was in the manifestation. Mark you, Beloved, when God does not tell us anything, there is as much Grace in His withholding it as there is in any of His Revelations. Did you ever hear or read the sentiment that there is as much to be learned from what is not in the Bible as from what there is in the Bible? Some people read the Scriptures and they say, “We wish we knew such-and-such.” Now you ought not to wish such a thing, for if it were right for you to know it, it would be there—and there is as much Divine Grace in what God has not put in the Bible as in what He has put there. If He had put more in it, it would have been our destruction. There is just enough and no more. Do you know how Robert of Normandy lost his sight? His brother passed a red-hot copper bowl before his face and burned his eyes out of their sockets. And there are some Doctrines that men want to know, which, if they could understand them, would be like passing a red-hot bowl before their eyes! They would scorch their eyes out and their understandings would be completely crushed. We have seen this in some ministers who have studied so much that they have gone out of their minds. They have gone further than they ought to have ventured. There is a point to which we may rightly go, but no further— and happy is the man who goes as near to it as possible without overstepping it. God said to Moses, “You cannot see My face; for there shall no man see Me, and live.” There are two senses in which this is true. No man can see God’s face as a sinner—and no man can see God’s face even as a saint.  
First, no man can see God’s face as a sinner. There comes a guilty wretch before the Throne of God. God has spread open His books and set His seat of judgment. There comes a man before the Throne of God. Look at him! He is wearing a robe of his own righteousness. “Wretch, how came you in here?” And the guilty creature tries to look at God and cries that he may live. But no, God says, “He cannot see My face, and live.” Thus says the righteous Judge, “Executioner of my vengeance, come forth!” Angels come with crowns on their brows—they grasp their swords and stand ready. “Bind him hand and foot and cast him into outer darkness.” The wretch is cast away into the fire of Hell. He sees written in letters of fire, “No man can see My face, and live.” Clothed in his own righteousness, he must perish.

Then, again, it is true that no man, even as a saint, can see God’s face and live—not because of moral disability, but because of physical inability. The body is not strong enough to bear the sight or vision of God. I cannot tell whether even the saints in Heaven see God. God dwells among them, but I do not know whether they ever behold Him. That is a speculation. We can leave that till we get there—we will decide it when we get to Heaven. I hardly know whether finite beings, even when glorified, will be capable of seeing God. This much is certain, that no man on earth, however holy, can ever see God’s face and yet live. Why, Manoah, even when he saw an angel, thought he should die! He said to his wife, “We shall surely die, because we have seen God.” If you and I were to meet an angel, or a troop of angels, as Jacob did at Mahanaim, we would say, “We shall die.” The blaze of splendor would overwhelm us! We could not endure it. We “cannot see God and live.” All that we can ever see of God is what He called His “back parts.” The words, I think, signify “regal train.” You have seen kings with regal trains trailing behind them—and all we can ever see of God is His train that floats behind Him. Yon sun that burns in the heavens with all his effulgence, you think is bright—you look upon him and he dazzles you—but all his splendor is but a single thread in the regal skirts of the robe of Deity! You have seen night wrapped in her sable mantle, woven with gems and stars—there they shine as ornaments worked by the needles of God in that brilliant piece of tapestry which is spread over our heads like a tent for the inhabitants of the earth to dwell in! You have said, “Oh, how majestic! That star, that comet, that silver moon, how splendid!” Yet they are nothing but just a tiny portion of the skirts of God that drag in the dust!

But what are the shoulders, the girdle of Divinity, the bracelets of Godhead, the crowns that adorn His lofty brow, man cannot conceive! I could imagine that all the planets and constellations of stars might be put together and threaded into a string and made into a bracelet for the arm, or a ring for the finger of Jehovah—but I cannot conceive what God Himself is! All I can ever learn, all that the thunder ever spoke, all that the boisterous ocean ever could teach me, all that the Heaven above, or the earth beneath, can ever open to my mind is nothing but the “back parts” of God. I can never see Him, nor can fully understand what He is.

III. Now, Beloved, we go to the third point and that is THE GRACIOUS SHIELDING.  
Moses had to be put into a cleft of a rock before he could see God. There was a Rock in the wilderness, Moses smote it, and water gushed out. The Apostle tells us “that rock was Christ.” Very well, Paul, I believe it was, but there is another thing that I believe—I believe that this rock was Christ! I know it was not Christ literally. Moses stood in a literal rock—he stood on the top of a high mountain, hidden in a cleft of a real rock. But, O my Soul, what is the cleft of the rock where you must stand if you would ever see God’s face and live? Oh, it is the “Rock of Ages, cleft for me,” where I must hide! Oh, what a cleaving that was when Jesus died! O my Soul, enter into the hole in Jesus’ side! That is the cleft of the Rock where you must abide to see God—

*“Till God in human flesh I see,  
My thoughts no comfort find.  
The holy, just, and sacred Three  
Are terrors to my mind.”*

But when I get into the cleft of that Rock, O my Soul, when I get into that cleft whose massive roof is the well-ordered Everlasting Covenant, whose solid golden floor is made of the solemn decrees of the Predestination of the Most High, and whose sides are called Jachin and Boaz, that is, establishment and strength, I am in a cleft of a Rock which is so enduring that time can never dissolve it! Precious Christ, may I be found in You amidst the concussion of the elements when the world shall melt away and the heavens shall be dissolved! Oh, may I stand in You, You precious cleft of the Rock, for You are All-in-All to my soul! Some of you, I know, are in that cleft of the Rock. But let me ask others, “Where are you?” Let it be a personal question. I have preached a long while about God. I have tried to mount the height of this great argument and speak of the wondrous things of God. I may have failed, but let me say to each one of you, “Are you in that cleft of the Rock?” Can you sing this verse?—

*“Jesus, Your blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress!  
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,  
With joy shall I lift up my head.”*

In closing, I want to draw one practical inference. What shall it be? Draw it yourselves. Let it be this—There is an hour coming when we must all, in a certain sense, see God. We must see Him as a Judge. It becomes us, then, to think seriously whether we shall stand in the cleft of the Rock when He comes. There is a passage I would mention before closing—“And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.” There was Death on the pale horse—and the original says, “Hades followed with him.” You know that the word, Hades, comprises both Heaven and Hell—it means the abode or state of departed spirits. Yes, Death is after me and you. Ah, run! Run! Run! But run as you will, the rider on the pale horse shall overtake you! If you can escape him for 70 years, he will overtake you at last. Death is riding! Here comes his pale horse! I hear his snorting, I feel his hot breath. He comes! He comes! And you must die!

BUT, WICKED MAN, WHAT COMES AFTERWARDS? Will it be Heaven or Hell? Oh, if it is Hell that is after you, where will you be when you are cast away from God? I pray God to deliver you from Hell. Hell is coming after you sure enough—and if you have no hiding place, woe be unto you! See that cleft in the Rock? See that Cross? See that blood? There is security there, but only there! Your works are but a useless encumbrance, cast them away and with all your might flee to the mountain! Cry to Jesus—

*“Nothing in my hands I bring,*

*Simply to Your Cross I cling.”*  
Yes, more than this, you will need Divine aid even in coming to Christ, so cry yet again—

*“But oh, for this no strength have I,*

*My strength is at Your feet to lie.”*  
And, poor helpless one, if you are but hidden in Christ, you are forever secure! Storms may arise, but you cannot be overwhelmed! Old Boreas may blow until his cheeks burst, but not a breath of wind can injure you, for in the cleft of the Rock you shall be hidden until the vengeance is gone!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **HEBREWS 11:1-21.**

This is the Arc de Triomphe erected to the memory of the heroes of faith, whose names are here recorded by the Apostle’s Inspired pen with a brief mention of some of their most memorable actions. If it had not been for their faith, which moved them to accomplish such valiant deeds, we might not have known anything about them.

Verse 1. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Though the “things” are only “hoped for” and “not seen” at present, the eye of faith can see them and the hand of faith can grasp them! Faith is more mighty than any of our senses, or than all our senses combined!

2. For by it the elders obtained a good report. It is noteworthy that they obtained this “good report” by their faith. Doubt gives a man an evil reputation—it is only Believers who obtain such a “report” as even the Holy Spirit describes as “good.”

3. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. It is only by believing the Inspired record that we can obtain a true understanding of the wondrous work of Creation. Science and reason are of little or no use here, but the opening words of Divine Revelation explain the great mystery—“In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth.”

4. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaks. It was the sacrifice of the believing Abel that was well pleasing in God’s sight. And though his brother, Cain, out of jealousy and malice, slew him, his good reputation continues even to this day. That is the best way of living which enables a man to go on speaking for God even after he is dead.

5. By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death: and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. It was by faith, not by works, that this truly gracious man, “was translated that he should not see death.” We never read of any unbeliever, “that he pleased God,” but this is the Inspired testimony concerning Enoch. [See Sermons #1307, Volume 22—

ENOCH; #107, Volume 3—FAITH; #2100, Volume 35—FAITH ESSENTIAL TO PLEASING GOD; #2513, Volume 43—HOW TO PLEASE GOD and #2740, Volume 47—WHAT IS ESSENTIAL IN COMING TO GOD—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

6. But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. No one can come to God if he does not believe that there is a God and that He justly dispenses rewards and punishments.

7. By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. [See Sermon #2147, Volume 36—NOAH’S FAITH, FEAR, OBEDIENCE AND SALVATION—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] By which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. There is an unholy fear which is cast out by perfect love, but there is a holy fear, a filial fear, which dwells most happily with faith. So was it with Noah, who, “by faith...moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.”

8. By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed: and he went out, not knowing where he went. Though Abraham did not know where he was going, God knew, and that was quite sufficient for the Patriarch. As a little child is willing to be led by his parent, so Abraham was willing to be led by God, even though that meant leaving his own country and his own people and going to the distant land which God intended to give him.

9, 10. 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: for he looked for a city which has foundations, whose

Builder and Maker is God. [See Sermon #2292, Volume 39—ABRAHAM, A PATTERN TO BELIEVERS—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

He was only a sojourner in the land of promise, he knew that even the promised land was only a tenting-ground for him and his descendants, but he also knew that he was on his way to a Divinely planned and Divinely built city—not like the temporary cities of earth, which shall all perish and pass away, but a city with everlasting foundations, a city that will last as long as God, Himself, exists.

11. Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Sarah’s faith was not like Abraham’s, yet it was true faith and, therefore, her name appears among faith’s worthies.

12, 13. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable. These 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. Though the promises could only be seen afar off, faith has such long arms that it embraced them, clung to them as loving relatives cling to one another and would not let them go. So may we see the promises, and be persuaded that they belong to us, and embrace them as we clasp to our bosom those who are nearest and dearest to us!

14, 15. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from which they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. True pilgrims never think of going back—they know that whatever difficulties and trials lie ahead of them, there are far greater ones in “that country from which they came out.” Bunyan’s Christian was quite resolved not to go back to the City of Destruction whatever perils he might have to face on his way to the Celestial City.

16. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He has prepared for them a city. Their desire for “a better country” has been implanted within them by God, Himself, and “He has prepared for them a city” which will more than satisfy their utmost desires.

17-19. By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall your seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. However puzzled Abraham may have been by the command to offer up the son in whom his seed was to be called, his plain duty was to obey that command and to leave the Lord to fulfill His own promise in His own way. Perhaps he had also learned, through his mistake concerning Ishmael, that God’s way of fulfilling His promise might not be his way—and that God’s way was always best.

20. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. He was old and blind, so that he did not know which of his sons came for the first blessing, yet he could see into the future sufficiently to bless both his sons “concerning things to come.” What wondrous power there is in faith even when it is exercised by very imperfect individuals!

21. By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. That staff had been Jacob’s companion on many memorable occasions, so it was most fitting that he should lean upon it while blessing his grandsons!

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GOD’S GLORY AND HIS GOODNESS  
NO. 3448

**A SERMON  
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE.

**“And he said, I beseech You, show me Your Glory. And He said, I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And He said, You cannot see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while My Glory passes by, that I will put you in a cliff of the rock, and will cover you with My hand when I pass by: and I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back parts: but My face shall not be seen.”  
Exodus 33:18-23.**

IT has frequently happened that good men in times of great trial have asked God either to give them a signal token of His love, or a special Revelation of Himself, that they might be strengthened and encouraged thereby. I suppose of many here present it is true that when called by the Master to great labor or deep affliction, you have been conscious of the same inward desire—your heart has craved after some extraordinary dispensation of Grace to counterbalance the extraordinary visitation of suffering that has overtaken you. Were you indulged with singular nearness to God and unusual glimpses of His Glory, you feel it would then be easy to leave all matters in His hands and acquit yourselves valiantly—strong for service, whatever there is to do—and patient in enduring whatever there may be to bear. That prayer, “I beseech You, show me Your Glory,” is a natural yearning, a spontaneous impulse of the soul. Albeit, I know that there is a grievous incredulity, a sinful unbelief which asks to see signs and wonders—and without them men will not believe—yet I think there is a desire which springs up in the breasts of Believers from an earnest childlike feeling of dependence upon the great Father God which is not sinful, and which God accepts—and to which He often sends a gracious reply.

Now we will not linger over any preliminary reflections. Our text is rather long, and our time this evening is very short. Let us draw your attention, in the first place, to the fact that—

I. GOD’S GLORY EVIDENTLY LIES IN HIS GOODNESS.  
You observe that when Moses said, “I beseech You, show me Your Glory,” the answer given him was this, “I will make all My goodness pass before you.” So then, Beloved, if we could actually see the Glory of the Lord, then the Infinite graciousness of His thoughts, His words and His deeds, all concentrated in one noontide effulgence and all beaming forth with ineffable brightness, would break on our vision! But, of course, it is not a Glory to be seen with mortal eyes, for God is a Spirit and, therefore, He is not to be discerned by our weak senses, or to be understood by our gross materialism. Still, I put it thus—could God be beheld by the mind of man and His perfections unfolded to our creature apprehensions, we would perceive that the chief splendor of His Majesty lay in His Infinite Benevolence! God is Love. This is the prominent point of the Divine Character. Though all excellent qualities beyond measure or degree, surpassing thought or reckoning, could be found in Him, yet, like the blended hues of many colors in the rainbow, the whole might be summed up in such words as these, “Your goodness.”  
Some sublime evidences and brilliant reflections of this goodness of God may be seen in the works of Creation. Who can leisurely walk in the fields, or saunter among the hills and dells, observing the beauty and order, the uses and capabilities of this fertile earth, without breathing a tribute of gratitude to the goodness of the Creator? Who can look up to the heavens with a gleam of sensibility, or a glimmer of intelligence, by day or by night from these dusky streets of ours, and observe the luster of the constellations, or meditate on the regular motion of the celestial bodies, without an overwhelming impression of the transcendent goodness of the Lord? Yes, “the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.” The woods ring with the melody of “happy birds that hymn their rapture in the ear of God.” The cattle on a thousand hills low out His praises and winged insects in countless numbers hum their joy! The world is His temple in which everything speaks of His Glory! Some glimpses of His goodness may be perceived in Providence, too. The history of man is the unrolling of the volume of Divine Benevolence to a great extent. That silver thread runs through all the web of human history. Yet, my Brothers and Sisters, these are but glimpses, for, alas, in Creation (and in Providence, too) much is to be seen of the terror and of the Justice of God as well as of His goodness. Earthquakes swallow cities. Storms sweep away not only the possessions men own, but the men, themselves, who own the possessions. Shipwrecks are constantly occurring and the sea is a vast cemetery. Dire famines are still abroad. Fell diseases stalk forth and mow down their helpless victims. The Lord Most High is terrible, yet surely He is good! His decrees are inscrutable. What then? We must be always ready to worship Him with resignation as well as with exultation, with bated breath as well as with grateful song. Tell me of the goodness of God to the whole animate Creation! Commend me to the tiny insects that dance in the sunbeams of His widespread benevolence and I tell you that He is great in power! His ways baffle our scrutiny. For by one chill wind, by one cold frost, in the course of a night millions of millions of those creatures perish at once! Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God! Whether in Creation or in Providence, between the tenderness that fosters life and the sternness that destroys life, the balance is held so steadily that we can but get glimpses of God’s goodness by broadly surveying or minutely examining them.  
The full display of the goodness of God, however, is reserved for the working of His Grace in the redemption of man. Do you ask wherein the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared? The answer is, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.” It is here at the Cross, by the blood of the Covenant, that Jehovah makes His goodness known in its most Divine forms! That God should be good to creatures is something to be thankful for, but that He should be good to sinful creatures exhibits His Character in a far more marvelous light and should compel our gratitude beyond all degree. That He should plan a scheme of redemption, that He should give His Son to carry out that purpose, that His Holy Spirit should bow the heavens and come down and be resident on earth, dwelling in the bodies of His people, that He might work out the good pleasure of His own will— herein is goodness! Is the earth a temple?—its windows are few and narrow, letting in little light compared with the Temple of God’s Grace which seems to be a very crystal palace, letting in the light of His Grace on all sides! Or rather it is like one huge pearl, whose light beams from within and makes the earth and the nations bright with the radiance of its glory! If you would see the goodness of God in its purest tenderness, you must come into the Sanctum Sanctorum, into the Holy of Holies, where He dwells in the hearts of His people, who form the living Temple of the living God! The experience of one and all who know Him will bear witness to this. It would appear, however, that in the manifestation of this Grace, the goodness of God shines in a peculiar light. Another attribute is blended with it. Permit me to read the verse to you—“I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you, and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy to whom I will show mercy.”  
You observe here, that while God’s goodness is His Glory, the very glory of His goodness lies in His Sovereignty. What less than this can be meant by the sentence, “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy to whom I will show mercy.” God is not bound to be gracious to anyone, and He is peculiarly jealous of His right to bestow His Grace where He will. “Shall I not do as I will with My own?” is the question which the Most High seems to be constantly asking. He will show mercy, but He will take care so to grant it that His own absolute prerogative shall be conspicuous. He exercises a right of His own in every act of mercy—it is not of debt, but of Grace—therefore, no flesh shall glory in His Presence. The creature may not say unto his Maker, “Why did You made me thus?” No man is permitted to challenge His authority, or ask, “Why do You withheld such a gift from me, or why have You bestowed such a gift on another”? Against His fiat there is no appeal. “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.” I know this attribute of Divine Sovereignty does not shine in a very lovely light to many eyes. Oh, may those eyes be touched with a heavenly salve—and they will see better! The naked grandeur of the fact is not to be impeached—the eyes are at fault! Let them be abashed—the eyes that are dazzled and blinded by the excess of its splendor, for the Lord is God, He gives no account of His doings. The Lord Most High does as He wills among the armies of Heaven and with the inhabitants of this lower world!  
Glory be to His name. Some of us have learned to love this attribute and to rejoice therein. We thank God that He is King. We delight in His absolute Sovereignty, knowing as we do that He is too wise to err, too good to be unkind. Therefore, we say, “Let His will be done on earth even as it is in Heaven”—and in all things let His counsels prevail—for in submission to Him we find all the purposes of His heart on our side, while in resistance to Him we find all His decrees set in array against us! Let not the creature, therefore, ask account from the Creator! Let not the subject call in question his rightful Lord! Above all, let not the disciple have a scruple about His Master’s teaching. Not, indeed, that we should gaze at this one attribute till our eyes are so blinded with its dazzling splendor that we cannot perceive other attributes of the Almighty. All His perfections blend and harmonize—none of them clash or contradict one another!  
God will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, but He always exercises that Sovereignty with respect to justice. He treats no man unequally. In judgment He is impartial. Among lost spirits, not one shall dare charge the Judge of All with partiality. The equity of their sentence shall be palpable alike to the criminal and the foe. Unmoved by passion or by prejudice, the heavens shall declare His righteousness—and Hell itself shall be unable to impeach the integrity with which He administers the laws and statutes of His universal Kingdom! Neither does God exercise that Sovereignty inconsistently with wisdom. He has chosen a people, and He did not choose them because of their merits, yet depend upon it, He made a wise choice! Were we endowed with more wisdom, we might easily discern the choice God has made is not only gracious, but highly judicious. He is not blind and unwitting that the counsel of His heart should be distorted with a random change or an inevitable fatality. What though we cannot decipher the why or the wherefore, there is a reason which He has not been pleased to reveal. Therefore, it ill becomes us to pry into matters so far beyond the sphere of our intelligence! And still less would it be fitting to ascribe to mere caprice motives which we are unable to fathom. Our Sovereign Lord acts according to His own will, it is true, but know that He acts according to the counsel of His will, that is to say, not without deliberation, forethought and prescience of all the issues! Nor is this Sovereign choice of God ever exercised apart from His goodness. He is infinitely gracious, infinitely benevolent, infinitely loving. His election makes the Grace He bestows, the compassion He feels and the love He manifests more abundantly conspicuous.  
Some preachers have set forth this Doctrine as if it were their delight to represent the Almighty as an austere Ruler, to be dreaded rather than to be revered! By exaggerating one feature of His admirable Character, or rather by neglecting to draw other features in their due proportion, they have produced an unseemly caricature, instead of an attractive delineation. His absolute dominion has thus made men shudder as if it were an awful despotism wherewith He tramples down the creatures whom verily He upholds by His power! But know you that the Lord is good, that His tender mercy is over all His works, and His mercy endures forever! Though in the exercise of His supreme prerogative, He says, “I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy,” yet He speaks again in words like these, “As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in him that dies, but had rather that he turn unto Me and live.” He wills not, He declares, the death of the sinner. Infinite Mercy is not inconsistent with unrivalled Sovereignty. Do you tell me to show you that? No, but I cannot show you it—it is for God to show you! Who am I that I should attempt to reveal the Infinite? Go to Him and put up the prayer, “Show me Your Glory,” and you shall see His goodness with His Sovereignty illuminating it like a blaze of light, always making it more resplendent, never obscuring it! At any rate, Beloved, the Doctrine is transparent enough to arrest attention. Do not, I beseech you, reject it. I know how angry it makes some men to allude to it, but I know also how good a thing it often proves for them to be incensed, when the Truth of God is more understandable than edible, for if the arrows of God stick fast in their conscience and wound them, there will come healing afterwards. Anything that wakes men from their apathy and makes them think is good. What though this Doctrine may look like a stumbling block in your pathway, it is one of the great thought leaders that has often brought men on their knees before the majesty of Heaven!  
But ah, the best of men, while here below, can only have a partial view of this Glory of God’s goodness and sovereignty. Moses, highly favored as he was, beholds it but in a measure. He sees the skirts of God’s garment—he cannot see His face. And yet it has been well observed that this very Moses afterwards saw the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ on the mountain of Transfiguration. “What you know not now, you shall know hereafter.” Here you can but know in part, but soon, and oh, how soon!—you shall know even as you are known. The veil will soon be torn, my Brothers and Sisters! If we have believed in Jesus, the least among us shall soon be wiser than the wisest of those who still linger behind in the wilderness! We shall stand before the Throne of God upon that sea of glass that glows with fire and cast our crowns before the Eternal One, and see the Infinite One and rejoice in the sight! Thus have we tried to show you that the Glory of God lies in His goodness and His Sovereignty.  
II. HIS GLORY CAN BE BEST SEEN IN THE CLIFF OF THE ROCK. Moses was put into the cliff of the rock. Surely I am not guilty of trifling with a literal fact or fancifully spiritualizing the sacred narrative, when I take up the language of the Apostle Paul, and say, “That Rock was Christ.” If the Rock from which the Israelites drank was Christ, surely this Cliff in the Rock, this splitting of the Rock, this making a shield and shelter of the Rock, was a true type of our Lord Jesus Christ— *“Rock of Ages cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee.”*  
It is no poetical fiction, no coinage of the brain. It is a substantial Truth of God that Jesus is the Cliff of the Rock wherein we stand when we come to God in Christ Jesus. There it is that we can look upon the goodness and the Sovereignty of Jehovah, and more fully survey the glorious vision than it were possible for us to behold anywhere else. Apart from Christ, men do not see the true goodness of God. The description that some preachers give of God’s goodness amounts to this—that men’s sins are such trifles that God will entirely overlook them as frailties of the creature, or if He should punish the transgressors, it will be with gentle discipline and not with fiery indignation—and that only for a short time— after which they will either perish by annihilation, or else perhaps they will enter into life everlasting by a general restitution. Sin is treated with an indifference that borders on levity! It excites so little aversion among men, that they begin to think it of no very great account in the sight of God! He is too good and generous to be hard upon His poor subjects, who did but follow their own inclinations and trample on His Laws! Knowing what they are, He pities them, as if vice were a disease and crime a misfortune! Take heed, my Friends, of all such sophistries! That leniency is not goodness. In fact, it is the very opposite. It has neither integrity nor benignity to

recommend it. Take the case of a legislator or a judge, whose sense of justice might be lax, while his feelings were too tender to denounce a crime and too timid to condemn a criminal. Would you consider him deserving of eulogy? Suppose a magistrate on the bench should say, “Well, it is true this man did break into a dwelling house, smite the servant, kill the owner and wreck the property. The evidence is clear, but there are extenuating circumstances. He needed a little money, or he would not have done it. Poor man! The money tempted him! Let us take a merciful view of the matter. Is not money a commodity that everybody is anxious to get? Are we not all exposed to temptation? Do not put him in prison! Do not sentence him to death—how would you like to be hanged? Admonish the unhappy fellow, but give him his liberty! Encourage him with the hope of a better career in the future.”  
What would you think of this new species of charity? When felony is but a misdemeanor, and murder is condoned as a casualty, I can hardly imagine you would feel very comfortable with the red-handed culprit by your side in this Tabernacle! You would rather not have him go home and sleep in one of your houses tonight—your generous hospitality would rather grudge him a cordial welcome! No, we say that kindness to the murderer is cruelty to the nation! The easy good nature that makes light of sin is a wrong to the community! The reprieve and the release of heinous offenders is a breaking up of the defenses that shield us from men whose conduct is unscrupulous and whose disposition is ferocious. Or when, to give another example, I see a man in Holland, digging away at the dykes which are made to keep out the sea, I might ignorantly resent any interference with him. Why should not the man have a little sand if he needs it to put on his floor, or why may not he take home a bag of earth to make the things in his garden grow better? Do not molest him! No, but with the knowledge I now possess of the consequences, I would say he will let in the sea—he will break up the ramparts! It cannot be endured. It must not be tolerated. He infringes the law to the hazard of his neighbors, so that it becomes such a high offense that mercy extended to him would be a misery to the surrounding population! What say you, then, my dear Friends, shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Would you impute to Him a pitiful clemency that rather exposes weakness than exhibits strength of character? No such callousness or apathy, no such disregard of the rights and wrongs of the inhabitants of the world belongs to the government of the Most High! Even the mercy of God, which is revealed in Christ and recorded in the Bible, is wise and discriminating. He is as severe as if He were not kind and He is as tender as if He were not rigorous. His Justice is never eclipsed by His Mercy and His Mercy is not diminished, but rather is increased in splendor by His Justice! Never, I pray you, think that men can understand the goodness of God till they see Christ Jesus! When they see Him Crucified, they discover how He pardons sin, but not till an Atonement is made—how He puts away the transgression, but not till His Law is fulfilled and made honorable by the suffering of the Only Begotten! He does not pull up the sluices of iniquity and let loose the floods upon mankind. He is too good to do that. He lays help upon One that is mighty and executes His vengeance upon the sinner’s Substitute. You never see His goodness till you get into Christ.  
Nor does any man ever see God’s Sovereignty aright until he comes into the Cliff of the Rock, Jesus Christ. I love the high Doctrines of the Covenant of Grace, I must confess, most devoutly and devotedly. But of this I am quite certain, that all the counsels of the Father concerning His people, and all the benefits He has conferred on His people were bestowed in the Person of His Well-Beloved Son! Still, I know of no greater pest under Heaven than high Doctrine preached or believed in as an abstract system of divinity or a blind fatalism by those who have not their heart set upon the One Mediator whom God appointed, the blessed Redeemer whom He has accepted as our Representative. Oh, how they caricature God as a Moral Governor! Oh, how they burlesque the Gospel as a proclamation of good tidings to the children of men! The love they attempt to describe is unlovely—and the mercy they essay to publish is unattractive! They sing hymns of Grace to the tune of reprobation! But in Christ Jesus you may see how Sovereignty blends with sympathy and how the strong will that knows no mutability is consistent with the goodwill that owns no animosity! The Lord is King, but the silver scepter is in His hand. He fulfils His own decrees, but His decrees are not grievous, for Christ is the Messenger of the Covenant and He proclaims His readiness to receive every heavy-laden soul that comes to Him for mercy!  
Now I further remark that in the gifts of the Gospel and the blessings of Christ we see Divine Goodness. You will never see Divine Goodness so clearly as you do in the fact that God gave His Son. “God so loved the world that He gave”—gave what?—Gave what token of His love? Gave the air we breathe, the fruits of the earth we feed upon, the flowers that charm our eyes, the gorgeous sun that shines resplendent in the skies— these are proofs of His benevolence no doubt, but all other proofs are comprehended in this—“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The Gospel of good news declares everywhere that whoever believes in Christ is not condemned. Herein the amazing goodness of God is described in a few words—an Infinity of meaning is pressed into a single sentence! The blessings that God has conferred on us in Christ—comprehending as they do the Holy Spirit who brings all things to us—show the riches of His goodness! Earthly blessings are but the lower springs—and they are often discolored in a measure by the soil through which they flow—but heavenly blessings are the upper springs, leaping from the Eternal Throne, immortal and pure, making those that drink pure and immortal, so that they shall never die! In Christ you can see Divine Sovereignty as you never saw it before. Oh, I like to think that Christ is King—that over all the world He reigns—that God has committed all power into His hands who is our Brother, touched with the feeling of our infirmities.  
The sons of Jacob might not go to Pharaoh, but it was a good thing when it was said, “Go to Joseph,” for they would, none of them, be afraid to go to their brother! And now there is a mediatorial Kingdom set up on the earth in which Christ, alone, is the Head. And who would wish to have a better Head and a better King? We can trust the power with Him, for He has absolute wisdom, unlimited goodness, unbounded Grace. Oh, how glad are we that the Lord reigns and that Christ Jesus is Head over all things to His Church, that He is King of kings and Lord of lords, according to that ancient saying, “Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.” In Christ, Sovereignty and goodness shine as with noontide radiance!  
And now I would ask you, my dear Hearers, to remember that the Sovereign Grace of God may be seen in the Gospel that is preached to you. God might, if He had willed, have made salvation conditional upon your performing certain works. He has not done so—He has been pleased to give salvation to every soul that will believe in Jesus Christ! In His Sovereignty He has been pleased to make faith the channel of saving blessing. He, in His Sovereignty, might have ordained a thousand Graces as the way to mercy, but He has only put two. “Repent,” He says, and in another place, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.” The knowledge of salvation might have been put so far beyond the reach of common intelligence that the whole of the British Museum could not have contained the volumes in which it was written—and an entire lifetime could not have sufficed to learn the rudiments of this best of all the sciences! Instead of that, He has put it in these simple sentences, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” “He that believes not shall be damned.” Here is His Sovereignty and His goodness, too! Thank God for so simple a plan of salvation and thank Him, I pray you, for such promises as He has made. Listen, Sinner! He has said, “Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” He has said, “Let the wicked forsake his ways and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him.” He might have chosen to send the Gospel to the great and mighty, but He has dispensed it freely to the poor! He has directed it to the humble, yes, and He has made a special mark that He has provided it for every broken and contrite heart that trembles at His Word! How can you kick at Sovereignty, however absolute, which is exercised in so tender, so gentle, so merciful a manner? Instead of rebelling against His scepter, come and kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way! Bow down before His nailed feet and ask the pardon that His wounds and death have purchased! Come to His Cross and let your trust fix itself on His passion which has expiated the guilt of all Believers! On His Resurrection which has secured life to all that trust Him, and on His intercession, which guarantees salvation to all that come unto God by Him—salvation even to the uttermost! Oh, see Him! He might, if He had so willed, have withheld the Gospel! He might, if He willed, have clogged the Gospel with terms and conditions which would make the acceptance of it a hardship! Or He might have denied to you the hearing of it, even though He gave others that unspeakable privilege. What, then, should be your gratitude, when He has been pleased to send His messenger to you with these tidings of Grace, this proclamation of pardon—“Trust in the Only Begotten, who died on the Cross, and I will forgive you—forgive you now”? “Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as snow.” Oh, yield, yield now! May His blessed Spirit come with these words of mine, which I would to God could be made more quick and powerful than they are—may His eternal Spirit come and clothe them with might and with energy to convict your conscience, to convert your heart, to renew your spirit, to make you bow before the Infinite heart so good and yet so absolute! Then might you say, “Great God, I acknowledge You as my King! I love You because You are a gracious God. I worship You because You could reject me if You willed. I kneel at Your footstool and pray You to accept me, not for my merit, since I have none, but for Your mercy’s sake! Oh, for Christ’s sake, have pity upon me!” He will hear you, Sinner! An answer of peace shall be given you—shall be given you now!  
The practical end of all this may be summed up in a few sentences. Sinner—unsaved, you are in the hands of God to do what He likes with you. He can destroy you. He can save you. A moth is not more feeble beneath the finger of a man than you are beneath the finger of God. Be not, therefore, high-minded. Submit yourself to Him whose power is able to crush or to uphold you. But know that He in whose hands you are, is infinitely good and gracious! Therefore, appeal to Him for mercy. By all means cherish hope. Yield not to despair. Suffer not that demon, like a nightmare, to sit on your breast, to crush out all your energies, stifle all your cries and prevent your drawing near to God in prayer! He is not more majestic and absolute as a Sovereign than He is benignant and compassionate! When you are in His hands, you are in good hands. Resist not His will! Repine not at His decrees! Confide in His clemency. Approach Him in the courts of His house. Fall down at His Mercy Seat! Adore Him by His generous titles. Seek shelter in His love. Give earnest attention to the Gospel—believe it implicitly. Right soon will you then get silent musings, obvious reasoning, solid arguments to banish fear and nourish hope! God need not have sent His Son into the world to suffer and to die. It must have been gratuitous on His part. That you should have a share in this great Redemption could never be inferred from His Justice! It must be referred to His Grace. But if you believe Him, then the Redemption is yours! The faith you have in Him is a token of the favor He has towards you. If you rely upon the simple fact that Christ died for you, your faith is the substance of the thing you hope for, and it shall be the evidence of your special Redemption! His blood was shed for your remission. Because He poured out His soul unto death, therefore your soul is raised up to everlasting life! Your relying upon Christ is my warranty for accrediting you with all the immunities and all the advantages of His salvation!  
This Sovereign goodness of God ought to be a great encouragement to any of you that have been great sinners, because while there is no competition on your part in which merit might bear the palm, there is a complacency on His part in which Grace can assert its claims. If He can save whom He will, He may be as willing to save you who are the most depraved as He is to save those who have been the most virtuous of mankind! Do you heartily repent, at this good hour, of your transgressions? God has not limited the promise of this mercy to those who have transgressed but a little, but He is known to make the chief of sinners the objects of His greatest mercy! It is well for us that Grace is distributed Sovereignly. Better that we should look to His goodwill than dream of our own free will. To be suitors for the great benefits He has treasured up for His people is far preferable to being schemers seeking to justify ourselves and forge a righteousness void of worth, graceless, heartless and good for nothing! Since He does as He wills, He may be willing to give to you what you are desirous to ask of Him. No, He does will to give to you if now He moves your will to accept at His hand the rich fruit of the Savior’s passion! Never did a soul desire God, but God desired that soul. Whenever a soul yearns to be saved through Jesus Christ, admiring the Grace as it has been vouchsafed to others, and craving the same Grace for itself, that hunger and thirst are prompted by God, and by God it shall be satisfied, for blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness— they shall be filled!  
Oh, come then, come and welcome! What more, what better can I do to conclude than ring again that silver bell which has so often resounded clear and loud in this Tabernacle? It has not lost any of its sacred melody or its enchanting power—  
*“From the Mount of Calvary,  
Where the Savior deigned to die,  
What transporting sounds I hear,  
Bursting on my ravished ear—  
Love’s redeeming work is done!  
Come and welcome, Sinner, come!”*  
Come, I pray you, for His mercy’s sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **ISAIAH 45:1-16.**

Verses 1-4. Thus says the LORD to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, to subdue nations before him; and loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut: I will go before you, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give you the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I, the LORD, which call you by your name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob My servant’s sake, and Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name: I have surnamed you, though you have not known Me. Long before the period of Cyrus’s birth, this prophecy was written by Isaiah—and surely it must have flashed solemn conviction upon the heart of the king when he came to read words like these, in which his very name was mentioned—and all his exploits and successes, with which he vanquished his enemies, captured their strong places and cut the gates of brass in pieces! Our God has all things present before Him. To Him there is no future. All things are in one eternal now with Him and, therefore, He tells His Prophets the things that shall be.

5. I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me: I girded you; though you have not known Me. It is a wonderful subject—the Providential government of God over princes and potentates that know Him not—how He raised up Cyrus on the behalf of His people, that they might be delivered—and though Cyrus did not know it, yet was he, as it were, an instrument in the hand of God—moved according to the Divine Will!

6, 7. That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside Me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness, I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things. It was to correct the Persian mistake into which Cyrus had fallen of a duplicate deity—one power creating light and another power creating darkness. “No,” says Jehovah, “I alone am God.”

8, 9. Drop down, you heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it. Woe unto him that strives with his Maker! As many do in these days. Tonguevaliant men who dare accuse the Most High and arraign Him at their bar.

9. Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Let them strive with their equals, but who is he that shall come into conflict with the eternal God?

9, 10. Shall the clay say to him that fashioned it, What are you making? Or your work, He has no hands? Woe unto him that says unto his father, What did you beget? Or to the woman, What have you brought forth? Quarreling with God is a waste of time, is audacity and presumption! It will end in disaster to us, for the Lord is Lord of All!

11-13. Thus says the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons, and concerning the work of My hands command you Me? I have made the earth, and created man upon it. I, even My hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their hosts have I commanded. I have raised him—That is, Cyrus.

13-15. Up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build My city, and he shall let go My captives, not for price nor reward, says the LORD of Hosts. Thus says the LORD, The labor of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto you, and they shall be yours: they shall come after you: in chains shall they come over, and they shall fall down unto you, they shall make supplication unto you, saying, Surely God is in you; and there is none else, there is no God. No other God. The day shall come in which this shall all be true, when men shall relinquish their idols and believe in that one great invisible God, the Maker of all things! For the present we do not see this.

15. Verily you are a God that hides Yourself, O God of Israel, the Savior. Throughout these long and weary years, man has forgotten or blasphemed his Maker, and God has sat still and borne it in the majestic patience of His Infinity.

16. They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols.  
—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 #553 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

ELECTION NO DISCOURAGEMENT TO SEEKING SOULS  
NO. 553

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 7, 1864, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“I will be gracious upon whom I will be gracious,  
and will show mercy upon whom I will show mercy.” Exodus 33:19.**

BECAUSE God is the Maker and Creator and Sustainer of all things, He has a right to do as He wills with all His works. “Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why have you made me thus? Has not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?” God’s absolute supremacy and unlimited Sovereignty naturally flow from His Omnipotence and from the fact that He is the Source and Support of all things. Moreover, if it were not so, the superlative excellence of the Divine Character would entitle Him to absolute dominion.

He should be Chief who is best. He who cannot err, being perfect in wisdom. He who will not err, being as perfect in holiness. He who can do no wrong, being supremely just. He who must act in accordance with the principles of kindness, seeing He is essentially Love, is the most fitting Person to rule. Tell me not of the creatures ruling themselves—what a chaos were this! Talk not of a supposed republic of all created existences, controlling and guiding themselves.

All the creatures put together, with their combined wisdom and goodness—if, indeed, it were not combined folly and wickedness—all these, I say, with all the excellencies of knowledge, judgment and love which the most fervid imagination can suppose them to possess—could not make the equal of that great God whose name is Holiness, whose Essence is Love, to whom all power belongs and to whom alone wisdom is to be ascribed. Let Him reign supreme, for He is infinitely superior to all other existences.

Even if He did not actually reign, the suffrages of all wise men would choose the Lord Jehovah to be absolute Monarch of the universe. And if He were not already King of kings and Lord of lords, doing as He wills among the armies of Heaven and the inhabitants of this lower world, it were the path of wisdom to lift Him up to that Throne. Since men have sinned, there becomes a yet further reason, or, rather, a wider scope for the display of Sovereignty. The creature, as a creature, may be supposed to have some claim upon the Creator—at least, it may expect that He shall not make it intentionally and despotically to put it to pain. That He shall not arbitrarily and without cause or necessity cause its existence to be one of misery.

I will not venture to judge the Lord, but I do think it is altogether incompatible with His goodness that He should have made a creature and, as a creature, have condemned it to misery. Justice seems to demand

that there shall be no punishment where there is no sin. But man has lost all his rights as a creature. If he ever had any he has sinned them away. Our first parents have sinned and we, their children, have attainted ourselves by high treason against our liege Lord and Sovereign. All that a just God owes to any one of us on the footing of our own claim is wrath and displeasure.

If He should give to us our due, we should no longer remain on praying ground, breathing the air of mercy. The creature, before its Creator, must now be silent as to any demands upon Him. It cannot require anything of Him as a matter of right. If the Lord wills to show mercy, it shall be so. But if He withholds it, who can call Him to account? “Can I not do as I will with My own?” is a fit reply to all such arrogant enquiries—for man has sinned himself out of court and there remains no right of appeal from the sentence of the Most High.

Man is now in the position of a condemned criminal whose only right is to be taken to the place of execution and justly to suffer the due reward of his sins. Whatever difference of opinion there might have been about the Sovereignty of God as exercised upon creatures in the pure mass, there should be none and there will be none, except in rebellious spirits, concerning the Sovereignty of God over rebels who have sinned themselves into eternal ruin and have lost all claim even to the mercy, much more the love of their offended Creator.

However, whether we all of us agree to the doctrine that God is Sovereign or not is a very little matter to Him, for He is so. De jure, by right, He should be so. Defacto, as matter of fact, He is so. It is a fact concerning which you have only to open your eyes and see that God acts as a Sovereign in the dispensation of His Divine Grace. Our Savior, when He wished to quote instances of this, spoke on this wise—“Many widows there were in Israel in the time of Elijah the Prophet. But unto none of these was Elijah sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman who was a widow.”

Here was election! Elijah is not sent to nourish and to be nourished by an Israelite widow, but to a poor idolatress across the border. The blessing of the Prophet’s company is graciously granted. Again our Savior says, “Many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the Prophet. And none of them were cleansed, save only Naaman the Syrian”—not an Israelite at all, but one who bowed in the house of Rimmon. See how distinguishing Grace finds out strange objects! Although our Savior only gave these two instances and no more, because they sufficed for His purpose, there are thousands of such cases on record.

Look at man and the fallen angels. How is it that fallen angels are condemned to endless fire and reserved in chains of darkness unto the Great Day? There is no Savior for angels! No precious blood was ever shed for Satan. Lucifer falls and falls forever, never to hope again. There is no dispensation of mercy to those nobler spirits. But man who was made lower than the angels, is selected to be the object of Divine Redemption! What a great mystery is here! This is a most industrious and indisputable instance of the exercise of the prerogatives of Divine Sovereignty. Look again at the nations of the earth. Why is this Gospel preached today to us Englishmen? We have committed as many offenses—I will even venture to say we have perpetrated as many political crimes as other nations. Our eye is always prejudiced towards everything which is English. But if we read our history fairly, we can discover in the past and detect in the present grave and serious faults which disgrace our national banner. Can we pass off as minor offenses the late barbarities in Japan and our frequent wars of extermination in New Zealand and at the Cape? And let it crimson the cheek of every inhabitant of the British Isles when we do but hint at the opium traffic with China.

Yet to us the Gospel is graciously sent, so that few nations enjoy it so fully as we do. It is true that Prussia and Holland hear the Word and that Sweden and Denmark are comforted by the Truth of God, but their candle burns but dimly. It is a poor flickering lamp which cheers their darkness, while in our own dear land, partly from the fact of our religious liberty and yet more graciously through the late revival, the sun of the Gospel shines brightly and men rejoice in the light of day.

Why this? Why no Grace for the Japanese? Why no Gospel preached to the inhabitants of Central Africa? Why was not the Truth of God displayed in the Cathedral of Santiago, instead of the mummeries and follies which disgraced both dupes and deceivers and were the incidental cause of the horrible burnings of that modern Tophet? Why today is not Rome, instead of being the seat of the beast, become the Throne of Jesus Christ? I cannot tell you. But assuredly, Divine Sovereignty passing by many races of men has been pleased to pitch upon the Anglo-Saxon family, that they may be as the Jews were aforetime—the custodians of Divine Truth and the favorites of mighty Grace.

We need not further speak upon national elections, for the principle is plainly carried out in individuals. Do you see anything, my Brethren, in that rich publican, whose coffers are gorged with the results of his extortion, when he climbs the sycamore tree so that his short stature may not prevent his seeing the Savior? Do you see anything in him why the Lord of Glory should halt beneath that sycamore tree and say, “Zaccheus, make haste and come down! For today I must abide at your house”?

Can you find me a reason why yonder adulterous woman, who has had five husbands and who is now living with a man who is not her husband, should constrain the Savior to journey through Samaria that He might tell her of the Water of Life? If you can see anything, I cannot. Look at that bloodthirsty Pharisee, hurrying to Damascus with authority to haul men and women to prison and shed their blood! The heat of midday cannot stop him, for his heart is hotter with religious rage than the sun with noontide rays.

But look, he is stopped in his tracks! A brightness shines round about him! Jesus speaks from Heaven the words of tender rebuke. And Saul of Tarsus becomes Paul, the Apostle of God. Why? Why? What answer can we give but this? “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.” Read the “Life of John Newton”—had he not ripened into the grossest of all villains? Turn to the history of John Bunyan—by his own confession the lowest of all blackguards! And tell me, can you find in either of these offenders any sort of reason why the Lord should have chosen them to be among the most distinguished heralds of the Cross? No man in his

senses will venture to assert that there was anything in Newton or Bunyan why they should engross the regard of the Most High. It was Sovereignty and nothing but Sovereignty.

Take your own case, dear Friends, and that shall be the most convincing of all to you. If you know anything of your own heart, if you have formed a right estimate of your own character, if you have seriously considered your own position before the Most High—the reflection that God loves you with an everlasting love and that, therefore, with the bands of His kindness He has drawn you—will draw forth from you at once the exclamation, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Your name give Glory, for Your mercy and for Truth’s sake.” Brothers and Sisters! The whole world is full of instances of Divine Sovereignty, for in every conversion some beam of the absolute dominion of God shines forth upon mankind!

When a sinner is anxiously disturbed about his soul’s affairs, his chief and main thought should not be upon this subject. When a man would escape from wrath and attain to Heaven, his first, his last, his middle thought should be the Cross of Christ. As an awakened sinner, I have vastly less to do with the secret purposes of God than with His revealed commands. For a man to say, “You command all men to repent, yet will I not repent because I do not know that I am chosen to eternal life,” is not only unreasonable, but exceedingly wicked. That it is unreasonable you will clearly see on a moment’s reflection.

I know that bread does not of itself nourish my body, “For man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word which proceeds out of the mouth of God.” It depends, therefore, upon God’s decree whether that bread shall nourish my body or not—for if He has not purposed that it shall, it may even choke me and so become rather the cause of my death than the staff of my life. Do I, therefore, when I am hungry, thrust my hands into my pockets and stand still and refuse to help myself from the well-loaded table because I do not know whether God has decreed that the bread shall nourish me or not? If I did, I would be an idiot or a madman! Or, if in my senses, I would starve myself on such a pretense and I should richly deserve the burial of a suicide.

I am not absolutely sure that there will be a harvest upon my field next year. Unless God has ordained that the corn shall spring up and shall ripen, all my farming will be labor lost. There are worms in the earth, frosts in the air, birds in the sky, mildews in the winds—all of which may destroy my corn and I may lose every single grain of the handfuls which I throw into my furrows. Shall I, therefore, leave my farm to be one perpetual fallow because I do not know whether God has decreed that there shall be a harvest or not next year?

If I become a bankrupt—if I am unable to pay my rent—if the thorn and the thistle grow taller and higher, and if at last my landlord thrusts me from my tenancy—all that men will say will be, “It serves him right!” True, because I was such a fool as to make the secret purposes of God a matter of paramount consideration instead of performing my known duty. I am ill and sick—a physician comes to me with medicine. I am not clear that his medicine will heal me. It has healed a great many others, but if God has decreed that I shall die, I shall die—if I take any quantity of medicine or take none at all.

My arm mortifies, but I will not have it cut off because I do not know whether God has decreed that I shall die of mortification or not. Who but a crazed idiot, or raving maniac, would talk thus? When I put the case in that light, you all reply, “Nobody ever talks in that way. It is too absurd.” Of course nobody does! And the fact is, even in the things of God, nobody really does argue in that way. A man may say. “I will not believe in Christ because I am afraid I am not elected,” but the thing is so stupid, so absurd, that I do not believe that any man not absolutely demented can be so grossly foolish as to believe that in his own reasoning.

I am far rather inclined to think that it is a wicked and perverse method of endeavoring to stupefy conscience on the theory that a bad excuse is better than none and that even a foolish argument is better than having one’s mouth shut in speechless confusion. But since men will everlastingly be getting to this point and there are so many who are always giving this as a reason why they do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, because, “It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy,” I shall try, this morning, to talk with these people on their own ground.

And I shall endeavor, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to show that the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God, so far from discouraging anybody, has not in it, if regarded aright, any sort of discouragement whatever for any souls believing in Jesus Christ. For one moment let me detain you from my object, while I reply to a very common method of misrepresenting the doctrine. It may be as well to start with a clear idea of what the doctrine really is.

Our opponents put the case thus—suppose a father should condemn some of his children to extreme misery and make others supremely happy, out of his own arbitrary will. Would it be right and just? Would it not be brutal and detestable? My answer is, of course it would! It would be execrable in the highest degree, and far, very far is it from us to impute such a course of action to the Judge of all the earth! The case stated is not at all the one under consideration, but one as opposite from it as light from darkness!

Sinful man is not now in the position of a well-deserving, or innocent child! Neither does God occupy the place of a complacent parent. We will suppose another case far nearer the mark. Indeed, it is no supposition but an exact description of the whole matter. A number of criminals, guilty of the most aggravated and detestable crimes, are righteously condemned to die and die they must unless the king shall exercise the prerogative vested in him and give them a free pardon. If for good and sufficient reasons, known only to himself, the king chooses to forgive a certain number and to leave the rest for execution, is there anything cruel or unrighteous here?

If, by some wise means, the ends of justice can be even better answered by the sparing of the pardoned ones than by their condemnation, while at the same time, the punishment of some tends to honor the justice of the lawgiver, who shall dare to find fault? None, I venture to say, but those who are the enemies of the State and of the king. And so may we well

ask, “Is there unrighteousness with God?” God forbid!  
“What if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known,  
endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that He might make known the riches of His Glory on the vessels  
of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto Glory, even us, whom He has  
called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?” Who is he that shall  
impugn the mingled mercy and severity of Heaven, or make the eternal  
God an offender, because, “He has mercy on whom He will have mercy?”  
Let us now proceed to our proper subject and endeavor to clear this Truth  
of God from the terrors supposed to cluster round it.  
I. Let us begin with this assertion, which we are absolutely sure is correct—THIS DOCTRINE DOES NOT OPPOSE ANY COMFORT DERIVED  
FROM OTHER SCRIPTURAL TRUTHS. This doctrine, stern as it may seem  
to be, does not oppose the consolation which may be rightly derived from  
any other Truth of Revelation. Those who hold the free will theory say that  
our doctrine, that salvation is of the Lord alone and that He will have  
mercy on whom He will have mercy, takes away from man the comfort derivable from God’s goodness.  
God is Good, infinitely Good in His Nature. God is Love, He wills not the  
death of any, but had rather that all should come to repentance. “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.” Our friends very properly  
insist upon it that God is good to all and His tender mercies are over all  
His works—that the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and  
plenteous in mercy. Let me assure them that we shall never quarrel on  
these points, for we also rejoice in the same facts.  
Some of you have listened to my voice for these ten years—I ask you  
whether you have heard me utter a single sentence which at all contradicts the doctrine of God’s great Goodness? You may have so construed it  
by mistake, but no such teaching has passed my lips. Do I not, again and  
again, assert the universal benevolence of God—the infinite and overflowing goodness of the heart of the Most High? If any man can preach upon  
the great text, “God is Love,” though I may not be able to preach with the  
same eloquence, I will venture to vie with him in the decision, heartiness,  
delight, earnestness and plainness with which he may expound his  
theme, be he who he may, or what he may.  
There is not the slightest shadow of a conflict between God’s Sovereignty and God’s Goodness. He may be a Sovereign and yet it may be absolutely certain that He will always act in the way of goodness and love. It  
is true that He will do as He wills. And yet it is quite certain that He always wills to do that which, in the widest view of it, is good and gracious.  
If the sons of sorrow fetch any comfort from the goodness of God, the doctrine of election will never stand in their way.  
Only mark, it does with a two-edged sword cut to pieces that false confidence in God’s goodness which sends so many souls to Hell. We have  
heard dying men singing themselves into the bottomless Pit with this lullaby, “Yes, Sir, I am a sinner, but God is merciful! God is good!” Ah, dear  
Friends, let such remember that God is Just as well as good and that He will by no means spare the guilty, except through the great Atonement of  
His Son Jesus Christ.  
The doctrine of election, in a most blessedly honest manner does come  
in and break the neck, once and for all, of all this false and groundless  
confidence in the uncovenanted mercy of God. Sinner, you have no right  
to trust to the goodness of God out of Christ. There is no Word in the  
whole Book of Inspiration which gives a shadow of a hope to the man who  
will not believe in Jesus Christ. It says of him, “He that believes not shall  
he damned.” It declares of you who are resting upon such a poor confidence as the unpromised favor of Heaven, “Other foundation can no man  
lay than that which is laid, Jesus Christ the Righteous.”  
If this is an evil to rob you of a false refuge, the doctrine of election certainly does that! But from the comfort properly derivable from the largest  
view of God’s bounteous goodness and unlimited love, election does not  
detract a single grain. Much comfort, too, flows to a troubled conscience  
from the promise that God will hear prayer. “Ask and it shall be given you.  
Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asks receives. And he that seeks finds. And to him that knocks  
it shall be opened.” If you ask anything of God in the name of Jesus  
Christ, you shall receive it.  
Now there are some who imagine that they must not pray because they  
do not know whether they are God’s chosen people. If you refuse to pray  
on the ground of such bad reasoning as this, you must do so at your own  
expense. But do mark our solemn assurance for which we have God’s  
warrant, that there is nothing in the Sovereignty of God which at all militates against the great Truth that every sincerely seeking soul, craving Divine Grace by humble prayer through Jesus Christ, shall be a finder. There may be an Arminian Brother here who would like to get into this  
pulpit and preach the cheering Truth of God that God has not said to the  
seed of Jacob, seek you My face in vain. We not only accord him full liberty to preach this doctrine, but we will go as far as he can and perhaps a  
little further in the enunciation of that Truth. We cannot perceive any discrepancy between personal election amid the prevalence of prayer. Let  
those who can, vex their brains with the task of reconciling them. To us  
the wonder is how a man can believe the one without the other! Firmly must I believe that the Lord God will show mercy to whom He  
will show mercy, and have compassion on whom He will have compassion.  
But I know as assuredly that wherever there is a genuine prayer, God  
gave it—that wherever there is a seeker, God made him seek. Consequently, if God has made the man seek and made the man pray, there is  
evidence at once of Divine election. And the fact stands true that none  
seek who shall not find. Very much comfort, also, is supposed to be derived and naturally so, from the free invitations of the Gospel. “Ah,” cries one, “what a sweet thing it is that the Savior cried, ‘Come  
unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’  
How delightful to read such a word as this, ‘Ho, everyone that thirsts  
come you to the waters and he that has no money; come you, buy and  
eat; yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.’ Sir,  
my heart is encouraged when I find it written, ‘Whoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely.’ But, Sir, I dare not come because of the doctrine  
of election.”  
My dear Hearer, I would not say anything harshly to you, but I must  
express my conviction that this is nothing but an idle excuse for not doing  
what you have no mind to do, because invitations of the most general  
character, no, invitations which shall be universal in their scope, are perfectly consistent with the election of God. I have preached here, you know,  
invitations as free as those which proceeded from the lips of Master John  
Wesley. Van Armin himself, the founder of the Arminian school, could not  
more honestly have pleaded with the very vilest of the vile to come to Jesus than I have done. Have I therefore felt in my mind that there was a  
contradiction here?  
No, nothing of the kind! Because I know it to be my duty to sow beside  
all waters, and like the sower in the parable, to scatter the seed upon the  
stony ground as well as upon the good land, knowing that election does  
not narrow the Gospel call which is universal, but only affects the effectual call, which is and must be particular. And that effectual call is no  
work of mine, seeing that it comes from the Spirit of God. My business is  
to give the general call, the Holy Spirit will see to its application to the  
chosen.  
O my dear Hearers, God’s invitations are honest invitations to every one  
of you. He invites you! In the words of the parable He addresses you, “All  
things are ready! Come you to the supper, My oxen and My fatlings are  
killed.” “No,” He says to His ministers, “Go out into the highways and  
hedges and compel them to come in.” Though He foreknows who will come  
in and has before all worlds ordained who shall taste of that supper, yet  
the invitation in its widest possible range is a true and honest one. And if  
you accept it you shall find it so.  
Furthermore, if we understand the Gospel at all, the Gospel in a nutshell is this—“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.”  
Or, to use Christ’s words, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved  
and he that believes not shall be damned.” This promise is the Gospel.  
Now the Gospel is true, whatever else may be false. Whatever doctrine  
may or may not be of God, the Gospel certainly is. The doctrine of Sovereign Grace is not contrary to the Gospel, but perfectly consonant  
therewith. God has a people whom no man shall number, whom He has  
ordained unto eternal life. This is, by no means, in conflict with the great  
declaration, “He that believes on Him is not condemned.”  
If any man who ever lived, or ever shall live, believes in Jesus Christ, he  
has eternal life! Election or no election, if you are resting upon the Rock of  
Ages you are saved. If you, as a guilty sinner, take the righteousness of  
Christ—if all black and foul and filthy you come to wash in the Fountain  
filled with blood—Sovereignty or no Sovereignty, rest assured of this, that  
you are redeemed from the wrath to come.  
O my dear Friends, when you say, “I will not believe in Christ because  
of election,” I can only say as Job did to his wife, “You speak as one of the  
foolish women speaks.” How dare you, because God reveals to you two  
things, which two things you cannot make square with one another—how  
dare you charge either the one or the other with being false? If I believe  
God, I am not only to believe what I can understand, but what I cannot understand! And if there were a Revelation which I could comprehend and sum up as I may count five upon my fingers, I should be sure it did not come from God. But if it has some depths vastly too deep for me— some knots which I cannot untie—some mysteries which I cannot solve, then I receive it with greater confidence, because it now gives me swimming room for my faith and my soul bathes herself in the great sea of  
God’s Wisdom, praying, “Lord, I believe; help You my unbelief.” Let it be said over and over again that there shall be no doubt about  
this matter. If there is any comfort derivable from the Gospel—if there is  
any sweet consolation flowing from the free invitations and the universal  
commands of Divine Truth—all those may be received and enjoyed by you,  
while you hold this doctrine of Divine Sovereignty as much as if you did  
not hold it and received some wider scheme.  
I think I hear one voice say, “Sir, the only comfort I can ever have lies in  
the infinite value of the precious blood of Christ. O Sir, it seems to me  
such a sweet thing that there is no sinner so black that Christ cannot  
wash away his sins and no sinner so old that the meritorious virtue of  
that Atonement cannot meet his case—not one in any rank or in any condition whom that blood cannot cleanse from all sin. Now, Sir, if that is  
true, how can the doctrine of election be true?”  
My dear Friend, you know in your own heart that the two things are  
not opposed to each other at all! For what does the doctrine of election  
say? It says that God has chosen and has saved some of the greatest sinners who ever lived. It says

He has cleansed some of the foulest sins ever  
committed and that He is doing so now and will do the same to the world’s  
end. So the two things exactly tally.  
And I will venture to say that if in the fullness of a man’s heart he shall  
say, “There is no sin except the one excepted sin, which cannot be forgiven.” And if he boldly announces that, “All manner of sin shall be forgiven unto men.” And if he shall plead with power and earnestness that  
souls would now come to Christ and lay hold upon eternal life, he may go  
back to his Bible and he may reread every text teaching the Sovereignty of  
God and every passage upholding Divine election—and he may feel that  
all these texts look him in the face and say, “Well done! Our spirit and  
your spirit are precisely the same! We have no conflict together—we are  
two great Truths which came from the same God—we are alike the Revelation of the Holy Spirit.”  
But we leave that point. If there is any comfort, Sinner, which you can  
truthfully and rightly get from any passage of Scripture, from any promise  
of God, from any invitation, from any open door of mercy, you may have  
it—for the doctrine of election does not rob you of one atom of the consolation which the Truth of God can afford you.  
II. But now we will take another point for a moment. Our second head  
is that THIS DOCTRINE HAS A MOST SALUTARY EFFECT UPON SINNERS. These may be divided into two classes—those who are awakened  
and those who are hardened and incorrigible. To the awakened sinner,  
next to the doctrine of the Cross, this doctrine of distinguishing Grace is  
perhaps the most fraught with blessings and comfort. In the first place,  
the doctrine of election, applied by the Holy Spirit, strikes dead forever all the efforts of the flesh. It is the end of Arminian preaching to make men  
active—to excite them to do what they can.  
The very end and object of Gospel preaching is to make men feel that  
they have no power of their own and to lay them as dead, at the foot of  
God’s Throne. We seek, under God, to make them feel that all their  
strength must lie in the Strong One who is mighty to save. If I can convince a man that, let him do what he may, he cannot save himself. If I can  
show him that his own prayers and tears can never save him apart from  
the Spirit of God. If I can convince him that he must be born again from  
above. If I lead him to see that all which is born of the flesh is flesh and  
only that which is born of the Spirit is spirit—Brethren three parts of the  
great battle are already won!  
“I kill and I make alive,” says God—when a man is killed the work is  
half done. “I wound and I heal”—when a man is wounded his salvation is  
commenced. “What? Am I to set a sinner industriously to labor after eternal life by his own works? Then, indeed, I am an ambassador of Hell! Am I  
to teach him that there is a goodness in him which he is to evolve, to polish and educate and perfect and so to save himself? Then I am a teacher  
of the beggarly elements of the Law and not the Gospel of Christ! Are we  
to set forth man’s prayers, repenting, and humbling as the way of salvation? If so, let us renounce the righteousness of Christ at once, for the two  
will never stand together!  
I am a mischief maker if I excite the activities of the flesh instead of  
pointing to the arms of the Redeemer! But if the potent hammer of electing  
Sovereignty dashes out the brains of all a man’s works, merits, doings and  
willings—while it pronounces over the dead carcass this sentence—“It is  
not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows  
mercy”—then the best thing is done for a sinner that can be done as a  
steppingstone to the act of faith! When a man is weaned from self and totally delivered from looking to the flesh for help, there is hope for him—  
and the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty does this through the Holy Spirit’s  
power.  
Again, this doctrine gives the greatest hope to the really awakened sinner. You know how the case stands. We are all prisoners condemned to  
die. God, as Sovereign, has a right to pardon whom He pleases. Now imagine a number of us shut up in a condemned cell, all guilty. One of the  
murderers says within himself—“I know that I have no reason to expect to  
be delivered. I am not rich—if I had some rich relations, like George  
Townley, I might be found insane and delivered. But I am very poor. I am  
not educated. If I had the education of some men I might expect some  
consideration. I am not a man of rank and position. I am a man without  
merit or influence, therefore I cannot expect that I should be selected as  
one to he saved.”  
I believe that if the present authorities of our land were the persons to  
be taken into consideration, a man who was poor might have a very poor  
chance of expecting any gratuitous deliverance. But when God is the great  
Sovereign, the case is different. For then we argue thus—“Here am I. My  
salvation depends entirely upon the will of God—is there a chance for  
me?” We take down a list of those whom He has saved and we find that He  
saves the poor, the illiterate, the wicked, the godless, and the worst of the worst—the base things and things that are despised. Well, what do we  
say—“Then why may He not choose me? Why not save me?  
“If I had to look for some reason in myself why I should be saved, I shall  
never find any, and consequently never shall have a hope. But if I am to  
be saved for no reason at all but that God wills to save me, ah, then there  
is hope for me! I will approach the gracious King! I will do as He bids me—  
I will trust in His dear Son and I shall be saved.” So this doctrine opens  
the door of hope to the worst of the worst and the only persons it discourages are the Pharisees, who say—“Lord, I thank You that I am not as  
other men are.” Those proud, haughty spirits who say—“No! If I am not to  
he saved for something good in myself, then I will be damned!” And  
damned they will be, with a vengeance, too!  
Moreover, do you not see, dear Friends, how the doctrine of election  
comforts the sinner in the matter of power? His complaint is, “I find I have  
no power to believe. I have no spiritual power of any kind.” Election stoops  
down and whispers in his ear—“But if God wills to save you, He gives the  
power, gives the life and gives the Grace. And therefore, since He has  
given that power and might to others as weak as you, why not to you?  
Have courage, look to the Cross of Christ and live.”  
And oh, what emotions of gratitude, what throbbing of love does this  
doctrine cause in human hearts. “Why,” says the man, “I am saved simply  
because God would save me, not because I deserved it, but because His  
loving heart would save me! Then, I will love Him, I will live to Him, I will  
spend and be spent for Him.” Such a man cannot be proud, I mean not  
consistently with the doctrine. He lies humbly at God’s feet. Other men  
may boast of what they are and how they have won eternal life by their  
own goodness, but I cannot. If God had left me, I had been in Hell with  
others—and if I go to Heaven, I must cast my crown at the feet of the  
Grace which brought me there.  
Such a man will become kind to others. He will hold his opinions, but  
he will not hold them savagely, nor teach them bitterly, because he will  
say, “If I have light and others have not, my light was given me from God,  
therefore I have no cause to plume myself upon it. I will try to spread that  
light but not by anger and abuse. For why should I blame those who cannot see? For could I have seen if God had not opened my blind eyes?”  
Every virtue this doctrine fosters and every vice it kills when the Holy  
Spirit so uses it. Pride it treads under foot! And humble, trustful confidence in the mercy of God in Christ it cherishes as a darling child. My time is gone. But I wanted to have said a word as to the effect of  
this Gospel upon incorrigible sinners. I will just say this—I know what the  
effect of it ought to be. What do you say who have made up your minds  
not to repent, you who care not for God? Why, you believe that any day  
you like you can turn to God since God is merciful and will save you! And  
therefore you walk about the world as comfortably as possible, thinking it  
all depends upon you and that you will get into Heaven just at the eleventh hour.  
Ah, Man, that is not your case! See where you are. Do you see that  
moth fluttering in my hand! Imagine it to be there! With this finger of mine  
I can crush it—in a moment. Whether it shall live or not depends absolutely upon whether I choose to crush it or let it go. That is precisely your position at the present moment. God can damn you now. No, let us say  
to you, “Yours is a worse position than that.”  
There are some seven persons now doomed for murder and piracy on  
the high seas. You can clearly say that their lives depend upon Her Majesty’s pleasure. If Her Majesty chooses to pardon them, she can. If not,  
when the fatal morning comes, the bolt will be drawn and they will be  
launched into eternity. That is your case, Sinner. You are condemned already! This world is but one huge condemned cell in which you are kept  
until the execution morning comes. If you are ever to be pardoned, God  
must do it. You cannot escape from Him by flight. You cannot bribe Him  
by actions of your own. You are absolutely in the hands of God and if He  
leaves you where you are, and as you are, your eternal ruin is as certain  
as your existence.  
Now, does not this make some sort of trembling come upon you? Perhaps not. It makes you angry. Well, if it does, that will not frighten me,  
because there are some of you who will never be good for anything until  
you are angry. I believe it is no ill sign when some persons are angry with  
the Truth of God. It shows that the Truth has pierced them. If an arrow  
penetrates my flesh, I do not like the arrow. And if you kick and struggle  
against this Truth of God, it will not alarm me. I shall have some hope  
that a wound is made. If this Truth should provoke you to think, it will  
have done for some of you one of the greatest things in the world. It is not  
your perverse thinking which frightens me. It is the utterly thoughtless  
way in which you go on. If you had sense enough to consider these things  
and fight against them, I should then have some faint hope for you. But alas, many of you have not said enough. You say, “Yes, yes, it is all  
true.” You accept it, but then it has no effect upon you. The Gospel rolls  
over you like oil down a slab of marble and produces no effect. If you are  
at all right in heart you will begin to see what your state is and the next  
thing that will startle your mind will be the reflection—“Is it so? Am I absolutely in God’s hands? Can He save me or damn me as He wills? Then I  
will cry to Him, “O God, save me from the wrath to come—from eternal  
torment—from banishment from Your Presence. Save me, O God! What  
would You have me to do? Oh, what would You have me to do, that I may  
find Your favor and live?”  
Then comes the answer to you—“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and  
you shall be saved,” for “whoever believes in Him shall never perish, but  
shall have eternal life.” O that God might bless this Divine doctrine to you!  
I have never preached this doctrine without conversions and I believe I  
never shall. At this moment God will cause His Truth to attract your  
hearts to Jesus, or to frighten you to Him.  
May you be drawn as the bird is drawn by the lure, or may you be  
driven as a dove is hunted by the hawk into the clefts of the rock. Only  
may you be sweetly compelled to come! May my Lord fulfill this desire of  
my heart! O that God may grant me your souls for my hire—and to Him  
shall be the glory, world without end! Amen.

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THE TABERNACLE—OUTSIDE THE CAMP  
NO. 359

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 10, 1861, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

**“And Moses took the tabernacle and pitched it outside the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that everyone  
which sought the LORD went out unto the  
Tabernacle of the congregation, which  
was outside the camp.”  
Exodus 33:7.**

I HAVE been somewhat perplexed in studying this text, for according to the book of Exodus, the tabernacle—the tabernacle strictly so called—did not exist at the time to which it refers. In the succeeding chapters of this very book, we have an account of the gifts which were made by the people for the construction of that tabernacle, wherein God dwelt while the children of Israel abode in the wilderness. It seems to me, after looking at the various authorities upon the point and considering the opinions of those who have well studied it, that when the children of Israel came out of Egypt there may have been some large tent constantly pitched in the center of the camp which had no ark of the covenant in it and probably no altar.

The vessels and implements for the service of the sanctuary had not then been made. Not even had the pattern been seen by Moses in the holy mount. The people may be considered to have been at that time under the patriarchal dispensation which reaches on, if I understand Scripture aright, until the time of the giving of the Law and forty days beyond that really—for it was forty days after the giving of the Law before the ceremonials of Levitical worship were thoroughly established.

Moses was forty days in the mount receiving instruction as to how the future worship of God should be ordered. That worship had not then begun in all its glorious splendor—Aaron had not even been ordained a priest. The service of the Levitical dispensation awaited as yet those statutes and ordinances by which its observances were solemnly imposed. Previous to this, as I take it, there was a large tent in the center of the camp set apart for that worship which was common to patriarchal times— for prayer, praise and burnt sacrifices.

Here God dwelt in the midst of this tabernacle. He was in the center of His people. His cloud overshadowed them by day and kept off from their heads the burning heat. That cloud was like a luminous atmosphere above them by night, so that probably they could see by night as well as by day. God was in the midst of them—this was their glory and their boast. They had no strange God. The LORD Himself had made their camp the place for His feet and glorious, indeed, it was. But while Moses had ascended to the mountaintop, the people, who were an unspiritual race, wanted something that they could see. They wanted some visible personification of that spiritual God whom they were unable to worship unless they confirm Him in type and figure. So they said unto Aaron, “Up, make

us gods that shall go before us!” They broke off their earrings and they fashioned there a golden calf and they said, “Those be your Gods, O Israel, that brought you up out of the land of Egypt.”

I do not think that they meant to worship the calf, but they intended to worship Jehovah under the representation of a calf for it is expressly said in the Word, “Then they proclaimed a feast unto Jehovah,” which shows that even their dancing around the calf was but a human invention whereby they hoped to honor and to glorify Jehovah. But they vexed the Holy One unto anger and they grieved His Holy Spirit so that He went forth from the midst of them. He would not acknowledge the camp any more as being the place where He could dwell. A voice might have been heard in Heaven, “Let Us go from here.”

The holy God could not abide any longer in the central spot of a camp so defiled by sin. The pillar of cloud moved and Moses bade the proper officers lift up the sacred tent—they carried it up the side of the hill. Justice was about to take away from the people the presence of God, but Mercy stopped its march. Mercy seemed to say, “Though God cannot abide in the midst of the people, yet He will not go very far from them.”

So He stayed upon the hillside and there was the tabernacle pitched, afar off from the people, but not so far that they could know that God was there. Not so far but that they who “sought the Lord” might reach the tabernacle at an easy distance. This, I say was intended to teach the people that God did not recognize their camp as being any longer His dwelling place, because human invention had stained His worship and laid His honor in the dust.

What use are we to make of this very significant incident? Give heed, Brothers and Sisters, I beseech you. This is just the position, I take it, of God’s tabernacle at the present hour. They that seek the Lord must go out from the camp and from the congregation and if they would commune with the Most High they cannot do it in the camps of even the religious and professing world. They must, like the Master, go forth outside the camp bearing His reproach. The day will come in which we shall be able to have fellowship with God in the camp, when the tabernacle of the Lord shall be among men and He shall dwell among them.

But that time is not yet. Now His tabernacle is out of the camp and away from men. Those who would follow Him must be separate, must come out from the masses, must be distinct and set apart in order to be recognized as the sons and the daughters of the Lord God Almighty.

There are three points upon which I shall enlarge this morning. The first will be that outside the camp is the place for true seekers of God. Secondly, that this going forth from the camp will involve some considerable inconvenience. And thirdly, I shall earnestly exhort you, as God shall help me, if you are seeking God, to take care that you go outside the camp afaroff from the camp according to His Word.

I. First, then, they that seek the Lord must, at this day, as in the time of the narrative we have just read, GO WITHOUT THE CAMP.  
It is scarcely necessary for me to say that no man can be a true seeker of God who has anything to do with the camp of the profane. We must take care that our garments are entirely clean from those lusts of the flesh and those blasphemies of the ungodly. It will be impossible for you, O Seeker, ever to have communion with God while you have fellowship with Belial. You can not go to the synagogue of Satan and to the synagogue of God at the same time. You will be an arrant fool if you shall attempt it. You will be mad if you shall persevere in the attempt. You will he something more than lost if you desire to be saved while you continue in so estranged a state.  
God will not allow us to do as the old Saxon king did who set up his old gods in one part of the church and hung up the crucifix in another, hoping that by having two strings to his bow he might make sure to be safe. Other religions may be tolerant, but the religion of Christ knows no tolerance with regard to error. Before God’s ark Dagon must fall. Dagon may be content for God’s ark to stand, if he may stand, too—but the ark of God knows of nothing but an absolute supreme for itself and a total destruction of all other gods.  
Either you must serve God or nothing. No compromise must be attempted. It will be considered as an audacious blasphemy of God. Come out, then, if you would be saved—come out from the herd of sinners, leave the godless and the Christless generation for in that camp there will be no possibility of fellowship with God.  
Again—we must as much come out from the camp of the careless as from the camp of the profane. The largest company in the world is not that of the profane, but of the thoughtless—not those who oppose, but those who neglect the great salvation. For every man who is openly an antagonist of Truth there are probably a thousand men who care neither for Truth nor error. The Sadducees still remain a very numerous body—men who are content to live as they like, holding really and secretly within them certain evil thoughts, but still willing to go with the crowd and to be numbered with the followers of Christ.  
Ah, if you would see the face of God, my Hearer, them come out from among the giddy, thoughtless throng. It is not possible for you to worship Him who bore the Cross while you shall be mingling in the amusements of the world and toying with the charms of the flesh. Come out from among them—be not numbered with them—let your conduct and conversation distinguish you at once from them. Let it be seen that you also were with Jesus of Nazareth. Let none mistake you for a mere bystander, a simple looker on, but let all know that you are one of His disciples because your speech betrays you. Oh, I do again repeat it—let none think that in the camp of the negligent, the thoughtless, those who count it enough to be moral before man, but who never think of God—let none think that salvation is to be found there.  
But we must go further than this—if a man would have fellowship with God he must go even out of the camp of the merely steady, sedate and thoughtful. For there are multitudes whose thoughts are not God’s thoughts and whose ways are not His ways who are in every respect conformed outwardly to the Laws of God. They rigidly observe the customs of upright society—they think and therefore abhor the trifles of the world— they sit down and meditate and therefore understand the hollowness of this present life, but who, notwithstanding, have never learned to set their affections on things above. Though they are not so foolish as to think that the shadows of this world are a substance, yet have they never sought eternal realities.  
You must come out from these, for except your righteousness exceed theirs you shall not be saved. Unless there shall be something more in you than in the merely steady, respectable and outwardly moral you shall never know the peace-speaking blood of Christ, nor enter into the “rest which remains for the people of God.” Up! Get away from them. It is not enough to leave the Amalekites—you must leave even the hosts of Moab— brother though Moab may seem to be to the Israel of God.  
We must draw yet another line, more marked and distinct than this. He that would know anything of God aright must even come out of the camp of the merely religious. See them—how they go to their church. What for? Frequently to show their finery and often to be seen of their friends. See many as they go to chapel. And what for? It is their custom. It is their habit. They sing as God’s people sing. They appear to take a holy delight in the worship of the Most High. They bow as God’s people bow when they pray—they do more—they sit at the Lord’s Table and appear to know somewhat of the joy which that ordinance affords. They come to baptism, they pass through the stream and yet in how many cases they have a name to live and are dead?  
Oh, it is one thing to attend to religion, but another thing to be in Christ Jesus. It is one thing to have the name upon the church rolls but quite another thing to have it written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. There is not a church under Heaven that is quite pure. With all our care, with all our industry and watchfulness, we cannot prevent the sad fact. Hypocrites will mingle with the sincere and the tares will be sown with the wheat. So I suppose it must be till the reapers come and gather the tares in bundles to burn. I pray you let none of you think that you have taken out a patent for Heaven when you have made a profession of your faith in Christ. That profession may be a lie. The conduct which springs from it may be but the result of custom.  
Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh.” And only “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” Do you believe that one-tenth of the religion you see about you is sincere? What do we say, then, to the fact that when investigation has been made as to articles sold at shops there is scarcely a single article in any trade which is not found to be adulterated. Why is this? If it were only some men who did this and they were notorious, we might flatter ourselves that Christians are surely clear. But what if it grows into a custom!  
When the fact comes out that in the most cases our articles of food are shamefully mixed and that with poisonous ingredients in some instances, what are we to say? Can that religion which spreads over London—which seems to be adopted by almost everybody—can that be sound while it allows this thing to go on under its cover? And have you not remarked the course of business? How often you must have noticed “astounding failures,” and that, too, of men professedly religious. How do you sometimes see the most shameful fraudulent bankruptcies and these are perpetrated by men who have occupied your pews and listened to your ministry.  
What does this teach us but that there is more glitter than there is gold and that there may be much varnish and much paint where there is but little of the sound material of grace. Oh, Sirs, if half the religion of England were true religion, we should not be such a people as we now are. Give us but one man out of three of those who profess to be followers of Christ, sincerely His and thoroughly His and how changed would this empire become and what a different face would all the commercial relations of life bear to the eyes even of outward observers! There is, it must be confessed, much delusion. I believe there is more sound godliness in England than ever there was since she was a nation—but yet as in the rolling of every chariot there is a cloud of dust so is there mixed up with the advance of the Savior’s kingdom that rolling cloud of dust—hypocrisy and vain pretense.  
Let us take heed to ourselves, then, that we go forth outside the camp, that we are distinguished and separated, not merely from the irreligious, but from the religious, too—that we are as separate even from the nominal church as we are from that people who profess not to know the Lord and are therefore cursed.  
Here I am stopped by the question, But in what respect is a Christian to come out from all these and more especially to come out from the mere professors? I will tell you, Brethren. There is occasion enough just now for the watchman to sound the notes of warning in your ears. The reasons why the nominal Church at the present time is not the place where the tabernacle is pitched is that the Church has adulterated the worship of God by the addition of human ceremonies. I shall not stay to indicate them, but I believe there is a great proportion of the worship of Christians in these days which is not warranted by the Word of God. We have made an advance beyond its plain letter and have added to the pure Word of God inventions of our own.  
In coming out from the Church we must leave all ceremonies behind us which are not absolutely taught in the Scriptures. We must shake our garments of every performance, however fair and admirable it may look, unless it has strictly the letter of Divine inspiration to warrant it. Having done this in a Church capacity, we must then come out from all the doctrines of the church which are not strictly Scriptural. We must leave behind us the dogmas of our creeds, if the creeds are not consistent with the Word of God.  
We must dare to bear our testimony against all false teaching. We must take care that we share none of the blame of those men who keep back a part of God’s Word and therefore mar their ministry and spoil its effect upon their hearers. We must come out from all the practices of the Church which are not in accordance with God’s Word. We must never plead the precedent of godly men for any act or thought which God Himself has not enjoined. Come right out. You have nothing to do with what even a Christian man might tolerate. You are to come straight out from the camp and taking heed that you swerve not to the right hand or to the left, “follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes.”  
Take care, too, that you are not actuated by the motives of the nominal Christian. Many nominal Christians have, as the motives of their lives, the maintaining of appearance—the keeping up of the respectable sham of godliness. Your conversation must be in Heaven, your motive must be derived from Heaven and your life must be, not in profession, but in reality, “a life of faith upon the Son of God who loved you and gave Himself for you.” In conclusion, if you would have true fellowship with Christ you must come out from the camp and be devoted—your whole spirit, soul and body—in the Lord’s strength entirely, perpetually and continually to His service.  
You must say what many say with the lip, but what few can really feel in the heart, “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.” Nothing short of this will be a true coming out of the camp. Nothing but this will give you that near and intimate relationship and communion with God after which every believer’s soul is panting and without which it cannot find repose.  
II. Having thus tried briefly to describe the Truth that outside of the camp is the place for seekers of God, I shall now take the second point— THIS GOING OUT OF THE CAMP WILL INVOLVE MUCH INCONVENIENCE.  
Some try to get over the inconvenience in the way Joshua did. They think they will come out of the camp altogether and live in the tabernacle and then there will be no difficulty. You know there are many pious minds, a little over-heated with imagination who think that if they never mixed with the world they could be holy. No doubt they would like to have a building erected in which they could live and pray and sing all day and never go to business, nor have anything at all to do with buying and selling. Thus they think by going outside the camp they should become the people of God.  
In this, however, they mistake the object of the Christian religion—“I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the Evil One.” That were an easy, lazy subterfuge for getting rid of the hard task of having to fight for Christ—to go out of the battle in order that you may win the victory is a strange method indeed of seeking to come off “more than conquerors!”  
No, no, we must be prepared like Moses to go into the camp and to come out of it—always to come out of it when we seek fellowship with God—but still to be in it, to be mixed up with it, to be in the midst of it doing the common acts of man and yet never being tainted by its infection. And never having the spirit troubled by that will and evil which is so rampant there. I counsel you, not that you should come out of the world, but that being in it you should be so distinctly not of it that all men may see that you worship the Father outside the camp of their common association and their carnal worship.  
This will involve many inconveniences. One stands on the outset. You will find that your diffidence and your modesty will sometimes shrink from the performance of duty’s stern commands. If you follow Christ you must confess Him. The Master desires to have no secret disciples. If Christ is worth anything, He is worth confessing boldly before the world, before angels and before devils. “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My Words in this adulterous and pitiful generation; of Him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”  
You must be able to say distinctly, I am not ashamed to avow that my heart is given to Jesus the Crucified. As He espoused my cause publicly before a gazing world, so I espouse His. His Cross have I taken, all else to leave, if it is necessary that I may follow Him. He is my Lord—to Him I will submit. He is my Trust. On Him I lean. He is my Hope—for Him I look.” Do not try the plan which some are attempting—of being Christians in the dark. Put on Christ. You know how the promise is made, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Do not shrink from the second part of the command. If you have believed, profess your faith in baptism. Be not ashamed of your Lord and Master. Know you not that the Lord has said, “He that with his heart believes and with his mouth confesses, shall be saved.”  
You must make a public confession. I know there is no merit in the confession but still, is it not right?—is it not reasonable? How can you expect the blessing of God if you do not what Christ tells you and do it not as Christ tells you? Come out, wear His badge, bear His name and say to the sons of men, “Let others do as they will, as for me and my house, we will, we must serve the Lord.”  
When you have got over that difficulty. When your reserve has given place to a good confession and you appear upon the stage of action, you will find that then your trouble really begins. Perhaps when you go outside the camp you will lose some of your best friends. Perhaps your mother may say she would not mind your serving Christ, but she wishes that you belonged to her denomination, while you feel that if you serve Christ at all you must go just where He would have you go and carry out to the letter all His will.  
Some of your dearest companions may say. “Well, if you turn religious, certainly our acquaintance must cease, we should never agree and therefore we had better part.” And some with whom you have to live will day after day put you to a sort of martyrdom before a slow fire by giving you the trial of cruel mockings. You will find that many a tie has to be cut when your soul is bound with cords to the horns of the altar. Can you do it? As Christ left His Father for you, can you leave all for Him? Do you know that text and is it terrible to you—“If a man love father and mother more than Me he is not worthy of Me and if a man love son or daughter more than Me he is not worthy of Me”?  
Are you ready to carry out your convictions, come what may? Should you turn back, would that be to rely upon the promise which David uttered—“When my father and mother forsake me then the Lord shall take me up”? You are not fit to be a disciple of Christ if you cannot take the like of this into the cost of following your Savior and estimate it as a light affliction compared with the eternal weight of glory which shall be given to them who faithfully serve Him and fully avow themselves His when others would turn them aside.  
You will find, too, when you go outside the camp, you will have some even professedly godly

people against you. It is one of the sorest trials that I know of in the Christian life to have godly men themselves censure you. “Ah,” they will say, when you are filled with the Spirit and are anxious to serve God as Caleb did, with all your heart—“Ah, young man, that is fanaticism and it will grow cool by-and-bye.” When you are called to some good work for your fellow men they will tell you, “That is too bold a deed, too daring an act of enthusiasm.” To say—“Whether any will follow me or not, here I go straight to battle and to victory”—this is the prowess of faith and Christ requires it of every one of you.  
The godly will follow you by-and-by, when you succeed, but you must be prepared to go without them sometimes. Look at young David. He knows that he is called to fight with Goliath, but his brothers say, “Because of your pride and the naughtiness of your heart to see the battle are you come.” But David cares not. He brings back the bloody head of the giant and there is his refutation of their slander. You do the same. Be prepared to meet with cold-hearted Christians.  
You will have to stand alone and bear their sneer as well as the sneer of the world. You will have to endure their “judicious” remarks and bear their sage cautions and their serious suggestions against your being too bold and too hot. Let none of these things dismay you. Do your Master’s will and do it thoroughly. Go the whole way with your Lord and Master and you shall come to be had in reverence of them that sit at meat with you.  
There is another inconvenience to which you will most surely be exposed, namely, that you will be falsely charged. Some will say, “You make too much of non-essentials.” That is a thing I frequently hear—nonessentials! There are certain things in Scripture, they tell us, that are nonessentials and therefore they are not to be taken any notice of. Doctrinal views and the baptism of believers, for instance—these are non-essential to salvation and therefore is the inference which follows according to the theory of some—we may be very careless about them. Do you know, Believer in Christ, that you are a servant? And what would you think if a servant should first wittingly neglect her duty and then come to you and tell you that it is non-essential?  
If she should not light the fire tomorrow morning and when you came down, she were to say, “Well, Sir, it is non-essential. You won’t die though the fire is not lit”—or if, when she spread the breakfast, there was no provision there but a crust of bread and nothing for you to drink. What if she should say, “Well, Sir, it is non-essential, you know? There is a glass of water for you and a piece of bread—the rest is non-essential.” If you came home and found that the rooms had never been swept and the dust was upon them, or that the bed had not been made and that you could not take an easy nights rest and the servant should say, “Oh, it is nonessential, Sir, it is quite non-essential.” I think you would find it to be non-essential for you to keep her any longer, but extremely essential that you should discharge her.  
And what shall we say of those men who put aside the words of Christ and say, “His precepts are quite non-essential”? Why, methinks because they are non-essential, they therefore become the test of your obedience. If you could be saved by them and if they were necessary to your salvation, your selfishness would lead you to observe then. But inasmuch as they are not necessary to your salvation they become tests of your willingness to obey Christ.  
If the Lord had left a record in His Word—“He that believes and picks up a pebble stone shall be saved,” I dare not neglect to pick up the pebble stone. And if I found that in Holy Scripture there were doctrines even of less value than the great points of our Christian religion, I should still think it were my duty to bow my judgment and to turn any intellect to the reception of God’s Truth just as God sent it forth. That idea about nonessentials is wicked and rebellious. Cast it from you. Go outside the camp. Be particular in every point. To the tiniest jot and tittle seek to obey your Master’s will and seek His grace that you may walk in the way of His Commandments with a perfect heart.  
But then, if you do walk according to this rule, others will say, “You are so bigoted.” Thus reply to them—“I am very bigoted over myself but I never claim any authority over you. To your own Master you stand or fall and I do the same.” If it is bigotry to hold decisive views about God’s Truth and to be obedient in every particular, as far as God the Spirit has taught me—if that is bigotry—all hail bigotry!—Most hallowed thing! The thing called bigotry is that which inclines one man to bind another’s conscience. The duty of all men is truly the same. But then I must not make my conscience the standard for another. It must be the standard for myself and I am not to violate it—“He that knows his Master’s will and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.”  
Take heed, therefore, that you do His will when you know it. But if another, not knowing His will, should reprove you, be ready to give an answer to him that speaks to you with meekness. But be not harsh with any man. You are not his master. Be not stern with those who differ from you, for you are not made the judge of mankind. You are not arbiter of right and wrong. Leave others to be as conscientious as yourself and believe that a Christian man, though he may differ from you, is as much sincere in his difference as you are in your dissent from him. Yet be careful that no unhallowed charity compel you to lay down the weapons of your warfare.  
Be careful that Satan does not deceive you and make you charitable to yourself. Be charitable towards every other man, but never to yourself. Forgive every other man the injuries that he does, but forgive not yourself. Weep, lament and sigh before God and so may He always help you thus to go forth outside the camp.  
With one other remark I will leave this point about the inconveniences. If you follow Christ and come outside the camp, you must expect to be watched. I have frequently noticed that when a member of our Church does anything wrong, people will say, “There is your religion—a horrible thing!” If a person who scrupulously goes to church but swears, nobody thinks anything of it. But if he is a Dissenter—“Oh, it is horrible!” Well, so it is, I admit. But it shows that people expect those who dissent to be better than those who do not. I only wish their expectation could always be fulfilled.  
If you profess to go outside the camp, others will look for something extra in you—mind that they are not disappointed. They ought to expect it and I am glad they do expect it. I have heard some say, “I do not want to join the church because then there would be so much expected of me.” Just so and that is the very reason why you should—because their expectation will be a sort of sacred clog to you when you are tempted and may help to give impetus to your character and carefulness to your walk— when you know that you are looked upon by the eyes of men.  
I wish to have the members of this Church carefully watched by the ungodly. If you catch them tripping, notice it. If you see them going into sin, let it be spoken of. God forbid we should wish to conceal it. Let it come out. If we are not what we profess to be, the sooner we are unmasked the better. Only do judge us fairly. Do judge the life of a professing Christian honestly. Do not expect perfection of him. He does not profess to be perfect. But he does desire try keep his Master’s Law and to do to others as he would they should do to him.  
We would not say to the world, “Shut your eyes.” The eyes of the world are intended to be checks upon the Church. The world is the black dog that wakes up Christ’s slumbering sheep—yes, and sometimes hunts them into the fold when otherwise they would be wandering upon the mountains. Expect to be watched, Christian. In the day when you say, “I will go outside the camp to follow Christ,” expect to be misrepresented. Expect that the dogs of this world will bark at you.  
They always bark at a stranger and if you are a stranger and a foreigner, they must bark at you. Expect, too, that they will watch your little slips and let that be a check to you and make you pray each moment, “Lord, hold me up and I shall be safe.” I would that there could be trained in all our churches and places of worship a race of men who would be really distinct—as much distinct from the professing church at large as that church is from the ungodly world itself.  
III. Now I come to use certain arguments by which I desire EARNESTLY TO PERSUADE EACH CHRISTIAN HERE TO GO WITHOUT THE CAMP, TO BE EXACT IN HIS OBEDIENCE AND TO BE PRECISE IN HIS FOLLOWING THE LAMB WHEREVER HE GOES.  
I use first a selfish argument—it is to do it for your own comfort’s sake. If a Christian can be saved while he conforms to this world, at any rate he will be saved so as by fire. Would you like to go to Heaven in the dark and enter there as a shipwrecked mariner climbs the rocks of his native country? Then be worldly, be mixed up with the people and remain in the camp. But would you have a Heaven below as well as a Heaven above? Would you comprehend with all saints what are the heights and depths and know the love of Christ which passes knowledge?  
And would you have an abundant entrance into the joy of your Lord? Then come out from among them and be separate and touch not the unclean thing. There are many professors and I trust they are true Christians, too, who are very unhappy and generally it is because they are worldly Christians. Oh, We have some members of our church, I trust they are saved, but you know they are as money-getting and as moneykeeping as any men whose portion is in this life. They seem to give as much of their whole force to the world as ever a worldling can and then they wonder why they are not happy.  
Why, they have laid up much of their treasure on earth and the moth has got at it and the rust has corrupted it and what wonder? Had they put their treasure wholly in Heaven no moth or rust would ever have consumed it. It is our unspiritual heart that makes our misery. If we were more Christ-like we should have more of Christ’s Presence and more of that peace of God which passes understanding. For your own comfort’s sake, if you are a Christian, be a Christian and be a marked and distinct one—distinct even from the church at large itself.  
But I have a better reason than that and it is for your own growth in grace do it. If you would have much faith, you cannot have much faith while you are mixed with sinners. If you would have much love, your love cannot grow while you mingle with the ungodly. You may be a babe in grace but you never can be a perfect man in Christ Jesus while you have anything to do with the worldly maxims and business and cares of this life. I do not mean while you have to do with them in a right way, but while you mix yourself up with them and are operated upon by them so as to turn aside from that straight line in which it is the Christian’s duty to walk.  
Little stones in the shoe make a traveler’s walk very uncomfortable and some of these little practices and little sins, as some call them, will make your path to Heaven very unhappy. You will very seldom be able to run in God’s ways—you will be a mere creeper. It will be a long while before you will bear the image of Him that created you. You will be a marred vessel— perhaps a vessel meant for hollow—but marred upon the wheel notwithstanding that by your mixing up with the customs of the world and going with the worldly church and with the multitude to do evil.  
But let me put it to you in another way. I beseech you Christian men and women, come right out and be your Master’s soldiers wholly for the Church’s sake. It is the few men in the Church and those who have been distinct from her, who have saved the Church in all times. Who saved the Church in the days of the Reformation? It was not the good men who were in the midst of the Church of Rome. There were very many humble curates in villages and priest here and there who were doing their best, I believe, to teach the Truth of God. But these men never saved the Church of Christ. She would have gone to ruin for all they did for her.  
It was Luther and Calvin and Zwingle who came right out and said, “No, we will have nothing to do with anti-Christ.” Who saved the Church a hundred years ago? Why, I dare to say, it was not those excellent men who in their own places of worship were pursuing their holy calling. But it was those who were first called Methodists—Whitfield and Wesley—the men who said, “This cold age will never do. In this absence of the Spirit of God there can never be a time of blessing to the Church.” It was men looked upon as fanatics, enthusiasts and heretics—who ought to be excommunicated. They came right out as distinct men, as if they were the particular stars of the sky and they alone cleft the darkness.  
So must it be with us. There must be some among us who care nothing for this world—who dash worldly laws and customs to the ground and in the name of God and His Church—and in Truth are prepared—though we may be embarrassed and hindered by what is called public opinion—to defy public opinion and do the right and the true, come what may. And you, too, in your life must do what God’s ministers must do both with tongue and life. If the Church is to he saved, it is not by men in her, but by the men who seem to go out even from her to bear Christ’s reproach and do Him service outside the camp.  
And for the world’s sake let me beg you to do this. Let the Church become more and more adulterated with worldliness. Let her Christians become more and more conformed to the world. Let her lords be cowed down under the bondage and tyranny of worldliness and what will the Church be worth and what will the world do? Her salt will have lost its savor and then the world must rot and putrefy. The Church itself can never be the salt of the world unless there are some particular men who are the salt of the Church. Do you then come out. Be singularly exact in your obedience to Christ, be scrupulously observant of all that He commands. Be you distinct from the professing world and so shall you bless the world through the Church.  
And now lastly, for your Master’s sake. What have you and I to do in the camp when He was driven from it? What have we to do with hosannas when He was followed with hootings, “Crucify Him, crucify Him”? What have I to do in the tent while my Captain lies in the open battlefield? What have we to do to dwell in our ceiled houses and to be peaceful and to have the smile of men, while Jesus is hounded to His death and nailed to the accursed tree?  
By the wounds of Christ, Christian, I beseech you mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts. By Him who came unto His own and His own received Him not, expect not to be received even by your own. By Him who was the Heir and of whom they said “Let us kill Him,” I pray you expect the like treatment from the same world. “Shall the servant be above his Master, or the disciple above his Lord?” If they call the Master of the house Beelzebub, what should they say of the servant? Are you prepared for silken ease when your Master fought to win the crown? Did He die to save you and will you not be willing to die to serve Him?  
Again I ask it—what have you to do with making love to that world which put Him to death? Dare you hold a parley with the enemy against whom you are sworn to fight? What? Will you be craven enough to ask for peace at the hands of the foe who has reddened himself with Jesus’ blood? In the name of God and of His Son cast down your gauntlet, draw your sword and throw away its scabbard. The world was never friends with the man that was a friend to Christ. You can not possibly have its friendship and smile and have the fellowship and smile of God, too.  
Make your selection, Christian. Make your choice now. Which shall it be—the world or Christ? It cannot be both. Which will you have? Will you be called a right good man, or will you be hissed and pointed at? Will you wear a fool’s cap and a fool’s coat and go to Heaven, or wear a wise man’s gown and go to Hell? Will you wear a thorny crown to be saved, or a golden crown and be lost? Make your choice, Christians, for one of these two things it must come to.  
God help us now to say, in the name of Him by whose merit and blood we have been saved—“I do this day take Christ to be my Lord and come

fair or foul— *“Through goods and flames, if Jesus lead, I’ll follow where He goes.”*

So be it. So be it, for Christ’s sake—that while saved by faith in Jesus— we may prove our faith by never shrinking from the trial which that faith necessarily involves. The Lord bless you, for Jesus’ sake.

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 #502 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A JEALOUS GOD  
NO. 502

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 29, 1863, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“For the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.” Exodus 34:14.**

THE passion of jealousy in man is usually exercised in an evil manner, but it is not in itself necessarily sinful. A man may be zealously cautious of his honor and suspiciously vigilant over another, without deserving blame. All thoughtful persons will agree that there is such a thing as virtuous jealousy. Self-love is, no doubt, the usual foundation of human jealousy, and it may be that Shenstone is right in his definition of it as, “the apprehension of superiority”—the fear lest another should by any means supplant us.

Yet the word “jealous” is so near akin to that noble word, “zealous,” that I am persuaded it must have something good in it. Certainly we learn from Scripture that there is such a thing as a godly jealousy. We find the Apostle Paul declaring to the Corinthian Church, “I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” He had an earnest, cautious, anxious concern for their holiness, that the Lord Jesus might be honored in their lives.

Let it be remembered, then, that jealousy, like anger, is not evil in itself, or it could never be ascribed to God. His jealousy is ever a pure and holy flame. The passion of jealousy possesses an intense force. It fires the whole nature, its coals are juniper, which have a most vehement flame. It resides in the lowest depths of the heart, and takes so firm a hold that it remains most deeply rooted until the exciting cause is removed. It wells up from the inmost recesses of the nature, and like a torrent, irresistibly sweeps all before it.

Jealously stops at nothing, for it is cruel as the grave (Song. 8:6). It provokes wrath to the utmost, for it is the rage of a man, therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance (Pro. 6:34). It overthrows everything in the pursuit of its enemy, for, “wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous. But who is able to stand before jealousy?” For all these reasons jealousy is selected as some faint picture of that tender regard which God has for His own Deity, honor and supremacy—and the holy indignation which He feels towards those who violate His Laws, offend His majesty, or impeach His Character.

Not that God is jealous so as to bring Him down to the likeness of men, but that this is the nearest idea we can form of what the Divine Being feels. If it is right to use even that word toward Him—when He beholds His Throne occupied by false gods, His dignity insulted, and His glory usurped by others—we cannot speak of God except by using figures drawn from

His works, or our own emotions. We ought, however, when we use the images, to caution ourselves, and those who listen to us, against the idea that the Infinite mind is really to be compassed and described by any metaphors however lofty, or language however weighty.

We might not have ventured to use the word, “jealousy,” in connection with the Most High, but as we find it so many times in Scripture, let us, with solemn awe, survey this mysterious display of the Divine mind. Methinks I hear the thundering words of Nahum, “God is jealous, and the Lord revenges, the Lord revenges and is furious. the Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies.” My Soul, be humbled before the Lord, and tremble at His name!

I. Reverently, let us remember that the LORD IS EXCEEDINGLY JEALOUS OF HIS DEITY.  
Our text is coupled with the command—“You shall worship no other God.” When the Law was thundered from Sinai, the Second Commandment received force from the Divine jealousy—“You shall not make unto you any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in the Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord your God am a jealous God.”  
Since He is the only God, the Creator of Heaven and earth, He cannot endure that any creature of His own hands, or fiction of a creature’s imagination, should be thrust into His Throne and be made to wear His crown. In Ezekiel we find the false god described as, “the image of jealousy which provokes to jealousy.” and the doom on Jerusalem for thus turning from Jehovah runs thus, “My eyes shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head.”  
False gods patiently endure the existence of other false gods. Dagon can stand with Bel, and Bel with Ashtaroth—how should stone and wood and silver be moved to indignation? But because God is the only living and true God, Dagon must fall before His Ark. Bel must be broken, and Ashtaroth must be consumed with fire. Thus says the Lord, “You shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves.” The idols He shall utterly abolish.  
My Brothers and Sisters, do you marvel at this? I felt in my own soul, while meditating upon this matter, an intense sympathy with God. Can you put yourselves in God’s place for a moment? Suppose that you had made the heavens and the earth, and all the creatures that inhabit this round globe. How would you feel if those creatures should set up an image of wood, or brass, or gold, and cry, “These are the gods that made us. These things give us life”?  
What? A dead piece of earth set up in rivalry with real Deity! What must be the Lord’s indignation against infatuated rebels when they so far despise Him as to set up a leek, or an onion, or a beetle, or a frog— preferring to worship the fruit of their own gardens, or the vermin of their muddy rivers—rather than acknowledge the God in whose hands their breath is, and whose are all their ways? Oh, it is a marvel that God has not dashed the world to pieces with thunderbolts, when we recollect that even to this day millions of men have changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and to birds and fourfooted beasts and creeping things!  
With what unutterable contempt must the living God look down upon those idols which are the work of man’s hands—“They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: they have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: they have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.” God has long-suffering toward men, and He patiently endures this madness of rebellion.  
But, oh, what patience must it be which can restrain the fury of His jealousy, for He is a jealous God and brooks no rival! It was Divine jealousy which moved the Lord to bring all His plagues on Egypt. Careful reading will show you that those wonders were all aimed at the gods of Egypt. The people were tormented by the very things which they had made to be their deities, or else, as in the case of the cattle, their sacred animals were, themselves, smitten, even as the Lord had threatened— “Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am Jehovah.”  
Was it not the same with ancient Israel? Why were they routed before their enemies? Why was their land so often invaded? Why did famine follow pestilence, and war succeed to famine? Only because, “they provoked Him to anger with their high places, and moved Him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, He was furious, and greatly abhorred Israel.” (Psa. 78:58, 59).  
How was it that at the last the Lord gave up Jerusalem to the flames and bade the Chaldeans carry into captivity the remnant of His people? How was it that He abhorred His heritage and gave up Mount Zion to be trod under foot by the Gentiles? Did not Jeremiah tell them plainly that because they had walked after other gods, and forsaken Jehovah, therefore He would cast them out into a land which they knew not?  
Brethren, the whole history of the human race is a record of the wars of the Lord against idolatry. The right hand of the Lord has dashed in pieces the Enemy, and cast the ancient idols to the ground. Behold the heaps of Nineveh! Search for the desolations of Babylon! Look upon the broken temples of Greece! See the ruins of pagan Rome! Journey where you will, you behold the dilapidated temples of the gods, and the ruined empires of their foolish votaries. The moles and the bats have covered with forgetfulness the once famous deities of Chaldea and Assyria. The Lord has made bare His arm and eased Him of His adversaries, for Jehovah, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.  
With what indignation, then, must the Lord look down upon that apostate harlot called the Roman Catholic Church, when, in all her sanctuaries, there are pictures and images, relics and altars—and poor infatuated beings are even taught to bow before a piece of bread in this country! Popish idolatry is not so barefaced and naked as it is in other lands, but I have seen it, and my soul has been moved with indignation like that of Paul on Mars’ Hill, when he saw the city wholly succumbed to idolatry.  
I have seen thousands adore the wafer, hundreds bow before the image of the Virgin, scores at prayer before a crucifix, and companies of men and women adoring a rotten bone or a rusty nail, because it is said to be the relic of a saint! It is vain for the Roman Catholic to assert that he worships not the things, themselves, but only the Lord through them, for this, the Second Commandment expressly forbids—and it is upon this point that the Lord calls himself a jealous God.  
How full is that cup which Babylon must drink! The day is hastening when the Lord shall avenge Himself upon her, because her iniquities have reached unto Heaven, and she has blasphemously exalted her Pope into the throne of the Host on High, and thrust her priests into the office of the Lamb. Purge yourselves, purge yourselves of this leaven! I charge you before God, the Judge of the quick and the dead, if you would not be partakers of her plagues, come out from her more and more and let your protest be increasingly vehement against this which exalts itself above all that is called God.  
Let our Protestant Churches, which have too great a savor of Popery in them, cleanse themselves of her fornications, lest the Lord visit them with fire and pour the plagues of Babylon upon them! Renounce, my Brothers and Sisters, every ceremony which has not Scripture for its warrant, and every doctrine which is not established by the plain testimony of the Word of God. Let us, above all, never, by any sign, or word, or deed, have any complicity with this communion of devils, this gathering together of the sons of Baal. And since our God is a jealous God, let us not provoke Him by any affinity, gentleness, fellowship, or amity with this Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth.  
With what jealousy must the Lord regard the great mass of the people of this country, who have another God beside Himself! With what indignation does He look upon many of you who are subject to the prince of the power of the air, the god of this world! To you, Jehovah is nothing. God is not in all your thoughts. You have no fear of Him before your eyes. Like the men of Israel, you have set up your idols in your heart. Your god is custom, fashion, business, pleasure, ambition, honor. You have made unto yourselves gods of these things. You have said, “These are your gods, O Israel.”  
You follow after the things which perish, the things of this world which are vanity. O you sons of men, think not that God is blind! He can perceive the idols in your hearts. He understands the secret things that your souls lust after. He searches your heart, He tries your reins—beware lest He find you sacrificing to strange gods—for His anger will smoke against you, and His jealousy will be stirred. O you that worship not God, the God of Israel, who give Him not dominion over your whole soul, and live not to His honor, repent of your idolatry! Seek mercy through the blood of Jesus, and provoke not the Lord to jealousy any more.  
Even Believers may be reproved on this subject. God is very jealous of His Deity in the hearts of His own people. Mother, what will He say of you, if that darling child occupies a more prominent place in your love than your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? Husband, what shall He say to you, and with what stripes shall He smite you, when your wife reigns as a goddess in your spirit? And wife, you should love your husband—you do well in so doing. But if you exalt him above God, if you make him to have dominion over your conscience, and are willing to forsake your Lord to please him—then you have made to yourself another god—and God is jealous with you.  
Yes, and we may thus provoke Him with the dead as well as with the living. A grief carried to excess. A grief nurtured until it prevents our attention to duty. A grief which makes us murmur and repine against the will of Providence—is sheer rebellion. It has in it the very spirit of idolatry—it will provoke the Lord to anger. And He will surely chasten yet again, until our spirit becomes resigned to His rod. “Have you not forgiven God yet?” was the language of an old Quaker when he saw a widow, who for years had worn her weeds, and was inconsolable in her grief—“Have you not forgiven God yet?”  
We may weep under bereavements, for Jesus wept. But we must not sorrow so as to provoke the Lord to anger. We must not act as if our friends were more precious to us than our God. We are permitted to take solace in each other, but when we carry love to idolatry, and put the creature into the Creator’s place—and rebel and fret, and bitterly repine—then the Lord has a rod in His hand and He will make us feel its weight, for He is a jealous God. I fear there are some professors who put their house, their garden, their business, their skill—I know not what else—at seasons into the place of God.  
It is not consistent with the life of godliness for a man to be perpetually an idolater, but even true Believers will sometimes be overcome with this sin, and will have to mourn over it. Brethren, set up no images of jealousy, but like Jacob of old, cry to yourselves, and to your families, “Put away the strange gods that are among you and be clean.”  
Let me warn those of you who neglect this—If you are the Lord’s people, you shall soon smart for it—and the sooner the better—for your own salvation. While, on the other hand, to those ungodly persons who continue to live for objects other than Divine, let me say—You not only will suffer in this life by bitter disappointments, but you shall also suffer eternal wrath in the life to come.  
Come, let me push this matter home upon your consciences. Let me carry this as a point of the bayonet. Why, my Hearers, there are some of you who never worship God! I know you go up to His house, but then it is only to be seen, or to quiet your conscience by having done your duty. How many of you merchants aim only to accumulate a fortune? How many of you tradesmen are living only for your families? How many young men breathe only for pleasure? How many young women exist only for amusement and vanity?  
I fear that some among you make your belly your god and bow down to your own personal charms or comforts. Talk of idolaters! They are here today! If we desire to preach to those who break the First and Second Commandments, we have no need to go to India, or traverse the plains of Africa. They are here. Unto you who bow not before the Lord, let these words be given, and let them ring in your ears—“The Lord whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.” Who shall stand before Him when once He is angry?  
When His jealousy burns like fire and smokes like a furnace, who shall endure the day of His wrath? Beware, lest He tear you into pieces and there be none to deliver you. Dreadful shall it be for you, if at the last you shall behold an angry God sitting in judgment. Pause, now, and meditate upon your doom, and imagine you see the Almighty robed in tempest and whirlwind—  
*“His Throne a seat of dreadful wrath,  
Girt with devouring flames.  
The Lord appears consuming fire,  
And Jealous is His name.”*  
God save you for Jesus’ sake.  
II. The Lord IS JEALOUS OF HIS SOVEREIGNTY. He that made Heaven and earth has a right to rule His creatures as He wills. The potter has power over the clay to fashion it according to his own good pleasure. And we creatures, being made, are bound to be obedient to our Lord. He has a right to issue commands, He has done so—they are holy and just—and wise men are bound to obey. But, alas, they continually revolt against His Sovereignty, and will not obey Him!  
No, there are men who deny altogether that He is King of kings, and others who take counsel together saying, “Let us break His bands in sunder, and cast away His cords from us.” He that sits in the heavens is moved to jealousy by these sins. He will defend the rights of His crown against all comers, for the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.  
This reminds us of the Lord’s hatred of sin. Every time we sin we as much as say, “I do not acknowledge God to be my Sovereign. I will do as I please.” Each time we speak an ill word we really say, “My tongue is my own, He is not Lord over my lips.” Yes, and every time the human heart wanders after evil, and lusts for that which is forbidden, it attempts to dethrone God and to set up the Evil One in His place. The language of sin is, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice? I will not have God to reign over me.”  
Sin is a deliberate treason against the majesty of God, an assault upon His crown, an insult offered to His Throne. Some sins, especially, have rebellion written on their forehead—presumptuous sins—when a man’s conscience has been enlightened and he knows better, but still forsakes the good, and follows after evil. When a man’s conscience has been aroused through some judgment, or sickness, or under a faithful ministry—if that man returns, like a dog to his vomit—he has, indeed, insulted the Sovereignty of God.  
But have we not all done this, and are there not some here, in particular, of whom we once had good hope, but who have turned back again to crooked ways? Are there not some of you who, Sunday after Sunday, get your consciences so quickened that you cannot be easy in sin as others are? And though you may, perhaps, indulge in sin, yet it costs you very dearly, for you know better. Did I not hear of one who sits in these seats often, but is as often on the ale bench?  
Did I not hear of another who can sing with us the hymns of Zion, but is equally at home with the lascivious music of the drunkard? Do we not know of some who in their business are anything but what they should be, yet for a show, can come up to the house of God? Oh, Sirs, oh, Sirs, you do provoke the Lord to jealousy! Take heed, for when He comes out of His resting place, and takes to Himself His sword and buckler, who are you that you should stand before the dread majesty of His Presence? Tremble and be still! Humble yourselves and repent of this, your sin.  
Surely, if sin attacks the Sovereignty of God, self-righteousness is equally guilty of treason—for as sin boasts, “I will not keep God’s Law.” Self-righteousness exclaims, “I will not be saved in God’s way. I will make a new road to Heaven. I will not bow before God’s Grace. I will not accept the Atonement which God has worked out in the Person of Jesus. I will be my own redeemer. I will enter Heaven by my own strength and glorify my own merits.” The Lord is very angry against self-righteousness. I do not know of anything against which His fury burns more than against this, because this touches Him in a very tender point—it insults the glory and honor of His Son Jesus Christ.  
Joshua said to the children of Israel, when they promised to keep the Law—“You cannot serve the Lord, for He is an holy God. He is a jealous God. And He will not forgive your transgressions, nor your sins.” So I may well say to every self-righteous person, “You cannot keep the Law, for God is a

ealous God,” carefully marking every fault, and just to mark your iniquities. Nor will He forgive your iniquities so long as you attempt to win His favor by works of the Law.  
Throw away your self-righteousness, you proud one! Cast it with all other idols to the moles and to the bats, for there is no hope for you so long as you cling to it. Self-righteousness is, in itself, the very height and crowning point of rebellion against God. For a man to say, “Lord, I have not sinned,” is the gathering up, the emphasis, the climax of iniquity— and God’s jealousy is hot against it.  
Let me add, dear Friends, I feel persuaded that false doctrine, inasmuch as it touches God’s Sovereignty, is always an object of Divine jealousy. Let me indicate especially the doctrines of Free will. I know there are some good men who hold and preach them, but I am persuaded that the Lord must be grieved with their doctrine though He forgives them their sin of ignorance. Free Will doctrine—what does it do? It magnifies man into God. It declares God’s purposes null and void, since they cannot be carried out unless men are willing. It makes God’s will a waiting servant to the will of man, and the whole Covenant of Grace dependent upon human action.  
Denying election on the ground of injustice, it holds God to be a debtor to sinners, so that if He gives Divine Grace to one, He is bound to do so to all. It teaches that the blood of Christ was shed equally for all men, and since some are lost, this doctrine ascribes the difference to man’s own will—thus making the Atonement, itself, a powerless thing until the will of man gives it efficacy. Those sentiments dilute the Scriptural description of man’s depravity—and by imputing strength to fallen humanity, rob the Spirit of the glory of His effectual calling Grace.  
This theory says, in effect, that it is of him that wills, and of him that runs, and not of God that shows mercy. Any doctrine, my Brothers and Sisters, which stands in opposition to this Truth of God—“I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,” provokes God’s jealousy. I often tremble in this pulpit lest I should utter anything which should oppose the Sovereignty of my God. And though you know I am not ashamed to preach the responsibility of man to God—if God is Sovereign, man must be bound to obey Him—on the other hand, I am equally bold to preach that God has a right to do what He wills with His own.  
I preach that He gives no account of His matters, and none may stay His hand, or say unto Him, “What are you doing?” I believe that the Free Will heresy assails the sovereignty of God, and mars the glory of His dominion in all faithfulness. Mingled with sorrow, I persuade you who have been deluded by it, to see well to your ways, and receive the Truth of God which sets God on high, and lays the creature in the dust. “The Lord reigns”—let this be this our joy! The Lord is our King, let us obey Him and defend to the death the crown rights of the King of kings, for He is a jealous God.  
While tarrying upon this subject, I ought also to remark that all the boastings of ungodly men, whenever they exalt themselves, seeing that they are a sort of claim to sovereignty, must be very vexatious to God, the Judge of all. When you glory in your own power, you forget that power belongs only unto God, and you provoke His jealousy. When kings, parliaments, or synods, trespass upon the sacred domains of conscience, and say to men, “Bow down, that we may go over you”—when we make attempts to lord over another man’s judgment, and to make our own opinions supreme, the Lord is moved to jealousy—for HE retains the court of conscience for Himself alone to reign in.  
Let us humbly bow before the dignity of the Most High and pay our homage at His feet—  
*“Glory to the eternal King,  
Clad in majesty supreme!  
Let all Heaven His praises sing,  
Let all worlds His power proclaim.  
O let my transported soul  
Ever on His glories gaze!  
Ever yield to His control,  
Ever sound His lofty praise!”*  
Let us crown Him every day! Let our holy obedience, our devout lives, our hearty acquiescence in all His will, our reverent adoration before the greatness of His majesty—all prove that we acknowledge Him to be King of kings, and Lord of lords—lest we provoke a jealous God to anger.  
III. THE LORD IS JEALOUS OF HIS GLORY. God’s Glory is the result of His Nature and acts. He is glorious in His Character, for there is such a store of everything that is holy, good, and lovely in God, that He must be glorious. The actions which flow from His Character, the deeds which are the outgoings of His inner Nature—these are glorious, too. And the Lord is very careful that all flesh should see that He is a good and gracious and just God. And He is mindful, too, that His great and mighty acts should not give glory to others, but only to Himself.  
How, careful, then, should we be when we do anything for God that God is pleased to accept as our doings, that we never congratulate ourselves. The minister of Christ should disrobe himself of every rag of praise. “You preached well,” said a friend to John Bunyan one morning. “You are too late,” said honest John, “the devil told me that before I left the pulpit.” The devil often tells God’s servants a great many things which they should be sorry to hear. Why, you can hardly be useful in a Sunday School but he will say to you—“How well you have done it!”  
You can scarcely resist a temptation, or set a good example, but he will be whispering to you—“What an excellent person you must be!” It is, perhaps, one of the hardest struggles of the Christian life to learn this sentence—“Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Your name be glory.” Now God is so jealous on this point that, while He will forgive His own servants a thousand things, this is an offense for which He is sure to chasten us. Let a Believer once say, “I am,” and God will soon make him say, “I am not.”  
Let a Christian begin to boast, “I can do all things,” without adding, “through Christ which strengthens me,” and before long he will have to groan, “I can do nothing,” and bemoan himself in the dust. Many of the sins of true Christians, I do not doubt, have been the result of their glorifying themselves. Many a man has been permitted by God to stain a noble character, and to ruin an admirable reputation, because the character and the reputation had come to be the man’s own, instead of being laid, as all our crowns must be laid, at the feet of Christ.  
You may build the city, but if you say with Nebuchadnezzar, “Behold this great Babylon which I have built!” you shall be smitten to the earth. The worms which ate Herod when he gave not God the glory are ready for another meal—beware of vain glory! How careful ought we to be to walk humbly before the Lord. The moment we glorify ourselves—since there is only room for one glory in the universe—we set ourselves up as rivals to the Most High.  
Penitent souls are always accepted, because they are not in God’s way. Proud souls are always rejected, because they are in God’s way. Shall the insect of an hour glorify itself against the Sun which warmed it into life? Shall the potsherd exalt itself above the man that fashioned it upon the wheel? Shall the dust of the desert strive with the whirlwind? Or the drops of the ocean struggle with the tempest? O you nothingness and vanity, you puny mortal called man—humble yourself and reverence your Great Creator!  
Let us see to it that we never misrepresent God, so as to rob Him of His honor. If any minister shall preach of God so as to dishonor Him, God will be jealous against that man. I fear that the Lord has heavy wrath against those who lay the damnation of man at God’s door, for they dishonor God, and He is very jealous of His name. And those, on the other hand, who ascribe salvation to man, must also be heavily beneath God’s displeasure, for they take from Him His Glory. Ah, thieves! Ah, thieves! Will you dare to steal the crown jewels of the universe?  
Where do you go, where do you bear the bright pearls which ought to shine upon the brow of Christ? Do you dare put them on the brow of man? Stop! Stop! The Lord will not give His Glory to another! Give unto the Lord, all you righteous, give unto the Lord, glory and strength! Give unto Him the honor that is due unto His name! Any doctrine which does not give all the honor to God must provoke Him to jealousy.  
Be careful, dear Friends, that you do not misrepresent God yourselves. You who murmur. You who say that God deals harshly with you—you give God an ill Character. When you look so melancholy, worldlings say, “The religion of Jesus is intolerable.” And so you stain the honor of God. Oh, do not do this, for He is a jealous God, and He will surely use the rod upon you if you do!  
A flash of holy pleasure crosses my mind. I am glad that He is a jealous God. It is enough to make us walk very carefully, but, at the same time it should make us very joyful to think that the Lord is very jealous of His own honor. But, Brothers and Sisters, if we believe in Christ, you and I are safe, because it would dishonor Him if we were not. For His own name’s sake, and for His faithfulness’ sake, He will never leave one of His people. “His honor is engaged to save the mean of His sheep.”  
Now, if Christ could trifle with His own honor, if He had no jealousy, you and I might be afraid that He would suffer us to perish. But it never shall be. It shall be said on earth, and sung in Heaven at the last, that God has suffered no dishonorable defeats from the hands of either men or devils. “I chose My people,” says the Eternal Father, “and they are Mine now that I make up My jewels.” “I bought My people,” says the eternal Son, “I became a Surety for them before the Most High, and the infernal lion could not rend the mean of the sheep.”  
“I quickened My people,” says the Holy Spirit. “The temptations of Hell could not throw them down. Their own corruptions could not overpower them. I have gotten the victory in every one of them, not one of them is lost. They are all brought safely to My right hand.” Hide yourselves, then, under the banner of Jehovah’s jealousy. It is bloody red, I know—its ensign bears a thunderbolt and a flame of fire. But hide yourselves, hide yourselves under it—for what enemy shall reach you there?  
If it is to God’s Glory to save me, I am entrenched behind munitions of stupendous rock. If it would render God inglorious to let me, a poor sinner, descend into Hell—if it would open the mouths of devils, and make men say that God is not faithful to His promise—then am I secure, for God’s Glory is wrapped up with my salvation, and the one cannot fail because the other cannot be tarnished!  
Beloved, let us mind that we are very jealous of God’s honor, ourselves, since He is jealous of it. Let us say with Elijah—“I am very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts.” May our lives and conduct and conversation prove that we are jealous of our hearts lest they should once depart from Him. And may we smite with stern and unrelenting hand every sin, and every thought of pride that might touch the Glory of our gracious God—living to Him as living before a jealous God.  
IV. In the highest sense, THE LORD IS JEALOUS OVER HIS OWN PEOPLE. Let me only hint that human jealousy, although it will exercise itself over man’s reputation, rights and honor, has one particularly tender place—jealousy guards, like an armed man, the marriage covenant. A suspicion here is horrible.  
Even good old Jacob, when he came to die, could not look upon his son Reuben without remembering his offense. “He went up to my couch,” said the old man—and, as if the remembrance were too painful for him, he hurried on from Reuben to the next. The Lord has been graciously pleased to say of His people, “I am married unto you.” The Covenant of Divine Grace is a marriage covenant, and Christ’s Church has become His spouse.  
It is here that God’s jealousy is peculiarly liable to take fire. Men cannot be God’s favorites without being the subjects of His watchfulness and jealousy—that which might be looked over in another—will be chastened in a member of Christ. As a husband is jealous of his honor, so is the Lord Jesus much concerned for the purity of His Church.  
The Lord Jesus Christ, of whom I now speak, is very jealous of your love, O Believer! Did He not choose you? He cannot bear that you should choose another! Did He not buy you with His own blood? He cannot endure that you should think you are your own, or that you belong to this world. He loved you with such a love that He could not stop in Heaven without you. He would sooner die than that you should perish. He stripped Himself to nakedness that He might clothe you with beauty. He bowed His face to shame, and spit that He might lift you up to honor and glory.  
He cannot endure that you should love the world and the things of the world. His love is strong as death towards you, and therefore will be cruel as the grave. He will be as a cruel one towards you if you do not love Him with a perfect heart. He will take away that husband. He will smite that child. He will bring you from riches to poverty, from health to sickness, even to the gates of the grave—because He loves you so much that He cannot endure that anything should stand between your heart’s love and Him. Be careful, Christians, you that are married to Christ—remember— you are married to a jealous Husband.  
He is very jealous of your trust. He will not permit you to trust in an arm of flesh. He will not endure that you should hew out broken cisterns, when the overflowing fountain is always free to you. When we come up from the wilderness leaning upon our Beloved, then is our Beloved glad. But when we go down to the wilderness leaning on some other arm. When we trust in our own wisdom, or the wisdom of a friend—worst of all, when we trust in any works of our own—He is angry and will smite us with heavy blows that He may bring us to Himself.  
He is also very jealous of our company. It were well if a Christian could see nothing but Christ. When the wife of a Persian noble had been invited to the coronation of Darius, the question was asked of her by her husband—“Did you not think the king a most beautiful man?” And her answer was—“I cared not to look at the king. My eyes are for my husband only, for my heart is his.” The Christian should say the same. There is nothing beneath the spacious arch of Heaven comparable to Christ—there should be no one with whom we converse so much as with Jesus. To abide in Him only—this is true love.  
To commune with the world, to find solace in our comforts, to be loving this evil world—this is vexing to our jealous Lord. Do you not believe that nine out of ten of the troubles and pains of Believers are the result of their love to some other person than Christ? Nail me to Your Cross, my bleeding Savior! Put Your thorn crown upon my head to be a hedge to keep my thoughts within its bounds! O for a fire to burn up all my wandering loves. O for a seal to stamp the name of my Beloved indelibly upon my heart! O Love Divine, expel from me all carnal worldly loves, and fill me with Yourself!  
Dear Friends, let this jealousy which should keep us near to Christ be also a comfort to us. If we are married to Christ, and He is jealous of us, depend upon it—this jealous Husband will let none touch His spouse. Joel tells us that the Lord is jealous for His land, and Zechariah utters the words of the Lord, “I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.” And then He declares that He will punish the heathen. And will He not avenge His own elect who cry unto Him day and night?  
There is not a hard word spoken but the Lord shall avenge it! There is not a single deed done against us, but the strong hand of Him who once died but now lives for us, shall take terrible vengeance upon all His adversaries. I am not afraid for the Church of God! I tremble not for the cause of God! Our jealous Husband will never let His Church be in danger. If any smite her, He will give them a double blow. The gates of Hell shall not prevail against His Church, but she shall prevail against the gates of Hell.  
Her jealous Husband shall roll away her shame. Her reproach shall be forgotten. Her glory shall be fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners—for He that is jealous of Himself is jealous for her fair fame. The subject is large and deep. Let us prove that we understand it, by from now on walking very carefully. And if any say “Why are you so precise?” let this be our answer—“I serve a jealous God.”

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2143 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE SHINING OF THE FACE OF MOSES  
NO. 2143

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY, MAY 18, 1890, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

INTENDED FOR READING  
ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 4, 1890.

**“And it came to pass when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses’ hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses knew not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. And Moses called unto them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them. And afterward all the children of Israel came near: and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him in mount Sinai. And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. But when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he took the veil off, until he came out. And he came out, and spoke unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses’ face shone: and Moses put the veil upon**

**his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.” Exodus 34:29-36.**

A FAST of 40 days does not improve the appearance of a man’s countenance—he looks starved, wrinkled, old, haggard. Moses had fasted 40 days twice, at least, and, according to many competent authorities, the 10th chapter of Deuteronomy seems to imply that he fasted 40 days three times in quick succession. I will not assert or deny the third 40 days, but it is certain that, with a very slight interval, Moses fasted 40 days and then 40 days more—and it is probable that to these must be added a third forty.

Small attractiveness would naturally remain in a face which had endured so stern an ordeal, but the Lord whom he served made his face brilliant with an unusual luster! The glory of the Light of God upon his countenance may have been the reason why he remained so free from infirmity in later years of old age. This man of 80 spent 40 more years in guiding Israel and in the end his eyes had not dimmed nor his natural force abated! He that could fast 40 days would be a hard morsel for death. Those eyes which had looked upon the Glory of God were not likely to wax dim amid earthly scenes— and that natural force which had endured the vision of the Supernatural could well support the fatigues of the wilderness.

God so sustained His servant that his long and repeated fasts, during which he did not even drink water, did no harm to his physical constitution! The abstinence, even from water, renders the fast the more remark

able and lifts it out of similarity to modern feats of fasting. Moses did not know, at the time, that his face was shining—but he did know it afterwards—and he has here recorded it. He gives in detail the fact of the brightness of his own face, how others were struck with it and what he had to do in order to associate with them. We are sure that this record was not made by reason of vanity, for Moses writes about himself in great lowliness of spirit—it was written under Divine direction—with a worthy object.

The man Moses was very meek and his meekness entered into his authorship as into all the other acts of his life—we are therefore sure that this record is for our profit. I am afraid, Brothers and Sisters, that God could not afford to make our faces shine—we would grow too proud. It needs a very meek and lowly spirit to bear the brightness of God! We only read of two men whose faces shone—and both were very meek. The one is Moses in the Old Testament—the other is Stephen, in the New—whose last words proved his meekness for, when the Jews were stoning him, he prayed, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.”

Gentleness of nature and lowliness of mind are a fine background on which God may lay the brightness of His Glory! Where these things abound it may be safe for the Lord not only to put His beauty upon a man, but also to make a record of the fact. Moses wrote this record with a reluctant pen. Since he did not write it out of vanity, let us not read it out of curiosity. He wrote it for our learning. Let us learn by it and may God the Holy Spirit cause our faces to shine, today, as we read of the shining face of Moses!

It would appear, so far as we can make out the narrative, that his face continued to shine long afterward. After Moses had come down from the mountain the brightness began to diminish. Paul tells us that it was a “glory to be done away”—but when he went into the holy place to commune with God, the brightness was revived and he came out again and spoke to the people with that same glowing Heaven upon his brow. When he addressed the people in the name of God he took off the veil and let them see the brightness of God in His ambassador. But as soon as he had done speaking and fell back into his own private character, he drew a veil over his face that none might be kept at a distance thereby.

The man Moses was as meek with the glory on his countenance as before it gathered there. God put great honor upon him but Moses did not desire to make a display of that honor, nor childishly wish that it should be seen of men. For the people’s sakes and for typical purposes, he veiled his face while in ordinary conversation with the people and only unveiled it when he spoke in the name of the Lord. Brethren, if God honors you as preachers or teachers, accept the honor but do not attribute it to your own worthiness, or even to your own personality—ascribe it to the office to which the Lord has called you.

“I magnify my office,” said Paul—but you never find Paul magnifying himself! He wears the glory as an ambassador of God, not as a private individual. The dignity that God gives to His servants is bestowed upon their office, not upon themselves apart from it. They must never run away with it into daily life and think that they themselves are “reverend,” because their Lord is so—nor may they claim for their own thoughts the serious attention which they rightly demand for the Word of the Lord.

Ministers do not pretend to be a class of sacred beings like the Brahmins of India—the only vantage-ground they occupy is that the Lord speaks through them according to the gift of His Holy Spirit. Unveiled are our faces when we speak to God and for God—and among our Brethren we would hide anything from which we might claim superiority for ourselves.

I. With this as my preface I shall now come immediately to my subject. Here is Moses with a strange glory upon his countenance. We will first answer the question, HOW CAME THIS GLORY TO LIE THERE? The skin of Moses’ face shone—why? The answer is, first, it was a reflection of the Glory which he had seen when he was with God in the holy mount. It was the result of that partly-answered prayer, “I beseech You, show me Your Glory.” God could not, at that time, grant the prayer in its fullness for Moses was not capable of the vision—and the Lord told him, “You can not see My face and live.” I look upon that prayer, however, as a very wonderful one for this reason, that it was answered to the full, 1,400 years after it was presented!

The glory of God is only to be seen in the face of Christ Jesus—and on the top of Tabor Moses saw the Son of God transfigured—and his prayer was then and there answered to its utmost bounds! In the Transfiguration, God showed to Moses His full Glory, for he was then made able to behold it. But though on the top of Mount Sinai he could not see the full Glory of Jehovah, yet he had seen enough to make an impression upon him of such a kind that the skin of his face shone. God is Light and they that look upon Him are enlightened and reflect Light around them! Moses spoke with God face to face as a man speaks with his friend and this made his countenance glow. As the sun shining upon a reflector has its light thrown back again, often in a most brilliant fashion, so that the reflector looks like a minor sun, so was it with the face of Moses when it reflected the Glory of the Lord.

The face of Moses was to God what the moon is to the sun. A saint shines on men when God has shone on him. We are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Presence of the Lord. Would you shine in the valley?—first go up the mountain and commune with God! Would you shine, my Brothers and Sisters, with superior radiance? Then be this your fervent prayer, “Make Your face to shine upon Your servant.” If the Lord lifts upon you the Light of His Countenance there will be no lack of Light in your countenance! In God’s Light you shall give Light. The Light on the face of Moses was the result of fellowship with God. That fellowship was of no common order. It was special and distinguished.

I do not doubt that Moses walked with God after the fashion of believing men in the pursuit of his daily calling—but he spent two periods of 40 days each in solitary fellowship with God. Everybody was away—Aaron,

Joshua and all the rest were far down below and Moses was alone with God. His communion with God was intense, close and familiar—and that not for one day but for 80 days at least! Protracted fellowship brings a nearness which brief communion cannot attain. Each morning’s sun found him still in the Light of God. Each evening’s dew found his soul still saturated with the Divine influence.

What must be the effect of such whole-hearted, undisturbed fellowship with God? He heard no hum of the camp below—not even the lowing of cattle, or bleating of sheep came up from the foot of the mountain. Moses had forgotten the world, save only as he pleaded for the people in an agony of prayer. No interests, either personal or family, disturbed his communion. He was oblivious of everything but Jehovah, the Glorious One, who completely overshadowed him. Oh, for the enjoyment of such heavenly communion! My Brothers and Sisters, have we not lost a great deal by so seldom dwelling apart—so little seeking continuous absorbing fellowship with the Most High? I am sure we have. We snatch a hasty minute of prayer. We afford a hurried quarter of an hour for Bible reading and we think we have done well.

Very far am I from saying that it is not well. But if for minutes we had hours, the gain might increase in proportion! Oh, for nights of prayer! Oh, for the close shutting of the closet door and a believing drawing near to God! There is no limit to the power we might obtain if such were the case. Though our faces might not be lit up with splendor, our lives would shine, our characters would become more pure and transparent—and our whole spirit would be so heavenly that men would regard with wonder the brightness of our being!

Thus, you see, the face of Moses shone because he had long looked upon the face of God. I would have you note that this communion with God included intense intercession for the people. God will not have fellowship with our selfishness. Moses came out of himself and became an intense pleader for the people—and thus he became like the Son of God and the Glory descended on him. How he pleaded! With what sighs and cries he besought Jehovah not to destroy the men who had vexed His Holy Spirit! They had degraded the Godhead by likening it unto a bullock which eats grass! They made a calf in Horeb and bowed before it, saying, “These are your gods, O Israel”!

Moses pleaded for the people down below and not for himself. Here is a point in which, it may be, we fail. The Lord turned again the captivity of Job when Moses prayed for his friends. The Lord loves intercessory prayer! And if ever He makes a man’s face to shine, it is when he, like Christ, has made intercession for the transgressors and poured out his soul, not for himself, but for a guilty company! More than that. In that intercession Moses had exhibited a degree of self-abnegation reaching to the sublime. God said to him, “Let Me alone, that I may destroy them. I will make of you a great nation.”

The Lord’s covenant with Abraham was that Abraham’s seed should possess the land—but the Lord might have destroyed all the existing tribes except Moses—and then have made of the family of Moses a race in which the Covenant with Abraham could have been kept to the letter. What a prospect was set before him! The children of Moses should grow into an elect nation, heirs of all the promises of God. But no—Moses not only goes the length of putting aside the proffered honor, but he cries, “Blot me, I pray You, out of Your book which You have written.” Instead of his name being written in the place of the people, he would let their names stand at the expense of his own! When a man can come to that, he is the man, the skin of whose face is a fit parchment on which God may write the Glory of His love! The less of self the more of God! When we can renounce all for God’s Glory and the good of His Church, the Lord will not fail to smile upon us.

Yet once more. This man Moses not only obtained this brightness by his long communion and his intercessory prayer and self-oblivion, but by his faithfulness among the people. When he went down in the interval between the two fasts and found the people worshipping the golden calf he did not spare them. He loved them, but he did not keep back the stern blow of justice. He said, “Who is on the Lord’s side?” And there came to him the tribe of Levi. And he said, “Go through the camp and slay every man his brother who shall be found rebelling against the Lord.” At once they cut off the idolaters who were guilty of open treason against the King of Israel!

But this was not enough—the whole nation must be chastened for its great sin—and humbled by a symbolical punishment. I think I see Moses, having broken the tablets in his holy wrath, now taking down their idol god, grinding it, pounding it, dissolving it in water and sternly compelling the tribes to drink of the water. He made a nauseous, bitter draught out of their idol—and made them drink it so that their bellies might be filled with their own iniquity and they might know what it was to turn away from the Lord their God! Grand old Moses! Faithful servant of God! Unbending executioner of Divine Justice!

Meek were you, Moses, but by no means indifferent to truth and righteousness! God chooses not milksops, destitute of backbone, to wear His Glory upon their faces! We have plenty of men made of sugar, nowadays, that melt into the stream of popular opinion—but these shall never ascend into the hill of the Lord, nor stand in His Holy Place, nor wear the tokens of His Glory. O my Brothers and Sisters, it is necessary that you be true to the Lord in public if you would have His fellowship in private! If the Lord can challenge you for yours unfaithfulness among men He will never honor you with His own peculiar seal of Light. Moses was no trimmer, no hunter after popularity. He was sternly true to his Lord and therefore he was such that the Lord could safely make his face shine!

Enough of this, though much more might be said—learn the useful lesson which this part of the subject teaches.

II. But, secondly, WHAT DID THIS SHINING OF HIS FACE MEAN? This brightness on his face—what did it signify? Very briefly it meant this—God’s special favor for Moses. God seemed to say, “This is My man. I have chosen him above all others. Among those that are born of women there is no greater than he. I have put a measure of My own Glory upon him and the token thereof shines in his face.”

Surely it also meant special favor for Israel. If they could but have understood it they would not have been afraid, but conscience made them cowards. God, in effect, said to them, by the shining of the face of Moses, “I have had favor upon you for I have accepted your intercessor. My servant Moses has been pleading for your lives and in proof that I have accepted you and will spare you, I have written your pardon across his shining brow.” Favor to the Lord Jesus is favor to us.

Lord, when I hear You say, “This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am wellpleased,” I rejoice that You are well-pleased with me in Christ Jesus. When God looks on the face of His Anointed, He looks with favor upon us. This brightness on the face of Moses was also God’s witness to his commission. He had sent him, for He had glorified him. The people could not doubt his commission when they looked upon his shining face! I suppose rays of light proceeded from it. Michael Angelo, in his famous statue of Moses, represents him with horns—the strange fancy is founded in the Vulgate version, which mistook the meaning of a Hebrew word and translated it “horns.”

Beams of light seemed to rise from that marvelous face! A halo of Glory surrounded that solemn countenance and the people could not but perceive that this was a man on whom God had looked! And more. It was not only a witness of his office, but it was an increase of his power. The people were overawed by this strange light. They dared, even after this, to murmur against Moses for they dared to murmur against God Himself—but still, to a people of such a temper as theirs, the supernatural light must have been a source of wonder and of awe—

*“They gazed and looked, and lo, on brow and face, A glory and a brightness not of earth!  
The eyes lit up with fire of heavenly birth, The whole man bright with beams of God’s great Grace.”*

It gave their Prophet authority with them—it made them tremble before him. They would not dare to contradict one who looked on them with such a face of Glory! His speech was as a flame of fire because his face was on a blaze! The pith of the whole thing, I think, lies in this—the face of Moses shone typically, to show that there is a great glory about the Law of God. It has a glory all its own from its spirituality, its holiness, its perfection, its justice, its immutability, its power over the conscience and so forth. It has eminent glory because it has been ordained of God Himself and therefore stands as the sacred Rule of the universe.

But this is not what Paul understands by the glory of the Law. He makes the glory “of that which was to be abolished,” the glory of the ceremonial Law, to lie in its end. The end of the Law for righteousness is Christ. The Law is given to point us to Christ, to drive us to Christ—to be our schoolmaster to whip us to Christ, to convince us of our need of Christ—and to shut us out from every other hope but that which begins and ends with Christ! The Glory of the Law is Christ! And so Moses comes with a Glory on his face which the children of Israel could not perceive, nor steadfastly look into—

*“They looked and saw the Glory and they shrank From that dread vision, dazzling man frail sight.”*

Even as today men see outward rites that God has given but see not their glorious meaning, so was it with Israel in the wilderness—they saw sacrifices, but they knew not the Great Sacrifice. They saw the oil and the water—but they knew not the Holy Spirit. They saw 10,000 tokens dear and manifest of the ever-blessed Messiah, but they did not perceive Him so as to know Him when He came. Every type and ceremony might say, “Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” The Law is overlaid with the Glory of Christ, as the face of Moses was covered with Light! This is the deepest and innermost meaning of the sacred Light which glowed upon the skin of the face of Moses.

III. And now, thirdly, this Glory upon the face of Moses—WHY DID NOT MOSES KNOW OF IT? For we read that “Moses knew not that the skin of his face shone.” I answer, first, that it is not easy for a man to see his own face unless he can borrow a looking-glass. Speaking in parable, the meaning I intend is this—it is not easy for a man to form an accurate judgment of his own character. There are people in the world who think they see their own faces clearly and that they shine like suns—yet they do not shine at all unless it is with brazen impudence and self-conceit.

In other cases lowly men are afraid that their faces do not shine at all— and yet they are brightness itself. It is no small part of the shining of some faces that their owners are modest and humble. Brothers and Sisters, you cannot see your own faces—and until you can do so you must not imagine that you know your own characters. Upon study you may arrive at something like a judgment, but it is not one which you may safely rely upon. Since Moses had no looking-glass, how could he tell that the skin of his face shone?

Our own judgment of our own character usually errs on the side of partiality to ourselves. Nor is the evil so readily cured as some suppose, for the gift of seeing ourselves, “as others see us,” is not so corrective as might be supposed. Some persist in seeing us through the colored spectacles of prejudice and ill-will. And this injustice is apt to create in us a further partiality to ourselves. If other men make mistakes about us who can see us, they probably do not make such great blunders about us as we do about ourselves, since we cannot see our own faces! The truth is that we are very fond of ourselves and have our own characters in high esteem— therefore we are unfair judges on points of difficulty about ourselves.

Our temptation is to gross self-flattery! We dream of strength where all is weakness—of wisdom where all is folly. A man does not need to see his own face if that face is washed to purity—it will be enough that God sees it and approves its beauty. But I will tell you, further, why Moses did not

see the Glory of his own face. It was because he had seen the Glory of God. When a man gets a clear view of the holiness of God it is all over with all claim of personal excellence. From that day he abhors himself in dust and ashes. I might have thought myself pure, but how can I be when I find that the heavens are not clean in God’s sight? I might have thought myself wise, but how can I be when I read that He charged His angels with folly?

How can I speak of perfect purity as a thing of which I am possessed after I have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts? A vision of God is the quietus of boasting! He that has looked into the face of the sun is blinded to all other light. Having given one sufficient reason, I am, perhaps, unwise to add another—but yet it may be profitable to remember that Moses had not seen the shining of his own face because it had never once entered his thoughts to wish that his face should shine. That is true beauty of character which comes without being sought—I mean unconscious excellence—a character which commands an admiration which it has never desired.

Are we not too apt to wish to be bright that others may see us? Have we not labored to grow in Grace that we might outgrow others? Does no man pray for success in his ministry with a little squint of his eyes towards an ambition to be thought “so useful”? Does no sister ever seek the salvation of her class that she may be esteemed in the Church as a remarkable soul-winner? Did you never pray for holiness and really mean that you wished to be considered holy? Have you never prayed in public with great fervor with a half-suppressed wish to be thought a special man of God? Would it not have greatly gratified you to hear men cry, “What a prayer that was”? Have you not ever labored to be humble that you might rejoice in your humility?

I am afraid it is so. We are always praying, “Lord, make my face to shine.” But Moses never had such a wish and, therefore, when it did shine, he did not know it. He had not laid his plans for such an honor. Let us not set traps for personal reputation or even glance a thought that way. Another reason why he had not thought of it was that he was so much engaged in doing good for others. He gave himself up for those stiffnecked Israelites! He actually lived for them and offered himself before God to die for them! He carried the whole people in his bosom as a nurse carries her child. He fed his flock like a shepherd and like the Good Shepherd, he would have given his life for the sheep. Oh, the self-sacrifice of the man Moses!

He never thought about his own face for he was thinking about their faces. What would he have given if they had been capable of such nearness to God as he himself enjoyed! Oh, to be so absorbed in doing good that we have not a thought or a care for our own personal reputation! Then a man may do good in self-forgetfulness and may find himself famous to his own amazement! Once more, Moses could not very well have thought of his own face shining, for he had no example of such a thing to suggest the idea. Out of all those around him nobody else’s face shone. When you live with men whose faces shine, then you enquire about yourself, for you naturally wish your face to shine like theirs.

Aaron’s face did not shine. Alas, poor Aaron! Nobody’s face shone in all that camp and so there was nothing to cause Moses to look for such a radiance on his own brow. Mr. Bunyan, in his beautiful picture of Christiana and Mercy and the children coming up from the bath, represents the opposite state of things, for he says, “When the women were thus adorned, they seemed to be a terror one to the other; for that they could not see that Glory each one on herself which they could see in each other.

“Now, therefore, they began to esteem each other better than themselves. ‘For you are fairer than I am,’ said one. And, ‘You are more comely than I am,’ said another. The children also stood amazed to see into what fashion they were brought.” It is a great treat to see and admire the Christian virtues of our Brothers and Sisters in Christ—every Christian delights to see his friends comely in all the Graces of the Holy Spirit. Moses had but little to gratify him in that way, especially at the period when he came down from the mountain and found Aaron weakly yielding to the people’s sin. Even the choicest of the elders were far inferior to Moses and therefore it was not suggested by his surroundings that his own face might shine.

It is well when men are not self-conscious. It is best, my beloved Brothers and Sisters, that our faces should shine to others and not to ourselves. If you might know your own excelling, do not know it—for there is an ill savor about self-consciousness. To come forward and say, “I am perfectly holy,” is babyish. It is like a child who cries, “See my new frock! Look at my pretty new frock!” I tremble to hear one say, “I have quite passed out of the conflict mentioned in the seventh of Romans. I have got this and I have got that.” I am reminded of Jehu, when he said, “Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord”—and yet Jehu was not right at heart before the Lord. There is not much to see when you wish men to see it. God save us from knowing too much about the shining of our own faces! May the light of His Countenance fill the whole circle of our being while we lie at His feet, mastered by a reverent awe of Him!

IV. I must hasten on to another interesting point. WHY DID MOSES WEAR A VEIL? Having this brightness on his face, why did he hide it? I answer, in part the natural meekness of the man led him to do so. He was forced into the position of leader. He never wished to be prominent, but the Lord put great pressure upon him in the desert and drove him on to be as king in Jeshurun. He had no ambitions. Though made to be as God to Pharaoh, he never exalted himself in the Egyptian court.

Among the Israelites he did not monopolize power—he gladly yielded to the chosen elders a portion of his magisterial dignity. The man Moses was very meek and so to hide the brightness of his face was a pleasure and not a trial to him. Like many a lovely woman, he shrank from the public gaze. We shall do well to possess the Grace of humility. He veiled his face in tender condescension to the people. When they ran away from him, he called to them to know why they were afraid. “My lord, we fear that splendor on your brow.” “Then, let me veil it,” says he. “I would not terrify, but

win.” It was their fault that they could not bear the brightness—their fault! I say again, their fault and yet he does not upbraid, nor stand upon his rights.

He had compassion on their folly as well as on their weakness. It may happen that a gracious man may be so evidently right that when others are offended at him, the offense is to be greatly blamed—and yet he will do well to yield in anything which does not involve principle. There is a modest veiling of excellences which shows a Brother to be still more excellent than his excellences which have proven him. Quench not the light of your sternest principle, but veil it with abounding love. He always sinks himself, this man Moses. The God-given Glory of his face he does not slight, nor seek to abate—but so far as it would bring him honor from men—he puts it under a veil. That he may come closer to the people whom he loves, he is content to hide his glory. Let us also seek to bless the people and to keep in touch with them.

But, Beloved, the chief reason lies elsewhere. Why did Moses veil his face? The answer is this—it was a judicial symbol, setting forth the sentence of God upon the people. The Lord, by this token, as good as said, “You are so rebellious, so given to your idolatries, so unwilling to see that from now on you shall not see the brightness of My Glory in the dispensation of the Law in which you live. Moses shall veil his face because the veil is upon your hearts.” It is a dreadful thing when God gives men up to judicial blindness—when He permits the veil which they have woven to abide over their minds, “that seeing they might not see and hearing they might not understand.”

As I told you in the reading, the veil was literally on Moses’ face, but spiritually it was on their hearts. From that time on they were not to see because they had not wished to see. He that willfully shuts his eyes will find that God takes away his sight. If you refuse to understand, justice will make you foolish. The shadow of destruction is insensibility. The eyes are blindfolded before the fatal volley is fired. The practical warning I would earnestly apply. Do you not think we have a great many people around us—may we not belong to them ourselves?—whose foolish hearts are blinded so that the light of the Glory of God in the face of Christ is veiled from them?

Are not many suffering from veiled hearts? In your circle there is a rare man of God—you have heard of his faith—he walks with God. Many have told you what beauties they see in his character. You cannot see anything particular in him. You, on the contrary, despise him and avoid his company. He wears a veil for you. Here is the Bible. “O Book, exquisite sweetness!” Your dear mother calls it beyond all things precious. Dear Soul, how her face brightens when she tells you how she has been sustained by it in the day of trouble!

You read it now and then but you do not see anything remarkable in it, certainly nothing that charms you—the Book is veiled to you. Here is the glorious Gospel of the blessed God! You have heard us say what a wonderful Gospel it is. We have been overjoyed in describing it. You feel no enthusiasm. The Gospel is veiled to you. You have heard a sermon on some grand doctrine. Believers are ready to leap for joy but you are utterly indifferent. The Truth of God is veiled to you. This is a sad omen of a lost estate. The veil is on your heart and your soul is in darkness which may be felt.

Am I not speaking the truth about many of you? O my Friends, when you hear about Christ and do not admire Him, conclude that you must be blind! When you hear the glorious Gospel of the blessed God and it does not charm you, conclude that the veil is on your hearts! Oh, that you would turn unto the Lord! For when you turn to God, the veil shall be taken away. Oh, that God the Holy Spirit would come and turn you by His almighty power! May He constrain you to seek the Lord today—then shall the veil be taken away and you shall see the beauty of the Lord Jesus in His salvation!

Here is a little prayer for you—use it often—“Open my eyes, O God, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Law.” The wondrous things are in the Law—may you behold them. The Holy Spirit must take the veil away and remove the scales from your eyes—then you will see, but not till then. This is why Moses wore the veil—as a testimony that God had given them over to judicial blindness because they refused to know His will. O Lord, deal not thus with this people!

V. I close with this question. WHAT OTHER LESSONS MAY WE LEARN FROM THE FACE OF MOSES? First, learn the exceeding Glory of our lord Jesus Christ. HOW SO? Well, this was, so to speak, in a minor degree, the transfiguration of Moses and all it came to was that his face shone. But when Christ came He was transfigured as to His whole Person! Not only His face shone but His whole Person and His garments, also! Moses could veil his face, but the shining of our Lord could not be thus veiled for it streamed through His raiment which became “white like snow.”

The veil of Moses was, so to speak, a raiment for his face and it was able to keep in the Glory—but our Lord was wearing His usual garment without seam, woven from the top throughout, and the Light shone through His raiment so that He and His clothing were, alike, bright. Nothing could conceal the Glory of our Lord, which was so great that whereas Israel saw it tremblingly, the disciples were cast into a deep sleep thereby. A word is used by an instructive commentator in reference to Christ’s Transfiguration which expresses a forcible idea—he speaks of it as incandescence. He was all brightness and light—surpassing the mere shining of the skin even as the sun far surpasses every form of its redaction.

The Glory of Christ is beyond all comparison—the glory which excels. Oh, that I knew how to speak of it! But I feel like Paul when he said, “I could not see for the Glory of that Light.” It overpowers me! The Lamb is the Light of Heaven itself—what more shall I say? John on the rock of Patmos saw our Lord in vision and he said His “countenance was as the sun shines in his strength. And when I saw Him I fell at His feet as dead.” Moses wore a light on his face that might be covered, but Jesus was, and is, all Light and in Him is no darkness at all. “That was the true Light,

which lights every man that comes into the world.” “The Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.”

Another lesson is just this. See the possibilities of Glory which await human nature. If Moses’ face can shine here, I can understand how, in the next state, when we are risen from the dead, our bodies may be all light and bright and we ourselves like flames of fire. “This corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality.” Unless our Well-Beloved comes quickly, our bodies will be sown in dishonor—and now I see how they can be raised in Glory. Then shall we put on “the Glory of the celestial.” We shall be among the shining ones and shall, ourselves, shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father!

If the wrinkled face of the Patriarch Moses, bronzed and browned by 40 years in the Arabian desert and lined by the long fast on the top of the mountain—if the dry parchment of his face could shine so marvelously— why should not our bodies be endowed with Glory when God shall raise them, again, from the grave? As a crocus bulb looks up from the soil wherein it was buried and boldly lifts up a golden cup which the sun fills with glory from the heavens, why should not we, also, bloom into perfection? “Beloved, now are we the sons of God and it does not yet appear what we shall be”—any more than it did appear what Moses should be— “but we know that, when He shall appear”—whose appearing is more glorious than that of Moses—“we shall be like He is for we shall see Him as He is.”

Lastly, here is one more lesson. What honor God may put upon any one of us if we really put honor upon Him! My Brothers, my Sisters, if you are consecrated to God as Moses was, He can give you an unconscious influence which others will be compelled to recognize. Upon your brow the heavenly Light of Divine Grace will rest! From your eyes the lamp of the Truth of God will shine! Walk in the Light, as God is in the Light, and have fellowship with Him—and then you, too, shall shine as God’s Lightbearers and your whole life shall be as the star which guided the wise men to Christ! Influencing men for God, the gracious will follow you and the wicked will be awed by you, even as “Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and holy.”

O Spirit of God, rest on every one of us according to our capacity to endure the tongue of fire! Say unto us, O Savior, this morning, “Go forth, My Friends and be burning and shining Lights to My praise.” Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Exodus 34:28-35; 2 Corinthians 3, 4:1-6.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—912, 427, 421.

PUTTING THE HAND UPON THE HEAD OF THE SACRIFICE  
NO. 1771

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 16, 1884, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD.”  
Leviticus 1:4, 5.**

No doubt there are clear distinctions in the teaching of the burnt offering, the meat offering, the peace offering and the sin offering. In those various sacrifices we have views of our Lord’s atoning work taken from different standpoints. On another occasion it will be profitable to note these delightful lessons and lay them to heart, but at this time I am not about to enter into such matters. These instructive distinctions are the special property of those who by reason of years have had their senses exercised and, therefore, can discern not only the great work of our Lord, but the details of it. I am not sufficiently strong in mind at this time to bring forth “butter in a lordly dish” for men of robust constitution, but I must be content to serve the little ones with a cup of milk. I cannot carry the great cluster from Eshcol and, therefore, I will bring you a few grapes in my trembling hands.

I desire to preach, this morning, so that I may fulfill the prayer of a little boy who, one Saturday evening before he went to bed, said in his prayers, “Lord, grant that our minister may say something tomorrow that I may understand.” I am very sorry that such a prayer should ever be necessary, but I am afraid it is not only necessary for children, but sometimes for grownup people to pray, “Lord, help our minister to say something that we can understand and that is worth understanding.” Some of my Brothers appear to dwell on high Olympus among the clouds—it were better if they lived on Calvary. Little dew comes from the dark mountains of intellectual dreaminess—far more refreshing drops are found upon Mount Hermon of the Gospel!

I feel like Dr. Guthrie when he desired those around him to sing him a child’s hymn—I would like to be a little child in preaching to you. Simple things are the most sublime and, to a sick man, the most sweet. I wish to be plain as a pikestaff in setting forth the way of expiation by the death of Jesus. I also have a reason for preaching foundation Truth of God today which, to myself is serious, though you may smile at it. It is this—if I have but few shots to fire, I should like each time to hit the center of the target, that is to say, if I may only speak to you once, today, after having been laid aside for three weeks, I desire to speak only upon topics which touch the vitals of godliness. I would plunge into the heart of the matter and deal with the essence and soul of true religion!

There are some things that may be or may not be and yet no great evil will come either way. But there are other things that must be, or all goes wrong! Of these “must-bes” I would now speak. Some things are important for the well-being of Christians, but certain other things are absolutely essential to the very being of Christians—and it is upon these urgent necessaries that I shall now speak—namely, concerning the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and our faith in it. These two things are of the highest importance and they cannot too often be brought before our minds.

Two matters were essential in the sacrifices of the Ceremonial Law and you have them both in our text—“He shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering,” and, “he shall kill the bullock before the Lord.” The appropriation by the offerer and the death of the offering are most fitly joined together and must, neither of them, be overlooked. For our immediate objective, there was no need to have taken our present text, for there are many others of the same effect. Look at Leviticus 3:2—“And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle.” Glance at the 8th verse—“And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it before the tabernacle.” Turn to chapter 4, verse 4, the second clause of the verse—“He shall lay his hand upon the bullock’s head, and kill the bullock before the Lord.”

Also at the 15th verse—“And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the Lord: and the bullock shall be killed before the Lord.” To the same effect is the 24th verse— “And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering.” All through the Book of Leviticus, the laying on of the hand and the killing of the victim are mentioned in immediate connection. These are, each of them, so important and so full of meaning that we must have a sermon upon each of them. Let us, on the present occasion, look at THE LEADING ACT OF THE OFFERER— “He shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt offering.” All that goes before is important, but this is the real sacrificial act so far as the offerer is concerned.

Before he reached this point, the person who presented the offering had to make a selection of the animal to be brought before the Lord. It must be of a certain age and it must be without blemish—and for this latter reason a careful examination had to be made—for the Lord would not accept a sacrifice that was lame, or broken, or bruised, or deficient in any of its parts or in any way blemished. He required an offering “without spot.” Now I invite all those who seek reconciliation with God to look about them and consider whether the Lord Jesus Christ is such an atoning Sacrifice as they need and as God will accept.

If you know of any other atonement for sin, examine it well, and I am persuaded that you will find many a fault and flaw in it. But concerning the Lamb of God, I have no question—you may search, but you shall find no blemish in Him. If there were any fault in Him, either of excess or deficiency, you might well refuse Him! But since there is nothing of the kind, I pray you joyfully accept Him at once. Come, now, and look at the Lord Jesus Christ—both at His Godhead and His Manhood; at His life and His death, His acts and His sufferings—and see if there is any iniquity in Him. He knew no sin—He had no acquaintance or dealing with it! “He was holy, harmless, undefiled.”

After you have well examined His blessed Person and His spotless Character, if you arrive at the conclusion that He is a fit and acceptable Sacrifice for you to present before the Lord, then I long that you may take the much more practical step and accept the Lord Jesus to be your Representative, your Sin Offering, your Burnt Offering, your Substitute and your Sacrifice. I long that every unsaved person here may, at once, receive the Lord Jesus as his Atonement, for this is the main part of that which the sinner must do in order to be cleansed from sin and accepted by God! Happily you have not to find a sacrifice as the Jew had to supply a bullock—God has provided Himself with a perfect Sacrifice! That which you have to bring to God, God first brings to you!

Happily, there is no need for you to repeat the examination through which the Lord Jesus passed both at the hands of men, of devils and of God, when He was tested and tried and examined, and even the Prince of this world found nothing of his own in Him! You have to attend to this one thing, namely, the laying of your hands upon the Sacrifice provided for you. To the Jew it was a sacrifice to be slain. To you it is a sacrifice already offered—and this you are to accept and recognize as your own. It is not a hard duty! You sang of it just now—

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

If you have already attended to this, do so again this morning! If you have never done so, I pray from my inmost soul that you may immediately do that which was meant by laying the hand upon the victim’s head.

I. To our work, then, at once. What did that mean? It meant four things and the first was, CONFESSION. He that laid his hand upon the head of the offering made confession of sin. I do not care what offering it was that was brought by a believing Israelite—there was always a mention of sin in it, either implied or expressed. “But,” says one, “the burnt offering was a sweet-savor offering! How could there be any reference to iniquity therein?” I know that the burnt offering was a sacrifice of sweet smell and that it sets forth our Lord as accepted of the Father. But let me ask you, Why did the Israelite bring a sweet-savor offering? It was because he felt that in and of himself, he was not a sweet savor unto God, for if he had been so, he would not have needed to have brought another sweet savor!

When I accept the Lord Jesus to be my righteousness, it is a confession of sin, for I should not need His righteousness if I had any of my own. The very fact of presenting a sacrifice at all contains within it a confession of the need of a sacrifice, which is the confession of personal shortcomings and a need of personal acceptableness. This is true of the burnt offering, but in other sacrifices—especially in the trespass offering—where the hands were laid upon the victim’s head, the offerer was charged to “confess that he has sinned in that thing” wherein he had trespassed. There was a detailed confession of sin joined with the laying on of hands in the case of the scapegoat. Let us read the passage in Leviticus 16:21—“And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness.”

See, then, that if you would have Him to be your Atonement, whom God has appointed to be His Sacrifice, you must come to Him confessing your sin! Your touch of Jesus must be the touch of one who is consciously guilty. He belongs not to you unless you are a sinner. Ah, Lord, confession of sin is no hard duty to some of us, for we can do no other than acknowledge and bemoan our guilt! Here we stand before You, selfcondemned—and with aching hearts we each one cry, “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness.” Do any of you refuse to make confession of guilt? Then, do not think it hard if, since according to your own proud notions you are not sinners, the Lord should provide you no Savior! Should medicine be prepared for those who are not sick? Why should the righteous be invited to partake of pardon? Why should a righteousness be provided for the innocent?

You are the rich and you are sent away empty—the hungry shall be filled with good things. Go away, you that say, “I am clean; I am not defiled.” I tell you that you have no part in the great Sacrifice for sin! For the blackest sinner out of Hell that will confess his sin, there is mercy— but there is none for you—your pride excludes you from pity! It bars the gate of hope against you. You sprinkle the blood of the lamb upon the threshold and trample on it in your arrogant self-conceit by making yourself out to have no need of its cleansing power! O self-righteous man, you make God out to be a fool since He gave His only-begotten Son to die, when, according to you there was no necessity for His death! In your case, at any rate, there is no need of a sacrifice by blood, no need of an Atonement through the Son of God laying down His life for men. By your refusal to trust in the Lord Jesus you charge God with folly and, therefore, into His holy place, where His glory shines forth in its excellence, you can never come!

Many of us come most readily, at this time, and lay our hand upon the head of the appointed Sacrifice, even our Lord Jesus Christ, because we have sin to confess and we feel that we need a Savior, even a Savior for the guilty! We are unworthy and undeserving. We dare not say otherwise! The stones of the street would cry out against us if we should say that we have no sin! The beams of every chamber in our house would upbraid us if we dared to assert that we are without transgressions! Our true place is that of sinners—we plead guilty to the dread indictment of God’s holy Law and, therefore, we are glad to lay our hand upon the head of the sinner’s Savior and Sacrifice.

In this act there was also a confession of self-impotence. The Believer who brought the bullock did as good as say, “I cannot, of myself, keep the Law of God, or make atonement for my past breaches of the Commandments. Neither can I hope, through future obedience, to become acceptable with God. Therefore I bring this sacrifice because I, myself, cannot become acceptable without it.” This is a Truth of God which you and I must also confess if we would be partakers of Christ and become “accepted in the Beloved.” Oh, Brothers and Sisters, what can we do without Christ? I like what was said by a child in Sunday school, when the teacher said, “You have been reading that Christ is precious: what does that mean?” The children were quiet a little while, till, at last, one boy replied, “Father said the other day that Mother was precious, for ‘whatever would we do without her?’”

This is a capital explanation of the word, “precious.” You and I can truly say of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is precious to us, for what would we do, what could we do without Him? We come and take Him, now, to be ours because if He is not ours, we are utterly undone! I, for one, am lost forever if Jesus cannot save. There is, in us, no merit and no strength—but in the Lord Jesus Christ we find both righteousness and strength—and we accept Him, this day, for that reason. Because we are so deeply conscious of our own self-impotence, we lean hard upon His All-Sufficiency. If you could read the text in the Hebrew, you would find it runs thus—“He shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make a cover for him”—to make atonement for him. The word is copher in the Hebrew—a cover.

Why, then, do we hide behind the Lord Jesus? Because we feel our need of something to cover us and to act is an interposition between us and the righteous Judge of all the earth! If the Holy One of Israel shall look upon us as we are, He would be displeased. But when He sees us in Christ Jesus, He is well pleased for His Righteousness’ sake. When the Lord looks this way, we hide behind the veil, and the eyes of the Lord behold the exceeding glories of the veil, to wit, the Person of His own dear Son! And He is so pleased with the cover that He refuses to remember the defilement and deformity of those whom it covers! God will never strike a soul through the veil of His Son’s Sacrifice. He accepts us because He cannot but accept His Son, who has become our covering!

With regard to God, when I am a conscious sinner, I long to hide away from Him and lo, the Lord Jesus is our shield and hiding place—the cover, the Sacred Atonement within which we conceal ourselves from Justice. Even the all-seeing eyes of God see no sin in a sinner that is hidden in Christ! Oh, what a blessing it is, dear Friends, when our sense of self-impotence is so great that we have no desire to make a show of ourselves, but, on the contrary, long to be out of sight and, therefore, we enter into Christ to be hidden in Him, covered in the Sacrifice which God has prepared! That is the second confession, and thus we have a confession of sin and of need of covering.

There was a further confession of the desert of punishment. When a man brought his bullock, or his goat, or his lamb, he put his hand on it and as he knew that the poor creature must die, he thus acknowledged that he, himself, deserved death. The victim fell in the dust, struggling, bleeding, dying. The offerer confessed that this was what he deserved. He acknowledged that death from the Almighty hand was due to him. And oh, when a man comes to that—when he acknowledges that God will be justified when He speaks in anger, and clear when He judges and pronounces sentence in justice—when he confesses that he cannot deliver himself, but has so sinned as to deserve to be cursed of God and judged to feel the horrors of the second death, then is he brought into a condition in which the great Sacrifice will be precious to him! Then will he lean hard upon Christ and, with broken heart, acknowledge that the chastisement which fell upon Jesus was such as he deserved and he will be amazed that he has not been called upon to bear it!

For my own part, I deserve eternal damnation, but I trust in the Lord Jesus and believe that He was punished in my place. “The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed.” If you can thus confess sin and bare your neck to punishment—and then lay hold upon the Lord Jesus—you are a saved man! Can your heart truly confess, “I am guilty. I cannot save myself. I deserve to be cast into the deepest Hell, but I now take Jesus to stand in my place”? Then be of good cheer, “Your faith has saved you: go in peace!” May the Spirit of God bless this first point!

II. Secondly, the laying on of hands meant ACCEPTANCE. The offerer, by laying his hand upon the victim’s head, signified that he acknowledged the offering to be for himself. He accepted, first of all, the principle and the plan. Far too many kick against the idea of our being saved by substitution or representation. Why do they rebel against it? For my part, if God will but graciously save me in any way, I will be far enough from raising any objection! Why should I complain of that which is to deliver me from destruction? If the Lord does not object to the way, why should I? Moreover, as to this salvation by the merit of another, I remember that my first ruin did not come by myself.

I am not speaking to excuse my personal sin, but yet it is true that I was ruined before I committed any actual sin by the disobedience of the first father of the race who was my representative. How this was just, I do not know, but I am sure it must be right, or God would not so reveal it. In Adam we fell—“By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners” (Rom. 5:19). If, then, the Fall began by the sin of another, why should not our rising be caused by the righteousness and the atonement of another? What says the Apostle? “For if through the offense of one, many are dead, much more the Grace of God, and the gift by Grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many.”

At any rate, it is not for you and for me to raise objections against ourselves, but to feel that if God sees that this is a proper way of salvation, He knows best and we cheerfully accept what He approves! Who is there among you that will not do so? God grant that no one may hold out against a method of Grace so simple, so sure, so available! But then, remember. After you have accepted the plan and the way, you must not stop there, but you must go on to accept the Sacred Person whom God provides. It would have been a very foolish thing if the offerer had stood at the altar and said, “Good Lord, I accept the plan of sacrifice—be it burnt offering or sin offering—I agree thereto.” He did much more than that! He accepted that very bullock as his offering and, in token thereof, placed his hand upon it!

I pray you beware of resting satisfied with understanding and approving the plan of salvation. I heard of one who anxiously desired to be the means of the conversion of a young man and one said to him, “You may go to him and talk to him, but you will get him no further, for he is exceedingly well acquainted with the plan of salvation.” When the friend began to speak with the young man, he received for an answer, “I am much obliged to you, but I do not know that you can tell me much, for I have long known and admired the plan of salvation by the Substitutionary Sacrifice of Christ.” Alas, he was resting in the plan, but he had not believed in the Person! The plan of salvation is most blessed, but it can avail us nothing unless we believe! What is the comfort of a plan of a house if you do not enter the house, itself? What is the good of a plan of clothing if you have not a rag to cover you?

Have you never heard of the Arab chief at Cairo who was very ill and went to the missionary, and the missionary said he could give him a prescription? He did so and a week later, he found the Arab none the better. “Did you take my prescription?” he asked. “Yes, I ate every morsel of the paper.” He dreamed that he was going to be cured by the plan of the medicine! He should have gone to the chemist and had the prescription filled—and then it might have worked him some good. So is it with salvation—it is not the plan—it is the carrying out of that plan by the Lord Jesus in His death on our behalf! The offerer laid his hands, literally, upon the bullock. He found something substantial there, something which he could handle and touch. Even so do we lean upon the real and true work of Jesus, the most substantial thing under Heaven!

Brothers and Sisters, we come to the Lord Jesus by faith and say, “God has provided an Atonement, here, and I accept it. I believe it to be a fact accomplished on the Cross that sin was put away by Christ and, therefore, I rest on Him.” Yes, you must get beyond the acceptance of plans and doctrines to a resting in the Divine Person and finished work of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ—and a casting of yourself entirely upon Him.

III. But thirdly, this laying of the hand upon the sacrifice meant not only acceptance, but also TRANSFERENCE. The offerer had confessed his sin and had accepted the victim presented to be his sacrifice and now he mentally realizes that his guilt is, by Divine appointment, to pass over from himself to the sacrifice. Of course this was only done in type and figure at the door of the Tabernacle. But in our case, the Lord Jesus Christ, as a matter of literal fact, has borne the sin of His people. “The Lord has made to meet on Him the iniquity of us all.” “Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.”

But do we, by faith, pass our sins from ourselves to Christ? I answer, No. In some senses, no. But by faith he that accepts Christ as his Savior agrees with what the Lord did ages ago, for we read in the Book of Isaiah the Prophet, “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” That was Jehovah’s own act in the ages past—and it was complete when Jesus stood as the great Sin-Bearer and redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us. All the transgressions of His people were laid on Him when He poured out His soul unto death and, “was numbered with the transgressors, and bore the sin of many.”

Then and there He expiated all the guilt of all His people, for He, “finished transgression, made an end of sin and brought in everlasting righteousness.” By His death He cast the whole tremendous load of human guilt, which was laid upon Him, into the depth of the sea, never to be found again! When we believe in Him, we agree to what the Lord has done and we may sing—

*“I lay my sins on Jesus  
The spotless Lamb of God.  
He bears them all and frees us  
From the accursed load.”*

There are two ruling religions around us in this day, and they mainly differ in tense. The general religion of mankind is “Do,” but the religion of a true Christian is, “Done.” “It is finished” is the Believer’s conquering word! Christ has made Atonement and we accept it as done. So in that respect we lay our sins on Jesus, the holy Lamb of God, because we set our humble seal to that grand transaction which was the confirming of the Covenant of old. The laying of the hand upon the head of the sacrifice meant a transference of guilt to the victim and, furthermore, a confidence in the efficacy of the sacrifice then and there presented.

The believing Jew said, “This bullock represents to me the sacrifice which God has provided and I rejoice in it because it is the symbol of a sacrifice which does, in very deed, take away sin.” Brothers and Sisters, there are a great number of people who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, after a fashion, but it is not in deed and in truth, for they do not believe in the actual pardon of their own sin! They hope that they may one day be forgiven, but they have no confidence that the Lord Jesus has already put away their sin by His death. “I am a great sinner,” says one, “therefore, I cannot be saved.” Man alive, did Christ die for those who are not sinners?! What was the need of a Savior except for sinners? Has Jesus actually borne sin, or has He not? If He has borne our sin, it is gone! If He has not borne it, our sin will never depart.

What does the Scripture say? “He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” If, then, Christ took the sinner’s sin, it remains not upon the sinner that believes! Assuredly, you, my Hearer, if you are a Believer, cannot have sin if Jesus has taken it away! You are made clean in the sight of God because your uncleanness has been washed away in the blood of the Great Sacrifice! Can’t you see this way of salvation? If you see it, will you not accept it now? Do you not already feel a joy springing up within your soul that there should be such a blessed way of deliverance?

At any rate, I tell you where I stand today—I stand guilty and without a hope in anything I have ever done or ever hope to do! But I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ bore my sin in His own body on the Cross and I am, at this moment, putting my hands on Him in the sense in which the Hebrew has it, leaning all my weight upon Him! If Jesus cannot save me, I must be damned, for I cannot help Him, neither can I see anyone else who can do so much as a hand’s turn in that direction! If there is not virtue enough in the blood of Jesus to cleanse me from all sin, then I must die in my sins! And if there is not sufficient merit in His Righteousness to save me apart from any righteousness of my own, then I am a castaway, a spirit shipwrecked on the ironbound coast of despair! But I have no fears, for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him until that day!

Now I pray you, dear people of God, to lean on Jesus and keep on leaning on Him. Oh, that you who as yet do not know Jesus may be brought to touch Him by faith and to lean upon Him by full reliance! In times of sharp pain, or great depression of spirit, or in seasons when death is near, you are forced to look around you to see where your foundation is, and what it is and, believe me, there is no groundwork that can bear the weight of a guilty conscience and a trembling, tortured body, except this foundation—“the precious blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin.” Jesus is the Atonement—He is the Covering—the Refuge! In fact, He is our All in All!

IV. Once more, this laying of the hand upon the head of the victim meant IDENTIFICATION. The worshipper who laid his hand on the bullock said, “Be pleased, O great Lord, to identify me with this bullock, and this bullock with me. There has been a transferring of my sin, now I beseech You let me be judged as being in the victim, and represented thereby.” Now consider that which happened to the sacrifice. The knife was unsheathed and the victim was slain! He was not merely bound, but killed—and the man stood there and said, “That is me, that is the fate which I deserve.” The poor creature struggled, it wallowed in the sand in its dying agonies—and if the worshipper was a right-minded person and not a mere formalist—he stood with tears in his eyes and felt in his heart, “That death is mine.”

I beseech you, when you think of our blessed Lord, to identify yourselves with Him! See the bloody sweat trickling down His face? That is for you. He groans, He cries! For you. Your sins deserved that you should sweat great drops of blood, but Jesus sweats, instead. The Lord is taken prisoner and scourged. Look how the red streams of gore flow down those blessed shoulders! He bears the chastisement of our peace. He is nailed to the Cross and we are crucified with Him. By-and-by He dies. And we die in Him—“We thus judge that if One died for all, then all died.” Believer, you died there in Christ! When your Substitute rendered to the Law of God, the penalty which it demanded, you virtually rendered it! “The soul that sins, it shall die,” and you have died, Believer! You have paid the debt in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ whom, by the laying on of your hands, you have accepted to be your Substitute!

You know that story—it is a capital one, well worth telling a thousand times! In the great French War a person was drawn for a conscript but as he could not leave his family, he paid a very heavy sum for a substitute. That substitute went to the war and was killed. After a time, Napoleon called out the rest of the conscription and the man was summoned because he had been formerly drawn, but he refused to serve. He said, “No, by my substitute I have served, and I am dead and buried—I cannot be made to serve again.” It is said that the question was carried up to the highest court and laid before the Emperor, himself, and the Emperor decided that the man’s claim of exemption was a just one. He had fulfilled the conscription by a substitute and that substitute had served for life. Therefore he could not be called upon to do more and, therefore, the person for whom he was the substitute could not further be summoned under that conscription.

This sets forth our joy and glory! We are identified with Christ; we are crucified with Him; buried with Him and in Him raised to newness of life! “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live.” “You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” It ought to be remembered that we were identified with Christ in His passing under the wrath of God as a Sin Offering. If you read in this Book, you will find that the sin offering was burnt outside the camp as an unclean thing—and so you and I were put outside the camp long years ago as an unclean thing! That is over, now, and we are, at this hour, no more cast out from the sight of God than Jesus is! The burnt offering was consumed upon the altar as a sweet savor unto God and in this, also, we are identified with Christ. We are now a sweet savor unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord. We are accepted in the Beloved. We are joined unto the Lord and there is no separating our interests from His, nor His from ours.

Who shall separate us from the Christ of God forever and ever? That is what the laying on of hands upon the beast meant. I trust, dear Friends, you have known all this for years and, if not, may you know it now. If the Lord will enable me, I intend to enter into the second part of my text next Lord’s-Day morning, and for this time it will suffice for me to drive this one nail home. Oh, that the Spirit of God would fasten it in a sure place in your hearts! My soul’s yearning desire is that each one of you may come, at once, and lay your hands on Christ by confession, acceptance, transference and identification. Nothing short of such an act will suffice to give you salvation!

Now, suppose that the Jew, who went up to the tabernacle and to the altar, when he got there, had been content to talk about the sacrifice without personally placing his hand on it? To talk of it would be a very proper thing to do, but suppose that he had spent all his time in merely discoursing about the plan of a sacrifice, the providing of a substitute, the shedding of blood, the clearance of the sinner through sacrificial death? It would have been a delightful theme, but what would have come of it? Suppose he had talked on and on and had gone back home without joining in the offering? He would have found no ease to his conscience— he would, in fact, have done nothing by going to the house of the Lord! I am afraid that this is what many of you have done so far. You are pleased to hear the Gospel. You take pleasure in the Doctrine of Substitution and you know true doctrine from the current falsehoods of the hour—for all of which I am very glad—but yet you are not saved because you have not taken Christ to be your own Savior!

You are like persons who might say, “We are hungry and we admit that bread is a very proper food for men, besides which we know what sort of food makes bone, and what makes muscle, and what makes flesh.” They keep on talking all day long about the various qualities of food—do they feel refreshed? No. Is their hunger gone? No! I should suppose that if they are at all healthy, their appetite is increased, and the more they talk about food the more hungry they become. Why, some of you here have been talking about the Bread of Heaven for years—and yet I am afraid you are no more hungry than you used to be! Go beyond talking about Christ and learn to feed upon Christ! Come, now, let us have done with talk and come to deeds of faith. Lay hold on Jesus, who is set before you in the Gospel! Otherwise, Friend, I fear you will perish in the midst of plenty, and die unpardoned, with mercy at your gate.

Suppose, again, that the Israelite, instead of talking with his friends, had thought it wise to consult with one of the priests. “Might I speak with you, Sir, a little? Have you a little room somewhere at the back where you could talk with me and pray with me?” “Yes,” says the priest, “what ails you?” “My sin lies heavy upon me.” The priest replies, “You know that there is a sacrifice for sin—a sin offering lies at the door and God will accept it at your hands.” But he says, “I beg you to explain this matter more fully to me.” The priest answers, “I will explain it as well as I can, but the whole of my explanation will end in this one thing—bring a sacrifice and over its head confess your sin—and let an atonement be made. The sin offering is what God has ordained and, therefore, God will receive it. Attend to His ordinance and live. There is no other way. Fetch your offering. I will kill it for you and lay it on the altar and present it to God.”

Do you say to him, “I will call again tomorrow, and have a little more talk with you”? Do you again and again cry, “Tomorrow”? Do you go again and again into the Inquiry Room? O Sir, what will become of you? You will perish in your sin, for God has not appointed salvation by Inquiry Rooms and talks with ministers, but by your laying your own hand upon the Sacrifice which He has appointed! If you will have Christ, you shall be saved! If you will not have Him, you must perish! All the talking to you in the world cannot help you one jot if you refuse your Savior! Sitting in your pew this morning, without speaking to me or any living man or woman, I exhort you to believe in Jesus! Stretch out your withered hand, God helping you, and lay it on the head of Christ, and say, “I believe in the merit of His precious blood. I look to the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.” Why, Man, you are saved as sure as you are alive, for he that lays the hand of faith upon this Sacrifice is saved thereby!

But I see another Israelite and he stands by his offering and begins to weep and groan, and bewail himself. I am not sorry to see him weep, for I trust he is sincerely confessing his guilt. But why does he not place his hand on the sacrifice? He cries and he sighs, for he is such a sinner! But he does not touch the offering. The victim is presented and, in order that it may be of any use to him, he must lay his hand upon it. But this vital act he neglects and even refuses to perform. “Ah,” he says, “I am in such trouble, I am in such deep distress,” and he begins explaining a difficulty. You hunt that difficulty down, but there he stands, still groaning and moaning, and producing another difficulty and yet another, world without end! The sacrifice is slain, but he has no part in it, for he has not laid his hand upon it—and he goes away with all the burden of his guilt upon him, though the sacrificial blood has reddened the ground on which he stood.

That is what some of you do. You go about lamenting your sin, when your chief lament should be that you have not believed on the Son of God! If you looked to Jesus, you might dry your eyes and bid all hopeless sorrows cease, for He gives remission of sins to all penitents. Your tears can never remove your sins—tears, though flowing like a river—can never wash away the stain of guilt. Your faith must lay her hand on the head of the Lord’s Sacrifice, for there and there, only is there hope for the guilty!

“But surely,” says one, “that cannot be everything.” I tell you it is so much everything that—  
*“Could tears forever flow,  
Could your zeal no respite know,  
All for sin could not atone,  
Christ must save, and Christ, alone.”*

Jesus will only save those who accept Him and desire to be identified with Him. I would to God that you would delay no longer, but come at once and freely accept what God has provided! I know the devil will tempt you to look for this and to look for that, but I pray you look at nothing but the Sacrifice that is before you. Lean on Jesus with all your weight! Observe that the Israelite had to put his hand upon a victim which was not slain as yet, but was killed afterwards. This was to remind him that the Messiah was not yet come. But you, Beloved, have to trust in a Christ who has come, who has lived, who has died, who has finished the work of salvation, who has gone up into Glory and who always lives to make intercession for transgressors! Will you trust Him or will you not?

I cannot waste words. I must come to the point. John Bunyan says that one Sunday when he was playing the game of tip-cat on Elstow Green, as he was about to strike the cat with the stick, he seemed to hear a voice saying to him, “Will you leave your sins and go to Heaven, or will you keep your sins and go to Hell?” This morning the voice from Heaven sounds forth this question—Will you trust in Christ and go to Heaven, or will you keep apart from Him and go to Hell?—for there you must go unless Jesus becomes your Mediator and your atoning Sacrifice. Will you have Christ or not?

I hear you say, “ But”—O that I could thrust your “buts” aside! Will you have Christ or not? “Oh, but”—No, your “buts” ought to be thrown into limbo, for I fear they will be your ruin. Will you trust Christ or not? If your answer is, “I trust Him with all my heart,” then you are saved! I say not you shall be saved, but you are saved! “He that believes in Him has everlasting life.” You know how our dear friend, Mr. Hill, put it, the other night, at the Prayer Meeting? “He that believes in Him has everlasting life.” “H-A-S”—that spells—“Got it.” Very good spelling, too! If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have eternal life in present possession! Go your way and sing for joy of heart, because the Lord has loved you! Mind you, keep on singing until you join the choristers before the eternal Throne of God!

May the Lord save every person that shall hear or read this sermon, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Psalm 51. Leviticus 1:1-9.**  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—395, 555, 51 (PART II).

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SLAYING THE SACRIFICE  
NO. 1772

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 23, 1884, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD.”  
Leviticus 1:5.**

You remember that last Lord’s Day we spoke of two things vitally essential to a true sacrifice and the first upon which we then enlarged was the laying on of the hands of the offerer upon the victim, by which he accepted it as his sacrifice, and made a typical transfer of his sin from himself to the victim. [**“Putting the Hand Upon the Head of the Sacrifice,” No. 1771.**And Sermon #1780, “**The Sprinkling of the Blood of the Sacrifice”**continues the series.] Now, the second essential thing, of which we are to speak this morning, is this—that the victim, thus bearing the guilt of the offerer, must be killed—its blood must be shed before the Lord. Nothing short of its death by violence would render it an atonement for the offerer—“he shall kill the bullock.”

You will find this order continually repeated whenever a sacrifice is spoken of. As I said on the last occasion, I feel great satisfaction, in this time of my weakness, in being permitted to speak to you about essential things. It was always a stigma upon the character of Caligula that he gathered his warriors, fitted out his ships and, when the people of Rome looked for some great addition to the empire by the vast naval expedition, he simply anchored his vessels near the beach and bade his legions advance upon the shore and gather shells and pebbles—and carry them home as trophies of their undisputed conquest. He trifled where he should have struggled. He spent time and labor upon matters of no importance and neglected the weighty business of his kingdom.

We shall not do so today—we have nothing to do with shells and stones! We have to do with matters worth more than gold or pearls— things essential to eternal life and vital to the salvation of the souls of men! Neither have I, this morning, a controversial topic upon which to debate before you. However important controversy may sometimes be, we are glad to be away from its strife and to consider a doctrine around which true Believers gather in hearty unity—a doctrine which must be taken for granted in the Christian Church! A doctrine which lies at the very root of the Truth of God and in the very heart of true religion!

Without controversy, great is this mystery of godliness, that Christ, manifest in the flesh, must die for sin, or otherwise sin cannot be put away. You remember what the Greek said when he heard an old philosopher with hoary head and gray beard disputing upon how to live. “Goodness!” he said, “if at his age he is disputing upon that subject, when will he be able to practice his conclusions should he arrive at one?” Truly, I may say to you to whom I have so long ministered—if we are forever to be learning and never coming to a knowledge of the Truth of God, what will become of us? If we are to have nothing but questionable matters laid before us, when shall the time come for the actual possession and enjoyment of the blessings of the Gospel?

At this hour my theme is such that I speak to you without diffidence or hesitation. In this case, “we believe and are sure.” Concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Sacrifice for sin, it was essential that He should die, for only through the blood which He shed on Calvary for human guilt can there be preached among men the remission of sins—

*“What can wash away my stain?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus!  
What can make me whole again?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus!  
This is all my hope and peace—  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus!  
This is all my righteousness—  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus!”*

May the Holy Spirit lay home the blood of Atonement to our consciences at this time to the glory of God and our own peace!

I. Concerning the killing and slaying of the offering, our first point is that it was ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL. The pouring out of the blood of the victim was of the very essence of the type. The death of Christ by bloodshedding was absolutely necessary to make Him an acceptable Sacrifice for sin. “It behooved Christ to suffer.” He could only enter into the Presence of God with His own blood. He could not be the grain of wheat which brings forth much fruit unless He should die. Remember that although there were important matters about the victim, yet nothing would have mattered if it had not been slain.

The Israelite brought an unblemished bullock, but the fact of its being unblemished did not make it an atonement for sin. No doubt many faultless bullocks and lambs still fed in the plains of Sharon. If the most perfect animal had gone away from the altar, alive, it would have effected nothing whatever by way of atonement. It must be unblemished in order to be an offering at all, but still, its perfections did not make it a sacrifice until it was killed. No matter what could be said of that bullock—it may have been the most laborious animal throughout all Israel; it may have dragged the plow to and fro, or even drawn the wagon loaded with the harvest—but that was nothing to make it a sacrifice for sin. It must die and its blood must be sprinkled upon the altar, or else the offerer has brought no acceptable oblation. All its life and its labor would not satisfy.

Nor would it be enough to bring the bullock there and dedicate it to God. Some animals which had been dedicated to the Divine service were used in the drawing of the wagons which carried the sacred furniture through the wilderness, but they were not sacrifices, for all that, neither did they avail for the bearing away of sin. It was indispensably necessary that the bullock should be without blemish—it was necessary that it should be voluntarily dedicated to God—but if it had not been killed, there would have been no presentation of an offering according to the Divine Law, nor any easing of the conscience of the Israelite.

And even so, Jesus must die—His perfect Nature, His arduous labor, His blameless life, His perfect consecration could avail us nothing without the shedding of His blood for many, for the remission of sin. So far from His death being a mere adjunct and conclusion of His life, it is the most important matter connected with Him! It stands in the foreground. It is the head and front of His redeeming work! We justly value Him for His example and for His living intercession—but in the business of Atonement, it is beyond all things necessary that we view Him as the Lamb slain!

Now notice that this was expressly declared by God in the Jewish Law book in express words. Kindly turn in this Book of Leviticus to the 17th chapter, and there read in the 11th verse, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul.” It is not the burning of the victim, it is not the flaying of it, nor the washing of it—it is the shedding of its blood—that is to say, the taking of its life, which makes it an atonement for sin. I need not quote another Old Testament text, because this is so completely to the point and so fully covers the whole of the ground. The atonement is not the animal itself, but the blood of the animal, which blood represents its life.

As to the entire Scriptures, they teem with statements of this Truth. I will only call to your recollection a few prominent passages, to collect them all would be impossible. When a child gathers flowers in the spring meadows when they are all golden with the kingcups, he fills his hands once, but he is almost persuaded to throw away what he has gathered that he may pluck yet more from the inexhaustible store around him! So do I feel that what I now bring before you might fitly be exchanged for another selection, yes, for many such, if time did not fail us. In the Old Testament, one of the most instructive types of redemption ever given is that of the Passover lamb. When God was about to smite Egypt He promised to spare His people—and in order to their safety He bade each family take a lamb, kill it and sprinkle the blood upon the lintel and the two side posts of their door.

Then they were to stay within the house till morning and the destroying angel would not touch so much as one of them. What is expressly said by God Himself about this passing-over? Hear the words and wonderingly drink in their teaching! “And when I see the blood, I will pass over you.” There was never a fuller type of the redemption of Christ, I hardly think one so full, as that of the passing-over of Israel through the blood of the paschal lamb! But the essence of that passing-over is displayed to us in this sentence—“When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” God’s eyes resting upon the evidence of a life having been taken instead of the sinner’s life, is the reason why He passes over the sinner so that he does not die!

When Isaiah, the great evangelical Prophet, spoke concerning Him upon whom the Lord laid our iniquity, he mentions His death as the main cause of His glorious reward! The last verse of the 53rd chapter of Isaiah is the culminating point of the whole, and it runs thus—“Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He has poured out His soul unto death.” It is a wonderful expression—it shows that Christ must die, or else He could not achieve the victory for us, nor share the spoil. He must pour out His Soul. He must relinquish life, must pour it out lavishly, as though He possessed much of it! He must make it flow like water gushing in a river from the smitten rock. This He must do voluntarily and without stint—“pouring out His soul unto death”—till none remained and the bottom of the vessel was reached in death.

It is clear that if He had not done this, He had done nothing, for the victory comes to Him because of this—not because He kept His Soul free from spot, not because He preached righteousness in the great congregation! Not because of anything else which Jesus did was He rewarded—the victorious deed was that, “He poured out His soul unto death.” This is the verdict, not only of the Holy Spirit in the Inspired Prophecy, but also of all that dwell with God above, for they sing with sweet accord before the Throne of God—“A new song, saying, You are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”

In the New Testament the passages abound which set forth the doctrine upon which we are now speaking. Look at that passage in Hebrews 9:12. There we are told expressly, “Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” There is no remission by the life of Christ, no remission by the teaching of Christ, no remission by our repentance, no remission by our faith—apart from the shedding of the blood of Christ, by whom, alone, sin is put away! This is negative; but in this case the negative is as strong as the most positive statement could be, for if without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, then we see how all-important that bloodshedding becomes! If you desire a positive statement, a sentence rises to our lips at once—“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

Observe, not the life, not the Incarnation, not the Resurrection, not the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus, but His blood, His death, the giving up of His life is that which cleanses us from all sin! This is that purging with hyssop of which David speaks when he laments his sin and yet looks to be made whiter than snow by the free pardon of his God. This Truth is the subject of all true Gospel preaching! Do you not know how Paul puts it— “The preaching of the Cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.” “For,” he says, “the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ Crucified.” It is not Christ in any other position, but Christ as Crucified! Christ as made a curse for us upon the tree—that is the first and most prominent fact that we are called to preach among the sons of men! “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace.”

Take away this substitutionary death of our Lord and you have taken all away! Without the death of Jesus there remains nothing for us but death! Forget the Crucified One and you have forgotten the only name by which we can be saved! Oh, that all of you would trust in Him. “Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” My Brothers and Sisters, this is the cause of the saints being in Heaven! In the first chapter of the Book of the Revelation, verse 5, we have the doxology, which begins, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.” Thus say all the glorified! Further on we are told concerning the saints, “They have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sits on the throne shall dwell among them.”

This is the true reading of the 14th verse of the last chapter of the Book of Revelation—“Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city.” Thus the passport to Glory is the precious blood of Jesus! Access to God, either on earth or in Heaven, is only by the blood of the Son of God! Now and then we meet with some squeamish person who says, “I cannot bear the mention of the word, blood.” Such individuals will be horrified this morning—and it is intended that they should be! Sin is such a horrible thing that God has appointed blood to wash it away, that the very horror which the thought of it causes may give you some notion of the terrible nature of sin as God judges it! It is not without a dreadful blood-shedding that your dreadful guilt could by any possibility be cleansed!

Sin-bearing and suffering for sin can never be pleasant things—neither should the type which sets it forth be pleasing to the observer. On great days of sacrifice, the courts of the tabernacle must have seemed like a shambles, and fitly so, that all might be struck with the deadly nature of sin. If it is so, that the blood of Jesus is mentioned in the songs of Heaven, let it not be forgotten in the hymns of earth—

*“To Him that loved the souls of men,  
And washed us in His blood,  
To royal honors raised our head,  
And made us priests to God.  
To Him let every tongue be praise,  
And every heart be love!  
All grateful honors paid on earth,  
And nobler songs above!”*

The Church militant is called upon continually to commemorate the blood-shedding. So often as we gather to the Communion Table we may ask the question, “The cup of blessing which we bless—is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?”

At the sacred table we show the death of our Lord until He comes. He says to us in express words, “This is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” He bids you remember the blood as you drink of the fruit of the vine, saying, “This cup is the new testament in My blood.” Take the blood away and the communion of the Lord’s Supper has gone—there remains nothing but the Popish “mass” which is so blasphemously called an unbloody sacrifice for the quick and the dead! Forget not that every person gathering to that table of communion is, if he is what he professes to be, a consecrated man and how comes he to be so but for this reason—“You are not your own, for you are bought with a price”?

We are redeemed unto God by the blood of Jesus. “You were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” It is the blood that makes you what you are—and the blood that permits you to enjoy what God has prepared for you—so that in every way you see the absolute essentiality of the death of the great Sacrifice. Here let us further consider that death is the result and penalty of sin—“The soul that sins, it shall die.” “Sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.” “The wages of sin is death.” It was right that the Substitute should bear a similar chastisement to that which would have fallen upon the sinner. Our Savior did not endure annihilation, for that is not the meaning of death—neither the first nor the second death should be so explained.

Jesus was not annihilated, but He bore the pain, the loss, the ruin, the separation, the overwhelming which is intended by death. He was even forsaken of God, so that He cried out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” The penalty was death and, therefore, Jesus was exceedingly sorrowful even unto death. He laid down His life for us and became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross. The Law of God demanded death and death has fallen upon our great Covenant Head. “In due time Christ died for the ungodly.” There is great comfort to my soul in this, for if the Lord Jesus has paid the capital sentence, nothing remains unpaid! “He that is dead is freed from sin.” That is to say, if the law has killed the man, it can ask no more of him—he must be free from further charge of guilt.

When the criminal has died, he has suffered the last sentence of the law, and is now beyond its jurisdiction. Our Lord Jesus has died—the Just for the unjust, and as that which He has borne is nothing less than death, it must cover all that is due to sin—

*“He bore on the Tree the sentence for me,  
And now both the Surety and sinner are free.”*

Since Jesus has died unto sin once, He dies no more. Death has no more dominion over Him. He has borne the last and most far-reaching penalty of the Law of God and there can be nothing left upon the score. His Atonement was a complete redemption. If you were in debt and were bound to pay so much every month, you would be very grateful to a friend who should step in and pay several installments for you. But if one of more liberal spirit discharged the whole amount, your gratitude would be deep and overflowing!

Let us rejoice that the Lord Jesus Christ has evidently, by His substitutionary Sacrifice, put away not a part and a portion of our sin, but the whole of it! By bearing death, itself, He has removed all our legal obligations and has placed us beyond the reach of further demands. “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us.” Now we may sing to Him who has removed our transgressions from us as far as the east is from the west.

This death of Christ was also absolutely necessary for the clearing of the troubled conscience. An awakened conscience will never be quieted with anything less than the blood of the Lamb—it rests at the sight of the great Sacrifice, but nowhere else. A conscience smarting under a sense of sin is an unequalled fountain of misery. Let Conscience once begin to scourge the sinner and he will find it to be the most terribly tormentor out of Hell! I do not know whether the Prophet Isaiah was really sawn asunder by Manasseh, but we know that some of the saints suffered that torture. Yet, surely, a saw that should gradually cut a man in half from head to foot is a faint picture of what your conscience can do when it begins to operate upon the mind with all its cutting force!

What a Divine Atonement that must be which calms the storms of an accusing conscience and gives the soul a lasting peace! Some may trifle with their consciences, but where God is at work, men dare not attempt it. The most important thing in the world to a sensible man is the condition of his conscience—if that is restless, he is in an evil case. Thomas Fuller, in his quaint way, tells us that he, one day, asked a neighboring minister to preach for him, when he called upon a short visit. “No,” said the other, “I cannot, for I am not prepared.” “But,” said Fuller, “though you are unprepared, I am sure you will preach well enough to satisfy my people.” His friend answered, “That may be true, but I could not preach well enough to satisfy my own conscience.”

There’s the rub with a true man. We cannot live well enough to satisfy our conscience and we cannot pray well enough to satisfy our conscience! A really tender conscience is as greedy as the horseleech which cries, “Give! Give!”— it asks for perfection and, as we cannot render it by reason of sin—Conscience will never cease its outcries till it is quieted with the precious blood of Jesus Christ! Once let us see Jesus offered up upon the Cross for sin and our heart feels that it is enough! When God is well pleased, we may well be satisfied and get on our way enjoying peace with God from that time and forever. Thus much, then, upon our first point— for many reasons it was absolutely essential that our great Sacrifice should die.

II. Secondly, we will, with great delight, meditate upon the fact that the death of Christ is EFFECTUALLY PREVALENT. Other offerings, though duly slain, did nothing thoroughly, did nothing lastingly, did nothing really, by way of expiation, for the Scripture says, “It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” The true purification is only found in the death of the Son of God! When our Lord was fastened to the Cross and cried, “It is finished,” and gave up the ghost, He had finished transgression, made an end of sin and brought in everlasting righteousness. By offering one Sacrifice for sins, forever, the work was done, the accusing record was altogether blotted out!

Why was there such cleansing power in the Redeemer’s blood? I answer, for several reasons. First, because of the glory of His Person. Just think who He was! He was none other than the, “Light of light, very God of very God.” He counted it not robbery to be equal with God, yet He took upon Himself our nature, and was born of a virgin. His holy Soul dwelt in a perfectly pure Body and to this, the Godhead was united. “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Now, for this glorious, this sinless, this Divine Person, to die, is an amazing thing! For the Lord of angels, Creator of all things, sustaining all things by the power of His Word—for Him, I say, to bow His head to death as a vindication of the Law. is an inconceivably majestic recompense to the honor of eternal justice!

Never could justice be more gloriously exalted in the presence of intelligent beings than by the Lord of All submitting Himself to its requirements! There must be an infinite merit about His death—a merit unutterable, immeasurable! I think if there had been a million worlds to redeem, their redemption could not have needed more than this “sacrifice of Himself.” If the whole universe, teeming with worlds as many as the sands on the seashore, had required to be ransomed, that one giving up of the ghost would have sufficed as a full price for them all! However gross the insults which sin may have rendered to the Law of God, they must be all forgotten since Jesus magnified the Law so abundantly and made it so honorable by His death. I believe in the special design of our Lord’s atoning death, but I will yield to no one in my belief in the absolutely infinite value of the offering which our Lord Jesus has presented! The glory of His Person renders the idea of limitation an insult.

Next, consider the perfection of our Lord’s Character. In Him was no sin, nor tendency to sin. He was “holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners.” In His Character we see every virtue at its best! He is incomparable. If He, therefore, died, “the Just for the unjust,” what must be the merit of such a death? His righteousness has such sweetness in it that all the ill-savor of our transgression is put away—it is no wonder that by the obedience of such an One as this Second Adam many are made righteous! Think next, dear Friends, of the nature of the death of Christ and you will be helped to see how effectual it must be. It was not a death by disease, or old age—but a death of violence, well symbolized by the killing of the victim at the altar. He did not die in His bed, sleeping Himself out of the world—He was taken by wicked hands, scourged, spit upon and then fastened up to die a felon’s death! His was a cruel doom! Human malice could scarcely have invented any method of execution more sure to create pain and anguish than death by hanging on a tree, fastened by nails driven through hands and feet!

In addition to His physical pain, our Lord was sorely vexed in spirit. His soul-sufferings were the soul of His sufferings—“He was exceedingly sorrowful even unto death.” Heaven refused its smile. His mind was left in darkness. To be frowned upon of God was a part of the punishment of our sin and Jesus Christ was not spared that direst and bitterest woe. God, Himself, turned away His face from Him and left Him in the dark! He died a dishonorable death, yes, a cursed death—“As it is written, cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” Now, for the Son of God to die, and die in such a manner, was a marvel! Never martyr died crying that he was forsaken of his God! That desertion was the lowest depth of the Savior’s grief. And since He died thus, I can well understand that He has, thereby, made an ample Atonement for the sins of all who believe in Him. Oh, great Atonement of my blessed Lord, my sins are swallowed up in You! Looking to the Cross and to the pierced heart of Jesus, my Lord, I am assured that if I am washed in His blood I shall be whiter than snow!

And then think of the spirit in which our Lord and Savior bore all this. Martyrs who have died for the faith have only paid the debt of Nature a little before its time, for they would have died, sooner or later. But our Lord needed not to have died at all! He said of His life, “No man takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.” The pouring out of His soul unto death was not in the power of man until the Lord was pleased to yield Himself a Sacrifice. “He gave Himself for me.” He laid down His life for His sheep. Out of love to God and man He willingly drank of the appointed cup—the only compulsion which He knew was His own desire to bless His chosen. “For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross, despising the shame.” Oh, it was splendidly lived, that life of our Lord! The Spirit which guided it, lights it up with an unrivalled brightness! Oh, it was splendidly died, that death of our Lord, for He went up to the Cross with such willing submission that it became His Throne!

The crown of thorns was such a diadem as emperor never wore! It was made of the ended sorrows of His people—sorrows ended by their encircling His own majestic head! On the Cross He routed His enemies and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it! In the act of death He nailed the handwriting of ordinances that were against us to His Cross and so destroyed the condemning power of the Law of God. O glorious Christ, there must be infinite merit in such a death as Yours, endured in such a style! And then I bid you to remember, once more, the Covenant Character which Christ sustained, for when He was crucified, we thus judge that One died for all, and in Him all died. He was not slain as a private individual, but He was put to death as a Representative Man.

God had entered into Covenant with Christ and He was the Surety of that Covenant, therefore His blood is called “the blood of the Everlasting Covenant.” Remember the expression of the Apostle where he speaks of “the blood of the Covenant with which we are sanctified”? Neither the First nor the Second Covenant were dedicated without blood—but the New Covenant was established by no blood of beasts, but by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep! When He offered Himself, He was accepted in that Character and capacity in which God had regarded Him from before the foundations of the world, so that what He did, He did as the Covenant-Head of His people. It was meet that He should die for us, seeing He had assumed the position of the Second Adam, being constituted our federal Head and Representative. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him because He condescended to be one flesh with us—and with His stripes we are healed because there is a Covenant union between us.

Thus much upon the effectual prevalence of that great Sacrifice—a theme so vast that one might enlarge upon it throughout all time!

III. Beloved Friends, it seems to me that no one will now forbid my saying, thirdly, that the fact of the necessity for the death of the Lord Jesus is INTENSELY INSTRUCTIVE. Listen while I repeat the lessons very briefly— you can enlarge upon them when you go from here to meditate in solitude.

Must the victims die? Must Jesus bleed? Then let us see what is claimed by our righteous God. He claims our life—He claimed of the offering its blood, which is the life thereof— He justly requires of each of us our whole life. We must not dream of satisfying God with formal prayers, or occasional alms-deeds, or outward ceremonies, or a half-hearted reverence. He must have our heart, soul, mind and strength—all that makes our true self—the very life of our being. Dead works are worthless before the living God. He claims our life and He will have it one way or another— either by its being perfectly spent in His service, or else by its being smitten down in death as the righteous punishment of rebellion! Nor is the demand unjust. Did He not make us and does He not preserve us? Should He not receive homage from the creatures of His hands?

Next, must the sacrifice die? Then see the evil of sin. It is not such a trifle as certain men imagine. It is a deadly evil, a killing poison. God, Himself, in human form, took human guilt upon Himself—the sin was none of His—it was only imputed to Him, but when He was made sin for us and bore our iniquities, there was no help for it, He must die! Even He must die! It was not possible that the cup should pass from Him. A voice was heard from the Throne of God—“Awake, O Sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow, says the Lord of Hosts: smite the Shepherd!” So unflinching is Divine Justice that it will not, cannot spare sin, let it be where it may! No, not even when that guilt is not the Person’s own, but is only taken up by Him as a Substitute. Sin, wherever it is, must be smitten with the sword of death—this is a Law of God fixed and unalterable. Who, then, will take pleasure in transgression? Will not every man who loves his own life awaken himself to fight against iniquity? Sinner, shake off your sin, as Paul shook off the viper into the fire! Do not dally with it. Pray God that you may have done with it. It is a horrible and a grievous thing and God says to you “Oh, do not this abominable thing which I hate.” God help you to flee from all iniquity.

Next, learn the love of God. Behold how He loved you and me! He must punish sin, but He must save us—and so He gives His Son to die in our place. I shall not go too far if I say that in giving His Son, the Lord God gave Himself, for Jesus is One with the Father. We cannot divide the Substance though we distinguish the Persons—thus God, Himself, made Atonement for sin committed against Himself! The Church is “the flock of God which He has purchased with His own blood.” Wonder of wonders! Truly love is strong as death as we see it in the heart of God! “Scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet perhaps for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” This is a heaped-up marvel! Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us!

Next, learn how Christ has made an end of sin. Sin is laid on Him and He dies—then sin is dead and buried! If it is sought for, it cannot be found. Speak of finality—this is the truest and surest finality that ever was, or ever shall be! “If a man dies shall he live again?” Not as before. If Christ died, what is there after death? Nothing but the Judgment and lo, He comes to that judgment—“Being raised from the dead He dies no more, death has no more dominion over Him.” This is our joy because neither sin nor death can have dominion over us for whom Christ died, and who died in Him! Christ has made an end of sin. His one offering has perfected, forever, the set-apart ones. These are but a few of the great lessons which we may learn from the necessity that the Sacrifice should be slain. I pray you learn them well. May they be engraved on your hearts by the Holy Spirit!

IV. And so I shall close by saying that this blessed subject is not only full of instruction, but it is ENERGETICALLY INSPIRING. First, this inspires us with the spirit of consecration. When I think that I could not be saved except by the death of Jesus, then I feel that I am not my own, but bought with a price. I remember reading of Charles Simeon, the famous evangelical clergyman of Cambridge, that he was, one day, thrown from his horse and was fearful that he had sustained serious injury. When he had recovered from the force of the fall, he stretched out his right arm, felt it, and finding that there was not a bone broken, he consecrated that arm, anew, to the living God who had so graciously preserved it.

Then he examined his left arm and found it all right—and so held that up and dedicated it anew unto Divine service. He did the same with his head, his legs and his whole body. As I was thinking over this subject, I felt as if I must go over my body, soul and spirit, and dedicate all to that dear Savior by whose blood I am altogether redeemed from death and Hell. “Bless the Lord, O my Soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name!” As I am not cast away from God. As I am not destroyed. As I am not in torment, not in Hell—I dedicate to God my blood-bought spirit, soul and body from this day forth to be the Lord’s as long as I live! Brothers and Sisters, do you not feel the same? I pray God the Holy Spirit to make you do so in a very practical manner. This doctrine of the death of Christ ought to inspire you till you sing—

*“Jesus, spotless Lamb of God,  
You have bought me with Your blood.  
I would value nothing beside Jesus—  
Jesus crucified!  
I am Yours and Yours alone.  
This I gladly, fully own.  
And, in all my works and ways,  
Only now would seek Your praise.”*

Next, this Truth of God should create in us a longing after the greatest holiness, for we should say, “Did sin kill my Savior? Then I will kill sin! Could I not be saved from sin except by His precious blood? Then, O sin, I will be revenged upon you! I will drive you out by the help of God’s Spirit! I will not endure you, nor harbor you. I will make no provision for the flesh. As sin was the death of Christ for me, so Christ shall be the death of sin in me.” Does not this inspire you with great love for the Lord Jesus? Can you look at His dear wounds and not be wounded with love for Him? Are not His wounds as mouths which plead with you to yield Him all your hearts? Can you gaze upon His face, wet with bloody sweat, and then go away and be ensnared with the world’s painted beauties? Heard you ever of a ruler dressed in such robes of love as those which Jesus wore? Did ever Love use such sacred means to win the beloved heart as Christ has done? What can any one of us do but answer Him thus—

*“Here, Lord, I give myself away,  
‘Tis all that I can do”?*

Do you not think that this solemn Truth of God should inspire us with great zeal for the salvation of others? As Christ laid down His life for us, should we not lay ourselves out for perishing souls and, if necessary, lay down our lives for the Brethren? Should we not practice self-denial in our labors to bring men to Jesus? Should we not joyfully toil and cheerfully bear reproach, if by any means we may save some? I think if this subject should go home to our hearts, it would be beneficial to us in a thousand ways and make us better soldiers of the Cross, closer followers of the Lamb. I pray that God the Holy Spirit may place it in the center of our souls and keep it there! It will bring with it peace and rest. Why should we be troubled, since Jesus died? It will fill our mouths with praises!

Hallelujah to the Lamb that was slain, who has redeemed us by His blood! It will draw us into closer communion with Him. If He loved us and died for us, we must live with Him, and in Him, and to Him. Surely it will also make us long to behold Him! Oh, for the vision of the Crucified! When shall we see the face that was so marred for us? When shall we behold the hands and feet which still bear the nail marks? And when shall we look into the wounded side bejeweled with the spear wound? Oh, when shall we be done with all our sins and griefs, forever to behold Him shine and see Him still before us? Oh, when shall we be—

*“Far from a world of grief and sin,*

*With God eternally shut in”?*  
Till then our hope, our solace, our glory, our victory are all found in the blood of the Lamb, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Hebrews 9.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—427, 291, 428.  
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SALT FOR SACRIFICE  
NO. 1942

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 23, 1887. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***“And every oblation of your meat offering shall you season with salt; neither shall you suffer the salt of the Covenant of your God to be lacking from your meat offering:***

***with all your offerings you shall offer salt.”  
Leviticus 2:13.***

IT is taken for granted that all true Israelites would bring many oblations and offerings of different kinds to God. And so they did who were truly devout and really grateful. I am sure that if the Lord has set our hearts on fire with His own love, we, also, shall be frequently saying, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?” It will be the habit of the Christian, as it was the habit of the devout Israelite, to be continually bringing oblations to his God.

How is this to be done? That is the point. We have need, each of us, to say with Paul, “Lord, what will You have me to do?” And we may add another question, “How will You have me do it?” For will-worship is not acceptable with God. If we bring to God what He does not ask, it will not be received. We must only present to Him that which He requires of us and we must present it to Him in His own way, for He is a jealous God.

I call your attention to the fact that, in this verse, the Lord three times expressly commands that with the meat offerings and all other offerings they were to offer salt. Does the great God that made Heaven and earth talk about salt? Does He condescend to such minute details of His service as to enact that the absence of a handful of salt shall render a sacrifice unacceptable—and the presence of it shall be absolutely necessary to its being received by Him? Then, my Brethren, nothing in the service of God is trifling! A pinch of salt may seem to us exceedingly unimportant, but before the Lord it may not be so. In the service of God, the alteration of an ordinance of Christ may seem to be a pure matter of indifference, and yet in that alteration there may be the taking away of the very vitals of the ordinance—and the total destruction of its meaning. It is yours and it is mine to keep to the letter of God’s Word, as well as to the spirit of it, remembering that it is written, “Whoever shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.” It is not for the servant to say, “This order of my master is unimportant and the other is binding.” The servant’s duty is to act in all things exactly as he is bid. Since our Master is so holy and so wise, it is impossible for us to improve upon His commandments. Yes, God enters into detail with His servants and even makes orders about salt.

If you will read the chapter through, you will note that other things were needed in connection with the sacrifices of the Israelites. Their sacrifices were, of course, imperfect. Even on the low ground which they occupied as symbols and emblems they were not complete, for you read, in the first place, that they needed frankincense when they offered their sacrifice to God. God did not smell sweet savor in the bullock, or the ram, or the lamb, unless sweet spices were added. What does that teach us but that the best performances of our hands must not appear before His Throne without the merit of Christ mingled with it? There must be that mixture of myrrh, aloes and cassia with which the garments of our Prince are perfumed to make our sacrifice to be a sweet savor to the Most High! Take care in your sacrifices that you bring the sacred frankincense.

Another thing that was enjoined constantly was that they should bring oil—and oil is always the type of the blessed Spirit of God. What is the use of a sermon if there is no unction in it? What is unction but the Holy Spirit? What is prayer without the anointing that comes of the Holy Spirit? What is praise unless the Spirit of God is in it to give it life, that it may rise to Heaven? That which goes to God must first come from God. We need the oil—we cannot do without it. Pray for me that I may have this oil in the sacrifice of my ministry, as I pray for you that in all that you do for the Lord Jesus, your sacrifice may continually have the sacred oil with it.

Then came a third requisite, namely, salt. If you read the preceding verses, you will see that the Lord forbids them to present any honey. “No meat offering, which you shall bring unto the Lord, shall be made with leaven: for you shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in an offering of the Lord made by fire. As for the oblation of the first fruits, you shall offer them unto the Lord: but they shall not be burnt on the altar for a sweet savor.” Ripe fruits were full of honey, full of sweetness—and God does not ask for sweetness, He asks for salt. I shall notice that as we go on farther. Not honey, but salt, must be added to all the sacrifices which we present before the living God.

What is the meaning of all this? We may not pronounce any meaning of the types with certainty unless we have Scripture to direct us, but still, using our best judgment, we do, first of all, see that the text explains itself. Observe, “neither shall you suffer the salt of the Covenant of your God to be lacking from your meat offering.”

I. It appears, then, that salt was THE SYMBOL OF THE COVENANT. When God made a Covenant with David, it is written, “The Lord gave the kingdom to David forever by a Covenant of salt”—by which was meant that it was an unchangeable, incorruptible Covenant which would endure as salt makes a thing to endure, so that it is not liable to putrefy or corrupt. “The salt of the Covenant” signifies that whenever you and I are bringing any offering to the Lord, we must take care that we remember the Covenant. Standing at the altar with our gift, serving God with our daily service, as I trust we are doing, let us continually offer the salt of the Covenant with all our sacrifices. Here is a man who is doing good works in order to be saved. You are under the wrong Covenant, my Friend, you are under the Covenant of Works and all that you will gain in that way is a curse, for, “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them.” “Therefore,” says the Apostle, “as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse.” Get away from that and get to that other Covenant which has salt in it, namely, the Covenant of Grace, the New Covenant of which Christ is the Head! We must not come to God without the salt of faith in Christ, or our offerings will be a sort of antichrist. A man who is trying to save himself is in opposition to the Savior. He that thinks of the merits of his own good works, despises the merit of the finished work of Christ! He is offering to God that which has no salt with it and it cannot be received.

We need this salt of the Covenant in all that we do, in the first place, to preserve us from falling into legality. He that serves God for wages forgets the Word—“The gift of God is eternal life.” It is not wage, but gift, by which you are to live. If you forget that you are under a Covenant of pure Grace, in which God gives to the unworthy and saves those who have no claim to any Covenant blessing, you will get on legal ground. And, once on legal ground, God cannot accept your sacrifice. With all your offerings you shall offer the salt of the Covenant of Grace, lest you are guilty of legality in your offering.

The Covenant is to be remembered, also, that it may excite gratitude. Whenever I think of God entering into Covenant that He will not depart from me and that I shall never depart from Him, my love to Him overflows. Nothing constrains me to such activity and such zeal, in the cause of God, as a sense of Covenant love. Oh, the gratitude one feels for everything which comes to us by the Covenant of Grace! Remember the old Scottish wife who thanked God for the porridge and then thanked Him that she had a Covenant right to the porridge, since He had said, “Verily, you shall be fed”? Oh, it makes life very sweet to take everything from the hands of a Covenant God and to see in every mercy a new pledge of Covenant faithfulness! It makes life happy and it also inspires a Believer to do great things for his gracious God. Standing on Covenant ground we feel consecrated to the noblest ends!

This tends to awaken our devotion to God. When we remember that God has entered into Covenant with us, then we do not do our work for Him in a cold, chilly, dead way—neither do we perform it after a nominal, formal sort—for we say, “I am one of God’s covenanted ones.” He has made an everlasting Covenant with me, ordered in all things and sure; therefore my very soul goes after Him and this which I am about to do, though it is only to sing a hymn, or to bow my knees in prayer, shall be done intensely, as by one who is in covenant with God, who is, therefore, bound to serve with all his heart and with all his soul, and with all his strength. Covenanted service should be the best of service. The covenanting saints of old stopped not at death, itself, for Him to whom they were bound!

My time will not allow me to enlarge, but I pray the people of God will always keep the Covenant in view. That Covenant will claim the last accent of our tongues on earth. It shall employ the first notes of our celestial songs. Where are you if you are out of Covenant with God? You are under the curse of the Old Covenant if you are not under the blessing of the New! But if the Lord Jesus Christ has stood Surety on your behalf and made the Covenant sure to you, you will serve God with alacrity and delight—and He will accept your service as a sweet savor offering in Christ Jesus. That is the first meaning of the text.

II. But, secondly, salt is THE TOKEN OF COMMUNION. In the East, especially, it is the token of fellowship. When an Oriental has once eaten a man’s salt, he will do him no harm.

Whenever you are attempting to serve God, take care that you do it in the spirit of fellowship with God. Take care that you suffer not this salt to be lacking from your meat-offering. Offer it in fellowship with God.

And this is a very important point, though I cannot dwell upon it at any length. Beloved, we never serve God rightly, joyfully, happily, if we get out of fellowship with Him. “His servants shall serve Him and they shall see His face.” There is no serving God acceptably unless you see His face. Once you feel your love to God dying out and the Presence of God withdrawn from you, you can live by faith, but you cannot work with comfort. You must feel a sweet friendship with God or else you will not so heartily give yourself to God’s service as the saints of God ought to do. I want you to live always in the sense of God’s nearness to you. Live always in the delightful conviction that God loves you. Never be satisfied to have a doubt about your being one with Christ, or that you are dear to the heart of God. You cannot sing, you cannot pray, you cannot teach a Sunday school class—you cannot preach in a fit and proper style if you lose this salt of communion! You may limp, but you cannot run in the ways of God if your fellowship is broken. “The joy of the Lord is your strength.” Have plenty of this salt of fellowship to heap upon every oblation.

Then, feel fellowship with God as to all His purposes. Does God wish to save souls? So do I. Did Christ die to save souls? So would I live to save them. Can you say that? Does the Holy Spirit strive against sin? So would I strive against sin. Feel all this. Endeavor to run on parallel lines with God as far as the creature can keep pace with the Creator. And when you do—when all your aims and designs are the aims and designs of God— then, Brother, you will plow and you will sow—and you will reap with joy and gladness of heart! There must be this fellowship with God in His designs. This is the essential salt of sacrifice.

I would have you especially have fellowship with God in Christ Jesus. Does God love Jesus? So do we. Does God desire the Glory of His Son? So do we. Does God determine that His Son shall put down all power, authority, rule and be King? We, too, wish Him to reign over us and over all mankind. “Your Kingdom come” is our prayer, even as it is God’s will that the kingdoms of this world should become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

Now, if you can always work in fellowship with God, what a grand thing it will be! For lack of this, many workers know not their position and never realize their strength. We are laborers together with God. If we are in our right state, we take a brick to lay it on the wall and a Divine hand has lifted that brick. We use the trowel and it is the great Master Builder that grasps the tool. We wield the sword and the Captain of the Lord’s host is strengthening our arm and guiding our hand that we may do valiantly in the day of battle. What an honor to have the Lord working with us and by us!

But oh, Beloved, do not get out of fellowship with God! If you have done so, before you do another stroke of work for Him go and get into fellowship with Him. If I were captain of the host and I saw that you were out of fellowship and yet you were marching to the battle, I would say, “Brother, go back.” When we bring our sacrifice, we are to leave it till we are reconciled to our brother—and much more must we leave it till we have a sense of being reconciled to God. I cannot go on serving God if I do not know that I am His child. I cannot go on preaching to you if I have any doubt of my own salvation. At any rate, it would be very wretched work to preach of freedom while myself in chains! He preaches best who is at liberty and can, in his own person, tell the captives how Christ makes men free. When you know that you are in union with God—and when your heart feels a blessed friendship to Him—then it is, dear Friends, that your oblation will come up acceptably before Him and you can do your work as it ought to be done before Him.

III. But I must get your minds to another point. Salt is the EMBLEM OF SINCERITY. “With all your offerings you shall offer salt.” There must be an intense sincerity about all we do towards God.

I bade you note that you were not allowed to present honey before the Lord. I really wish that some of our Brethren who are over-done with honey, would notice that. There is a kind of molasses godliness which I can never stomach. It is always, “Dear this,” and, “Dear that,” and, “Dear the other,” and, “This dear man,” and, “That dear woman.” There is also a kind of honey-drop talk in which a person never speaks the plain truth. He speaks as familiarly as if he knew all about you and would lay down his life for you, though he has never set eyes on you before and would not give you a halfpenny to save your life! These people avoid rebuking sin, for that is “unkind.” They avoid denouncing error. They say, “This dear Brother’s views differ slightly from mine.” A man says that black is white and I say that it is not so. But it is not kind to say, “It is not so.” You should say, “Perhaps you are right, dear Brother, though I hardly think so.” In this style some men think that our sacrifice is to be offered! If they hear a sermon that cuts at the roots of sin and deals honestly with error, they say, “That man is very narrow-minded.”

Well, I have been so accustomed to be called a bigot that I, by no means, deny the charge! I feel no horror because of the accusation. To tell a man that if he goes on in his sin, he will be lost forever and to preach to him the Hell which God denounces against the impenitent is no unkindness! It is the truest kindness to deal honestly with men. If the surgeon knows very well that a person has a disease about him that requires the knife and he only says, “It is a mere trifle: I dare say that with a little medicine and a pill or two we may cure you,” a simpleton may say, “What a dear kind man!” But a wise man judges otherwise. He is not kind, for he is a liar! If, instead of that, he says “My dear Friend, I am very sorry, but I must tell you that this mischief must be taken out by the roots and, painful as the operation is, I beg you to summon courage to undergo it, for it must be done if your life is to be saved.”

That is a very unpleasant kind of person and a very narrow-minded and bigoted person—but he is the man for us! He uses salt and God accepts him—the other man uses honey and God will have nothing to do with him. When honey comes to the fire, it turns sour. All this pretended sweetness, when it comes to the test, turns sour—there is no real love in it. But the salt, which is sharp and when it gets into the wound makes it tingle, nevertheless does sound service.

Whenever you come before God with your sacrifices, do not come with the pretence of a love you do not feel, nor with the beautiful nonsense of hypocrites, but come before the Lord in real, sober, earnest truth. If you are wrong and feel it, say so, and out with it! And if God has made you right through His Spirit, do not deny it, lest you deny the work of the Holy Spirit and so dishonor Him.

What is meant is that in all our sacrifices we ought to bring our hearts with us. If we sing, let us sing heartily as unto the Lord—not with our voices only, but with our very souls! If we preach, let us preach with all our might—we have such precious Truth to handle that it ought not to be dealt with in a trifling manner. If we try to win a soul, let us throw our whole strength into the work. Though we would not scheme, like the Pharisees, to make a proselyte to our sect, yet let us compass sea and land to bring a man to Christ, for such we should do.

And when we bring our heart and throw it intensely into the service of God, which is one form of the salt, let us take care that all we do is spiritually performed—not done with the external hand, or lips, or eyes, but done with the soul, with the innermost heart of our being! Otherwise it will be mere flesh and, without salt, it will be viewed as corrupt and rejected at God’s altar.

When you attempt to pray and rise from your knees feeling that you have not prayed, then do not leave the Mercy Seat, but pray till you pray! When you are singing a hymn and do not feel quite in tune for singing, sing yourself into tune! Do not leave an ordinance till you have tasted the salt of that ordinance. I admire that resolution of John Bradford the martyr. He said that he made a rule that he never ceased from a holy engagement till he had entered into the spirit of it. Too often we treat these things lightly. There is no soul in them and yet we are satisfied with them. We eat our unsavory devotions without salt—and the Lord rejects them. We have had a few minutes in prayer in the morning and, perhaps, just a few weary minutes at midnight. We have run through a chapter, or perhaps we have taught a class on the Sabbath afternoon and taught it perfunctorily without any life and yet we have been content. Or we have preached, but it has been a mere saying of words—there has been no life or vigor in it.

Oh, do not so! Bring not to God your unsalted sacrifices, but let the salt of sincerity savor all. It is better to say, “I did not pray,” than it is to say, “I did pray,” and yet only to have gone through a form. It is better to have to confess, “I did not sing,” than to follow the tune when your heart is not in it. You had better leave off the external form than keep it up if your soul is not in it—lest you be found to mock the Most High God! Pile on the salt! Let it season the whole of your sacrifice through and through! Be sincere before the heart-searching God.

IV. Lastly, salt is THE TYPE OF PURIFYING POWER and with all our sacrifices we have need to bring a great deal of this salt. The salt eats into the meat. It drives away corruption. It preserves it. We require a deal of this. Brothers and Sisters, if we come before God with holy things while we are living in sin, we need not deceive ourselves—we shall not be accepted! If there is any man of whom it can be said that he is a saint abroad and a devil at home, God will estimate him at what he is at home— and not at what he is abroad. He may lay the sacrifice upon the altar, but if it is brought there with foul hands and an unholy heart, God will have nothing to do with it! “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord” and, certainly, without holiness can no man serve the Lord. We have our imperfections, but known and willful sin, God’s people will not indulge. From this God keeps them. As soon as they know a thing to be sin and their attention is called to it, that which they have committed in inadvertence causes them grief and sorrow of heart and they flee from it with all their souls.

But do not be deceived! You may be a great man in the Church of God and hold office there—and even be a leader—but if you lead an unholy life, neither you nor your sacrifice can ever be accepted by the Most High. God abhors that His priests should serve Him with unwashed hands and feet. “Be you clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.” I constantly preach to you free, rich and Sovereign Grace without the slightest condition—and I preach the same at this time. But remember that the Grace of God brings sanctification with it and that the gift of God is deliverance from sin—and if we abide in sin and remain in it, we cannot be the children of God! We must, dear Friends, bring with all our oblations that salt in ourselves which shall purify our hearts from inward corruption and which shall have a power about it to purify others. Know you not that the saints are the salt of the earth? And if we are salt to others, we must have salt in ourselves. How can we conquer sin in others if sin is unconquered in ourselves? How can we give a light we have never seen? How can we have seed as sowers if we have never had bread as eaters?

You know what the woman said concerning the well—“Father Jacob,” she said, “gave us the well and drank thereof himself.” You cannot give other people wells if you do not drink from this yourself! You cannot benefit a man by Grace if you are not first benefited by Grace yourself. Can anything come out of a man that is not in him? There must be a holy, sanctifying power about the child of God, making him to be as salt, or else he cannot act upon the putrid masses round him as the salt ought to do.

With all your oblations, then, bring this salt. God give it to us! Let us cry to Him for it! I bless God for this Church that God has made you a power in the neighborhood—that God is making you a power all over this country! Those hundreds of ministers who came up this week, whom we have educated here and whom all of you have helped to educate—are not these a purifying salt? Our Brothers and Sisters by thousands are scattered all over the world. Not a week passes without some of our number going far away and I always say, “Yes, go, dear Brethren. Salt should not remain in the box. It ought to be scattered all over the meat. Wherever you go, mind that you are salt, so that people do not say, ‘Is this one of the Tabernacle people? He is a poor, lukewarm creature.”’ Do not have it so, but do, now that God blesses you so largely, take care that the salt is in you all.

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” and I have no greater sorrow than this—that there are some among you who are no credit to your profession. There are some among you who do not live, even, as well as the world expects you to live. I mean not only poor ones, but rich ones among us are a dishonor to us. There are a few of all degrees among us who are not spiritually-minded but are worldly and carnal. They come to this place and sit among us with their faces turned towards Heaven while they, themselves, are going the way of the ungodly. They know what I mean while I speak it! God grant that they may bear the rebuke—and repent and turn to the Lord! They are looking one way and rowing another—trying to be the people of God, if they can, and yet, at the same time, acting as common sinners act!

The Lord bless you, Beloved, by making you all holy! And if you will not be holy, may He take that great fan into His hand and blow the chaff away! If it cannot be that this shall be a pure heap lying upon His floor to His honor and Glory, then may He still continue that great purgation which is always going on in every Church where He is really present! Brothers and Sisters, we must be holy! We must be holy, or else cease to be what we are. God bring us to this—that with every oblation we may offer huge handfuls of salt! May we always be accepted in Christ, accepted with our sweet savor—holy, acceptable to God because His Spirit has made us holy and keeps us right before Him. The Lord bless you always! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Ephesians 4.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—386, 623, 435.

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON  
DEAR FRIENDS—The severe weather in England has induced the officers of the Church at the Tabernacle to persuade me to remain in this sheltered spot for another week. I was reluctant to do this, but, at length, feeling myself very weak, I judged it to be the best economy to take the further rest. The little meditation at the Lord’s table, which is here given, will be followed by a similar one next week. And after that I hope to deliver the Word from my own pulpit. Again I beg my Readers’ prayers that I may return strong for service, anointed for high enterprise. With kindest regards to the thousands of my Brothers and Sisters.

Yours to serve.  
Mentone, January 16, 1887.  
*C. H. Spurgeon*

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Sermon #1048 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE SIN-OFFERING FOR THE COMMON PEOPLE  
NO. 1048

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 28, 1872, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And if any one of the common people sins through ignorance, while he does something against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done, and is guilty. Or if his sin, which he has sinned, comes to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has sinned. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay the sin offering in the place of the burnt offering. And the priest shall take of the blood thereof with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar. And the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savor unto the Lord; and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.” Leviticus 4:27-31.**

VERY much of interesting truth clusters around the sin-offering. The type is well worthy of the most careful consideration and I regret that we shall not have time, this morning, to enter into all its details. The reader of the chapter will perceive that it gives us four forms of the same sacrifice. These may be regarded as four views of the same thing, probably views taken by four classes of Believers according to their standing in the Divine life. Although all men who are saved have the same Savior, they have not the same apprehensions of Him. We are all cleansed, if cleansed at all, by the same blood, but we have not all the same knowledge of the manner in which it is effectual for cleansing.

The devout Hebrew had but one sin-offering, but that was set forth to him under varying symbols. The following remarks may aid you in understanding the type before us. The chapter begins with the sin-offering for the anointed priest, and describes it with the fullest detail. It then proceeds, in the 13th verse and onwards, to give the sin-offering for the whole congregation, and it is most notable that the sin-offering for the anointed priest is almost in every circumstance identical with the sinoffering for the whole congregation.

Is not this designed to show to us that when Christ, our anointed Priest, took upon Himself the sin of all the congregation of God’s chosen as His own there was demanded of Him the same expiation and atonement as would have been demanded of His people had they been reckoned with in their own persons? His Atonement for sins which were not His own, but which were laid upon Him by the Lord on our behalf, is equivalent to the penalty which would have been required of all the congregation of Believers for whom His blood was especially shed. This is a memorable lesson which ought not to be forgotten. We ought to see herein the inestimable value of the Sacrifice of Christ by which the many offenses of a number that no man can number are forever put away.

There was given, in the death of our Lord, as full a recompense to justice as if all the redeemed had been sent into Hell. No, the truth goes far further than that—they could not have made a complete expiation, for even had they suffered for sin for thousands of years, the debt would “still be paying, never paid.” Glory be to the name of our great Substitute! He by His sin-offering has perfected forever them that are set apart. In the case of the sin-offering for the priest we have a fuller picture of the atonement than is offered by the two latter instances, and you will please note that the sin-offering was a victim without blemish.

In the first two cases a bullock was to be slain. Thus the most precious animal the Hebrew owned, the noblest, the strongest—the image of docility and labor—was to be presented to make atonement. Our Lord Jesus Christ is like the firstling of the bullock, the most precious thing in Heaven, strong for service, docile in obedience, One who was willing and able to labor for our sakes—and He was brought as a perfect Victim, without spot or blemish, to suffer in our place. The priest slew the bullock, and its blood was poured forth, for without shedding of blood there is no remission. The vital point of the Atonement of Christ lies in His death. However much His life may have contributed to it, and we are not among those who, in the matter of salvation, separate His life from His death by a hard and fast line—yet the great point of the putting away of human guilt was the Lord’s obedience unto death, even the death of the Cross.

The victim was slain, and so the atonement was made. Returning to the passage before us, we find that the blood of this victim was taken into the Holy Place which was immediately outside the sacred veil of the sanctuary. And there the priest dipped his finger in the blood and sprinkled the blood seven times before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary. So in making atonement for sin there is a perfect exhibition of the blood of Jesus before the Lord. That life has been given for life is openly proven where alone the proof is available.

Before the offended Lord the vicarious death is thoroughly exhibited— for was it not written of old in the Book of Exodus, “When I see the blood I will pass over you”? Our sight of the blood Christ gives us peace, but it does not make the satisfaction—it is God’s seeing of the blood which makes the Atonement—and, therefore, seven times before the veil was this blood exhibited before the Lord, that a perfect atonement might be made. The next thing the priest did was to go up to the golden altar of incense which stood hard by the veil, and put some of the blood upon each one of the horns, indicating that it is the blood of the atonement which gives power (for that is the meaning of the horns) to intercession.

The sweet perfume of the altar of incense stands for the prayers and praises of the saints, and especially for the intercession of Christ Jesus, and, because the blood is there, Christ’s intercession is heard. And, therefore, our prayers and praises come up with acceptance before the Lord. Then the priest removed to the bronze altar of burnt sacrifice and all the blood which remained he poured out at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering which stood at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Full bowls of blood colored the base of the altar. Blood was seen on every side—on the veil, on the golden altar, and now upon the altar of brass. Within and without the Holy Place but one voice was heard—the voice of the blood of atonement crying to God for peace! The whole tabernacle must have been almost at all times so smeared with blood as to have been far from pleasant to the eye! This was intended to teach Israel that God’s anger against sin is terrible, and that the dishonored Law will be satisfied with nothing less than the giving of life for life, if sinners are to be saved. The altar of burnt offerings was the altar of acceptance—it was the place where those sacrifices were presented in which there was no mention of sin—but which were brought as thanksgivings to God. Therefore, as much as to teach us that the very ground and foundation of the acceptance of the Christian and his offering lies in the precious blood of Jesus, full bowls of blood were poured upon the base of the altar. See what wonders the precious blood of Jesus Christ can do! It is the strength of intercession and the foundation of acceptance!

From the bullock which had been slain certain choice pieces were taken—especially the inward fat—and these were laid upon the altar and consumed, to show us that even while the Lord Jesus was a sin-offering He has still accepted of God, and though His Father forsook Him so that He cried out, “Why have You forsaken Me?” He was still a sweet savor unto the Lord in the obedience which He rendered. But the most significant part of the whole sacrifice remains to be described, and you will notice that it is only described in the first two forms of the sinoffering. The priest was not allowed to burn the bullock, itself, upon the altar, but he was commanded to take up the whole carcass—its skin, flesh, head, and everything—and carry the whole forth outside the camp.

It was a sin-offering, and therefore it was loathsome in God’s sight. And the priest went right away from the door of the tabernacle, past all the tents of the children of Israel, bearing this ghastly burden upon him. Went, I say, right away, till he came to the place where the ashes of the camp were poured out—and there—not upon an altar, but on wood which had been prepared upon the bare ground, every single particle of the bullock was burned with fire. The distance the bullock was carried from camp is said to have been four miles. The tracking of which is just this— that when the Lord Jesus Christ took the sins of His people upon Himself, He could not, as a Substitute, dwell any longer in the place of the Divine favor, but had to be put into the place of separation, and made to cry, “Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani?”

Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews puts the matter clearly, “For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.” Outside Jerusalem our Lord was led to the common place of doom for malefactors, for it is written, (and oh, the power of those words, I dare not have uttered them if they had not been inspired), “He was made a curse for us, for it is written, cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” The blessed Son of God was made a curse for us and put to an accursed death by being hung upon the Cross—and all because sin anywhere is hateful to God, and He must treat it with indignation!

The fire of Divine Justice fell upon our blessed Sin-Offering until He was utterly consumed with anguish and He said, “It is finished,” and gave up the ghost. Now this is the only way of putting away sin—it is laid upon Another, and that Other is made to suffer as if the sin belonged to Him— and then, since sin cannot be in two places at once and cannot be laid upon Another and rest upon the offerer, too, the offerer becomes clear from all sin! He is pardoned and he is accepted because his Substitute has been slain outside the camp instead of him.

I have thus introduced to you the first two forms of the sin-offering. It seemed necessary to begin there. The third form of the sin-offering was for a ruler, a person of considerable standing in the camp. There is nothing very remarkable about that third form which needs now detain us. We, therefore, come to the subject in hand. The sin-offering for a common person.

I. And, here, we will begin our discourse upon the text itself by speaking of THE PERSON, a common person. It gives me unspeakable joy to read these words, “If any one of the common people sin,” for which one of the common people does not sin? The text reminds me that if a common person sins his sins will ruin him—he may not be able to do so much mischief by his sin as the ruler or a public officer—but his sin has all the essence of evil in it and God will reckon with him for it. No matter how obscurely you may live, however poor and unlettered you may be, your sin will ruin you if not pardoned and put away.

If one of the common people sins through ignorance, his sin is a damning sin. He must have it put away or it will put him away forever from the face of God. A common person’s sin can only be removed by an atonement of blood. In this case you see the victim was not a bullock—it was a female of the goats or of the sheep, but still it had to be an offering of blood—for without shedding of blood there is no remission. However commonplace your offenses may have been. However insignificant you may be yourself—nothing will cleanse you but the blood of Jesus Christ! That verse is quite correct—

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

It is true the sins of great men cover a larger space, but yet there must be a bloody Sacrifice for the smallest offenses. For the sins of a housewife or of a servant—of a peasant, or of a crossing-sweeper—there must be the same Sacrifice as for the sins of the greatest and most influential. No other Atonement will suffice. The sins of the common people will destroy them unless the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses them. But here is the point of joy—that for the common people there was an Atonement ordained of God! Glory be to God! I may be unknown to men, but I am not unthought-of by Him! I may be merely one of the many, but still He has thought of me. As each blade of grass has its own drop of dew, so each guilty soul coming to Christ shall find an Atonement for itself in Christ. Blessed be the name of the Lord—it is not written that there is a Sacrifice for the great ones of the earth, alone—but for the common people there is a Sin-Offering so that each man coming to the Savior finds cleansing through His precious blood!

Observe with thankfulness that the sacrifice appointed for the common people was as much accepted as that appointed for the ruler. Of the ruler, it is said, “the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.” The same thing is said of the common person. Christ is as much accepted for the poorest of His people as for the richest of them! He as much saves the unknown as He does the Apostolic names of high renown! They need the sacrifice of blood, but they need nothing more—and the blood which pleads before the Throne of God speaks as well for the least as it does for the chief of the flock!

Come here, then, you who belong to the common people! If any of you have sinned, come at once to Jesus, the great Sin-Offering! Though you are common in rank, know you not that the common people heard Him gladly? Publicans and sinners pressed around Him to hear Him! Though you are but commoners in your wealth, possessing little of this world’s goods, yet come, buy wine and milk without money and without price! Common in your talents and in your gifts, yet He bids you come, for these things are hid from the wise and prudent. It is not for those who think themselves distinguished that He has especially laid down His life, but, “the poor have the Gospel preached to them,” and in their salvation He will be glorified!

Mark it says, “If any one of the common people sin, through ignorance,” or if his sin, which he has sinned, comes to his knowledge, then he shall bring his offering.” Has it suddenly come to the knowledge of any person here that he has sinned as he thought he had not sinned? Has some fresh light broken in upon you and revealed to you your darkness? Did you come to this House depressed in spirit because you have discovered that you are guilty and must perish unless the mercy of God prevents it? Then come, you common people who have discovered your sin and bring your sacrifice! No, it is here already for you! Come and accept the Sacrifice which God provides, and let your sins be put away forever!

I wish the words of the text could provoke the same feelings in every heart that they do in mine, for I could gladly stand here and weep my soul away in joy that for the common people’s sin there should be a Sacrifice, for I can put my name down among them. I have sinned! I have come to the knowledge of my sin! And I thank God I need not ask myself any other question—be I who I may or what I am, though but one of the common people—there is a Sin-Offering for me!

II. Now, pass on from the person to THE SACRIFICE. “He shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has sinned.” Observe my Brothers and Sisters, that there is a discrepancy between the type and the reality, for first, the sin-offering under the Law was only for sins of ignorance. But we have a far better Sacrifice for sin than that, for have we not read in your hearing this morning those precious words, “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin”? Not from sins of ignorance only, but from all sin. Oh, that blessed word “all!” It includes sins of knowledge. Sins against the light and love of God. Sins wantonly perpetrated. Sins against man and against God. Sins of body and of soul. Sins of thought and word and deed. Sins of every rank and character. “Sins immense as is the sea”—all, ALL are removed—no matter what they are! “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

Yet do I bless God that the type deals with sins of ignorance because we may get a Gospel out of it. We have committed many sins which we know not. They have never burdened our conscience because we have not yet discovered them, and, besides, we do not know them to be sins. But Christ takes those sins, too, and prays, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” “Cleanse me,” said David, “from secret faults,” and that is just what Jesus does. It used to be a doctrine of the church of Rome that no man could have a sin forgiven which he did not confess. Truly, if it were so, there would be no salvation for any of us, since it is not possible for the memory to charge itself with the recollection of every sin, nor for the conscience to become so perfect as to take cognizance of every form of transgression!

But, while we ought to confess to God all sins which we know, and while we should confess them as much as can be in detail, yet, if through ignorance they remain unacknowledged, except in the gross and the bulk, Jesus Christ, the Sin-Offering bears our sins of ignorance—sins which we knew not to be sins when we committed them, or which we still know not to be sins. He takes them away! It must be so, for He “cleanses us from all sin”—sins of ignorance, as well as sins against light and knowledge.

Now, what comfort there is here for all you of the common people! Be your sins what they may, there is a Sin-Offering which takes away all sin from you however you may have defiled yourselves—though you are black as night and hideous as Hell—yet is there power in the atoning blood of the Incarnate God to make you white as newly-fallen snow! Washed once in the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, there shall remain upon you no trace of guilt! Note another discrepancy—the sinner of the common people, in this case, had to bring his sacrifice—“he shall bring his offering.” But our Sin-Offering has been provided for us.

You remember the question of Isaac to his father Abraham, as they went up Moriah? He asked him, “My Father, behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt-offering?” And Abraham said, “My Son, God will provide Himself a lamb.” Isaac’s enquiry might have been the eternal question of every troubled heart. “O God, where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” Who will bear human sin? But JEHOVAH JIREH GOD has provided Himself a Lamb for a Burnt-Offering and a Sin-Offering, too—and now we have not to bring a sacrifice for sin, but have simply to take what God provided from before the foundations of the world!

Now let us notice that in the type the victim chosen for a sin-offering was unblemished—whether a goat or a sheep—it must be unblemished. How could Christ make an Atonement for sins if He had had sins of His own? Had He been guilty, it would have required that He should suffer for His own guilt. But, being under no obligation whatever to the Law of God except such as He voluntarily undertook, when He had rendered obedience He had an obedience to give away, and He has graciously bestowed it upon us! When He suffered, His suffering not being due to God on account of anything that He had personally done, He had much suffering to spare—and He has transferred it to us. The Immaculate Christ has died, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God!

His is full of comforts, for if you will study, O seeking Soul, the perfect Character of your blessed Lord as God and as Man, and see how fairer than the lilies He is in matchless purity, you will feel that if He suffered there must be in such suffering a merit unspeakable which, being transferred to you, can save you from the wrath to come! In the dear Redeemer we have an unblemished Sacrifice! But I do not understand, and therefore, cannot explain why the victim was a female in this case, for most of the sacrifices were males of the first year—but this is peculiar in being a female. Is it because there is neither male nor female, bond nor free, but all are one in Christ Jesus?

Or, am I wrong if I conjecture that this was intended to typify a view of Christ taken by one of the common people, and therefore it is purposely made incomplete? It is an incomplete view of Christ to have before you the female as the type, and the type is purposely made incomplete in order that this Truth of God may lie before us—that while a complete view of Christ is very comforting, instructive and strengthening, yet even an imperfect view of Him will save us if accompanied by real faith. If we should make a mistake upon some point, yet, if we are clear upon the main Truth of His Substitution, it is well with us.

On purpose, then, it seems to me that a victim was introduced which did not, with exactness, set forth Christ so that the Lord might say to His people and to us, “You have not reached the perfect conception of My dear Son, but even an imperfect apprehension of Him will save you if you believe in Him.” Who among us knows much of Christ? Oh, Brothers and Sisters, we know enough to make our hearts love Him! We know enough of Him to make us feel that we owe all to Him, and we desire to live for His Glory. But He is far greater than our greatest thoughts! We have only skirted the shores and navigated the little bays and creeks of Christ—we have not sailed out into the main ocean, nor fathomed the great deeps as yet. Yet what little we know of Him has saved us, and for His dear sake we are forgiven and accepted in the Beloved!

Does not the Lord seem to say to us, “Poor Souls, you have misconceived My Son and made many mistakes about Him—but you do trust Him, and I save you.” A certain woman thought that there was power in the hem of Jesus’ garment to make her whole. She was mistaken in imagining that there was a healing efficacy in His garment—but since it was a mistake of faith and reflected honor upon Christ, the Lord made it true to her—He made virtue go out of Himself even into the hem of His garment for her sake! And so, though we may err here and err there in reference to our Lord, yet if our soul does but cling to Him like a child to its mother, knowing little of its mother except that its mother loves it— and that it is dependent upon her—that clinging will, by His Grace, be saving.

But the main point about the sacrifice was it was slain as a substitute. There is nothing said about its being taken outside the camp—I do not think it was in this case—all that the offerer knew was it was slain as a substitute. And, dear Hearers, all and everything that is essential to know in order to be saved is to know that you are a sinner and that Christ is your Substitute. I beseech the Lord to teach every one of us this, for though we should go to the University and learn all knowledge—though we should ransack all the stores of learning, unless we know this—“He loved me and gave Himself for me,” we have not learned the very first principles of a true education for eternity. God gives us to know this, this very day.

III. But, now thirdly, we pass on from the sacrifice to THE AFTER CEREMONIES upon which only a word. In the case of one of the common people, after the victim was slain the blood was taken to the bronze altar and the four horns of it were smeared to show that the power of fellowship with God lies in the blood of substitution. There is no fellowship with God except through the blood. There is no acceptance with God for anyone of us except through Him who suffered in our place.

And then, secondly, the blood was thrown at the feet of this same bronze altar as if to show that the atonement is the foundation as well as the power of fellowship. We get nearest to God when we feel most the power of the blood. Yes, and we could not come to God at all except it were through that bloody way. After this, a part of the offering was put upon the altar, and it is said concerning it what is not said in any other of the cases, “the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savor to the Lord.” This common person had, in most respects, a dim view of Christ, compared with the others, but yet there were some points in which he had more light than others, for it does not say of the priest that what he offered was a sweet savor.

But, for the comfort of this common person, that he might go his way having sweet consolation in his soul, he is told that the sin-offering he has brought is a sweet savor unto God. And oh, what a joy it is to think not only has Christ put away my sin if I believe in Him, but now, for me, He is a sweet savor to God and I am for His sake accepted—for His sake beloved, for His sake delighted in—for His sake precious unto God! When God had destroyed the earth by the Flood and Noah came out of the ark, you will remember that he offered a sacrifice unto God and it is said, “The Lord smelled a sweet savor,” or a savor of rest—and then He said I will no more destroy the earth with a flood and He entered into a Covenant with Noah.

Oh, happy is that soul that can see Christ, his Sin-Offering, as being a savor of rest unto the Lord Most High so that a Covenant of Grace is made with him—a Covenant of sure mercies that shall never be removed! But I must pass on again.

IV. The fourth point is one to which I ask all your heart’s attention. I have purposely omitted mentioning why the sacrifice in order to enlarge upon it now. Please observe that in all four cases there was one thing which was never left out, “He shall lay his hand upon the head of the sinoffering.” It was no use killing the bullock. It was no use slaying the heifer. No use pouring out the blood or smearing the horns of the altar unless this was done. The guilty person must come, and must himself lay his hands upon the victim. Oh, that while I speak of this, some of you may lay your hands upon Christ Jesus according to the verse of the poet—

*“My faith does lay her hand  
On that dear head of Yours,  
While like a penitent I stand,  
And there confess my sin.”*  
Now that act of laying on the hand signified confession. It meant just this—“Here I stand as a sinner and confess that I deserve to die. This goat which is now to be slain represents in its sufferings what I deserve of God.” O Sinner, confess your sin now unto your great God! Acknowledge that He would be just if He condemned you! Confession of sin is a part of the meaning of laying on of the hand. The next thing that was meant by it was acceptance. The person laying his hand said, “I accept this goat as standing for me. I agree that this victim shall stand instead of me.” That is what faith does with Christ—it puts its hand upon the ever-blessed Son of God, and says, “He stands for me, I take Him as my Substitute.” The next meaning of it was transference. The sinner standing there confessing, putting his hand on the victim and accepting it, did by that act, say, “I transfer, according to God’s ordinance, all my sin which I here confess, from myself to this victim.” By that act the transference was made. You know there is a blessed passage which says, “the Lord has laid on Christ the iniquity of us all.” From this expression an objection has been revised to that blessed hymn—  
*“I lay my sins on Jesus.”*  
Yet I think the expression is quite correct. Cannot both utterances be true? God did lay sin in bulk upon Christ when He laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. But, by an act of faith every individual, in another sense, lays his sins on Jesus, and it is absolutely necessary that each man should so do if he would participate in the substitution.  
Now, do observe, I pray you, that this was a personal act. Nobody could lay his hand upon the bullock, or upon the goat, for another—each one had to put his own hand there. A godly mother could not say, “My graceless boy will not lay his hand upon the victim, but I will put my hand there for him.” It could not be. He who laid his hand there had the blessing, but no one else! Had the godliest saint with holy but mistaken zeal said, “Rebellious man, will you not put your hand there, I will act as sponsor for you,” it had been of no avail! The offender must personally come. And so, dear Hearer, must you have a personal faith in Christ for yourself.  
The word is sometimes interpreted to mean, and some give it the meaning, of leaning hard. What a blessed view of faith that gives us. Sometimes, according to the Rabbis, those who brought the victim leaned with all their might and pressed upon it as if they seemed to say by the act, “I put the whole burden, weight and force of my sin upon this unblemished victim.” O my Soul, lean hard on Christ! Throw all the weight of your sin upon Him, for He is able to bear it and came on purpose to bear it—and He will be honored if you will lean heavily on Him! And, Beloved, what a simple act it was! The man who would not be absolved from sin in this way deserved to perish—there was nothing but to lay his hand, nothing but to lean—how could he refuse?  
Faith in Christ is no mystery—no problem needing to be explained in long treatises—it is simply trust Him! Trust Him! Trust Him and you are saved! “There is life in a look at the Crucified One.” “Look unto Him, and be you saved all the ends of the earth.” Nothing can be plainer—nothing can be simpler—why is it that so many puzzle themselves where God has given us simplicities? It must be that God made man upright, but he has found out many inventions with which to bewilder himself. The laying on of the hand was the act of a sinner. He came there because he had sinned and because his sin had come to his knowledge.  
Had he been sinless there would have been no meaning in his bringing a sin-offering. Innocence needs not a substitute or sacrifice for sin. The sin-offering is evidently for the man who has sin, and what if I say there is no soul here to whom Christ is so suitable as the soul that is most full of sin? You that are a great, big, evil sinner—a thoroughpaced sinner, a damnable sinner—you are the very sinner to come to Christ and glorify His Grace! He is a Physician who did not come into this world to cure finger aches, and pinpricks, but to heal great diseases, loathsome leprosies, and burning fevers! Come, you Sinner of the common people, come and rest alone on Jesus! I wish I knew how to speak of this theme so as to move your souls.  
Within a few months or years at the longest, we shall all be before the bar of God—and what if some of us should be there with our sins upon us? I am afraid some of you will be there unforgiven. O you to whom I have so often spoken, will you be there unpardoned? I shall not be able to make excuses for you there and say you did not know the way of salvation, for I have preached it with great plainness of speech. I have often cast aside language which contended itself to my taste, to use, instead, more homely words, lest one of you should miss my meaning. God knows I have often forsaken tracks of thought which opened before me, and which might have interested many of my hearers, because I have felt while so many of you are unsaved, I must keep on plowing with simplicity and sowing elementary Truths of God!  
I am evermore telling over and over again the story of the substitutionary work of the Lord Jesus. What? Do you hate your souls so much that you will damn them to spite Christ? Is there such a hatred between you and yourself that you will reject God’s own Sacrifice for sin? You cannot say it is difficult for you to avail yourself of the death of Jesus. It is but to lay your hand of faith on that dear head! What enmity must there be in your hearts that you will not be reconciled to God even when He makes the reconciliation by the death of His own dear Son! To what a pitch has man’s rebellion against his Maker gone, when, sooner than be at peace with Him, he will reject eternal love and will forever ruin his own soul!  
Oh, may God grant that some this morning may say, “I will stretch out my hand, I will trust in Jesus!” You see that the hand to be stretched out is an empty one and the heart which leans may be a fainting one. Weakness and sinfulness find strength and pardon by taking Jesus to be their All-in-All.  
V. The last word I have to speak to you makes the fifth head, namely, THE ASSURED BLESSING. Turn to your Bibles, at the 31st verse. Let every soul here that is conscious of sin read those last lines—“and it shall be forgiven him.” There is the sacrifice. The man must put his hand upon it. The sacrifice is slain, and, “his sin shall be forgiven him.” Was not that plain speaking? There were no ifs, no buts, no perhaps—but—“it shall be forgiven him.”  
Now, in those days it was only one sin, the sin confessed, that was forgiven. But now “all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.” In those days the forgiveness did not give the conscience abiding peace, for the offerer had to come with another sacrifice by-and-by. But now the blood of Christ blots out all the sins of Believers at once and forever—so that there is no need to bring a new sacrifice or to come a second time with the blood of Atonement in our hands. The sacrifice of the Jew had no intrinsic value. How could the blood of bulls and goats take away sin? It could only be useful as a type of the true Sacrifice, the SinOffering of Christ.  
But in our Lord Jesus there is real efficacy. There is true Atonement. There is real cleansing and whoever believes in Him shall find actual pardon and complete forgiveness at this very moment. What a joy it is to know that—  
*“The moment a sinner believes  
And trusts in his crucified God,  
His pardon at once he receives,  
Salvation in full through His blood.”*  
I delight to believe that of Christ Jesus, Kent’s verse is true—  
*“Here’s pardon for transgressions past,  
It matters not how black their cast,  
And oh, my Soul, with wonder view,  
For sins to come here’s pardon too.”*  
Our sins were all laid on Christ in one bulk, and were all put away at one time. Woe unto any man who should have to take his sins upon himself as they come! The blessing is that as our sins are committed they are still laid on Jesus, according to the words of the Psalmist, “Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whom there is no guile.” The Believer sins, but the Lord imputes not his sin to him—he lays it still upon the Scapegoat’s head who bore our sins of old, even Christ Jesus our Savior! The meat of all my discourse is this—if there is a child of God here who is in the dark and burdened with sin—dear Brother, dear Sister—do not stand controverting with the devil as to whether you are a child of God or not! Do not be going over your experience and saying, “I am afraid I am a hypocrite and I have been deceived.” But, for the moment, suppose the worst. Let the devil take for granted his accusations, and then reply to him in words like those of Martin Luther— “You say I am a great sinner and a law-breaker, and all this, to which I reply I will cut your head off with your own sword, for what if I am a sinner? It is written Jesus Christ came to save sinners and I rest my soul as a sinner simply upon Him.” I like beginning again. The best way to get back lost evidences is to leave the evidences alone and go again to Jesus. Evidences are very like a sundial—you can tell what time it is if the sun is shining, but not if it isn’t! And truly, a man of experience can tell the time of day without the sundial if he can but see the sun itself. Evidences are clearest when Jesus is near, and that is just the time when we do not need them!  
Here is God’s direction for acting when under a cloud. “If any walk in darkness and see no light, let him”—what? Fret about his evidences? No, “let him trust,” there is the end of it—“let him trust in the Lord and obey the voice of His Servant,” and the light will soon come to him. Come away, O burdened Believer, to the Sin-Offering! “If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father.” The fountain that was opened for sin and for uncleanness was not opened for the unregenerate only, but for the people of God, for it was opened “in the house of David,” for the “inhabitants of Jerusalem,” that is, for those who are God’s people.  
If there is a poor soul here who has never believed in Jesus but is burdened with sin, I invite him, and I pray God the Holy Spirit to make the invitation effectual, to come now to Jesus Christ. I think that when I was seeking the Savior if I had been in this congregation and had heard Christ set forth as bearing sin as a Substitute, and heard the plain talk you have listened to this morning, I would have found peace immediately. Instead of which I was months and months hunting after peace because I did not know this—that I had nothing to do, for Christ had done it all— and all I had to do was to take what Christ had done and simply trust in Him!  
Now that you know it, oh, may God add something to your knowledge! May He give you power to lay your hand on Jesus! Lean on Him, Soul! Lean on Him! If you cannot lean, fall back into His arms! Faint away upon the bosom of the Savior! Trust Him! Rest in Him! It is all He asks of you! And then faith shall justify you and cleanse you, and shall give you sanctification, and by-and-by perfection, and shall bring you into His eternal Kingdom and Glory. The Lord bless you, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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LAYING THE HAND ON THE SACRIFICE  
NO. 2840

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JULY 19, 1903.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 12, 1877.

**“And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering.” Leviticus 4:29.**

I MIGHT have taken as my text several other verses in the same chapter, for they all express the same idea as the words I have just read to you. For the sake of emphasis, let me ask you to look at the 4th verse. When a priest had committed sin and brought a sin offering unto the Lord, it is written, “He shall bring the bullock unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord; and shall lay his hand upon the bullock’s head.” The 15th verse tells us that when the whole congregation of Israel had sinned through ignorance, the Lord said to Moses, “The elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the Lord.” Then, in the 24th verse, we read that when a ruler had sinned through ignorance and brought his sin offering, “He shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before the Lord.” And, in the 33rd verse, you find that if a common person had committed a sin through ignorance, or if his sin should come to his knowledge, he was to bring a sin offering and then it was added, “He shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering.”

Any one of those verses would, therefore, have sufficed for a text. It seems to have been a necessary part of the proceedings that when a sin offering was presented to the Lord, to be offered up before Him, the offerer should first of all lay his hand upon the head of the animal devoted to this sacred purpose.

I hope I am addressing many persons who wish to know more about the way and plan of salvation and who are anxious to partake in the benefits of Christ’s atoning Sacrifice. Possibly they are saying, “We know that there is a Savior for sinners, but how can He be ours? We know that an Atonement has been made for sin, but how can that Atonement really put away our sin so that we may be pardoned and accepted by God?” This is a very natural question and a very proper one. It would be well if it were most solemnly and seriously asked by all who, as yet, remain without being partakers of the blessings which are stored up for us in Christ Jesus.  
Beloved Friends, it will be all in vain, so far as we are personally concerned, “that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” unless He shall save us. It will be of no avail to us that Jesus shed His precious blood unless that blood washes away our guilt. It will increase, rather than diminish our misery if we hear that others are saved as long as we ourselves remain unsaved. If we are finally lost, it will not make our lot in Hell anymore tolerable if we discover that there was a Propitiation for sin, although we never had a share in its expiatory effects. Of all questions in the world, it seems to me that this is the most urgent and pressing one—and that we ought not to rest until we get it satisfactorily answered and put into practice—“How can I be a partaker in the eternal life which Jesus Christ came into the world to procure for sinners by His death?”

Some of you have up to now totally neglected this question. If you had noticed, in The Times, an advertisement stating that somebody’s next of kin was wanted, and you had suspicion that you were the person to whom the notice referred, I guarantee you that you would not have let the grass grow under your feet—you would have been quick enough to secure the fortune which had been left by your relative! But now that Jesus Christ has died and left a wondrous legacy of Grace among the sons of men, you have allowed a good many years to roll over your head without making an eager and earnest search into the question whether there is anything for you! You have seen a great many persons saved all around you, yet you remain unsaved. You have some of your dear ones who are in Heaven, but you are not pursuing the path which will lead you there and, all this while you have not had the excuse, which many have had, of never having heard that there was a great Savior and great salvation to be had without money and without price!

If you could plead such an excuse as that, it would be better for you than it is now, when you are sinning against light and knowledge in neglecting that which would is most of all for your spiritual and eternal good. Be wise, therefore! You have been trifling far too long! Be serious and bend your whole mind to the earnest consideration at this allimportant question, “How can I obtain salvation? How can I get it here and now? How can sin be pardoned? How can my sins be pardoned right now? I have long heard of Christ—how can I come into vital communion with Him? I know that—

*“‘There is a fountain filled with blood,*

*Drawn from Immanuel’s veins’—*  
“but how can I be washed therein so that I, personally, may become whiter than snow?”

My text says that the guilty person who brought the sin offering laid his hand upon its head. And this act gives a pictorial and symbolical answer to your questions and tells you how you can come into communion with Christ—and how His great Sacrifice can become available for you. You have to do to Christ, spiritually, what these Hebrews did literally! You have to imitate their action and so carry out those words of Dr. Watts which we often sing—

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

I shall speak of only two things which we may learn from my text. The first is the intent of this symbol. And the second is, the simplicity of the symbol—this laying of the hand of the offerer upon the head of the victim presented by him to God as a sin offering.

I. First, then, let me try to explain THE INTENT OF THE SYMBOL. What did it mean? These things, of which I shall speak in explaining this symbol, are necessary in order that Christ should become yours. Follow me very carefully and prayerfully, dear Friend, if you do, indeed, desire to be saved, for it may be that the Lord will lead you into Everlasting Life even while I am speaking. I pray that He may do so!

The first meaning of this laying of the hand upon the head of the sacrifice is this—it was a confession of sin. The offering was a sin offering— but for sin it would not have been needed! The man who came and laid his hand on the head of the sin offering, acknowledged, by that act and deed, that he was a sinner. If there had been anyone who was not a sinner, he would have had no right to be there. A sin offering, for a person who had sin, would have been a superfluity—why should he bring a sin offering to the Lord? So, dear Friends, if you have no sin, you are not fit subjects for Christ’s saving power and Grace. If you are not guilty, you do not need forgiveness. If you have never transgressed the Law of God, you need not come before Him with a sin offering! Only remember that if you do think so, you are under one of the most sorrowful delusions that ever entered the brain of a madman! You are deceiving yourself, depend upon it! If you say that you have no sin, the Truth of God is not in you. But he who brought a sin offering before the Lord said, in effect, “This is what I need, for I am a sinner. I need to have my sins taken away for I am guilty in the sight of God. So I put my hand upon this lamb, or goat, or bull which is about to die, thereby confessing that I need a sacrifice in order that the sin which I confess that I have committed, may be put away.”

Are you reluctant to confess that you are a sinner? If so, I pray very earnestly that you may speedily get rid of that reluctance. God does not ask you to confess your sins to any man. It would be a shame for you to do so, for you would pollute that man, whoever he might be, if you poured into his ear the sad tale of your filthiness and sin! God does not ask you to do any man the serious wrong of whispering into his ear the foul story of your transgressions. It is not to your fellow creature, but to your God, that you are to confess your sin! Go straight to Him and say, as the prodigal said to his father, “I have sinned against Heaven, and in Your sight.” What makes you so slow to do that? Do you imagine that He does not know about your sin? Do you think that you can hide anything from Him? That is impossible, for “all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” Is it your pride that keeps you from confessing your sin? How can you hope that God will forgive you if you will not acknowledge that you have sinned against Him?

Think how you act towards your own children. How ready you are to again clasp them to your bosom when they have offended against you! Yet you watch to see in them signs of relenting and repenting. So does the Lord your God watch for tokens of contrition and godly sorrow in you! Why, “take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.” Are you not willing to do this? Then, alas, you lack the first requisite for obtaining acceptance through Christ! How can you, who will not admit that you have sinned, lay your hand upon the head of the sin offering?

He who thus confessed his sin confessed also that he deserved to die, just as that victim was about to be slain. There stood the priest, with his sacrificial knife, ready to slay the innocent beast and the basin in which to catch the blood of the bull, or goat, or lamb—whichever it might be that was being offered—and he who laid his hand upon its head, thereby said, “This poor animal is about to die and to pour out its blood. And this reminds me that I deserve punishment from God. If He were to destroy me, He would be perfectly justified in doing so.” Soul, will you say that? Are you willing to humble yourself in the dust and to say that? Will you put the rope about your neck and confess that you deserve the extreme penalty that the great Judge can inflict? If so, you have begun well, for he who will confess his guilt and will acknowledge that he deserves the punishment of death for it has begun to put his hand upon the head of the great Sacrifice for sin!

Follow me a step further and I trust that we may rejoice together that you, poor, guilty, self-condemned soul, have found deliverance through the one Sacrifice which God has provided for the putting away of sin. In the second place, the laying of the hand upon the head of the sin offering was a consent to the plan of substitution. He who had brought the victim laid his hand upon its head and, though he did not say so, yet his actions, being interpreted, meant, “God has ordained that this animal should take my place and I accept the Divine appointment right heartily. I agree with Him that I should be pardoned through the offering of a sacrifice and that I should be accepted by God by reason of the shedding of the blood of a sacrificial victim.” Now, what say you to this plan, O Man? If the Jew was willing to let the death of the bull, or the goat, or the lamb typically stand for his own death, are you willing, with all your heart, to accept God’s plan of salvation by the substitution of His only-begotten Son suffering and dying in your place?

Surely you will not quarrel with this method of saving you if God sees it to be the right one! Whenever my conscience has raised any question about the justice of this arrangement, it has always been quite a sufficient answer for me to say that if the thrice-holy Jehovah feels that the Sacrifice of Christ, in the place of sinners, is enough to vindicate His Justice, I may well be satisfied with what satisfies Him. Indeed, to question the righteousness of that method of saving the lost is to assail God upon a matter which lies very near His heart and to attack that wondrous plan of Redemption which is the last and highest display of all His Divine attributes—for the system of Substitution is the apex of the pyramid of God’s Revelation, the very highest point of the great mountain chain in which He has manifested His Wisdom, Power, Love, Mercy and even His Justice to the sons of men—“that He might be just, and the Justifier of him who believes in Jesus.” O Soul, if the Lord, who is offended, is satisfied with the Expiation offered, you, certainly, need not be so foolish as to raise questions concerning it or to quibble at it!

Besides, if you will but think seriously about this matter, you will see that the Justice of God is abundantly honored by Christ’s standing in your place. There is a well-known story of a school master who had one boy in his school whom he could not keep in order by any ordinary discipline. He had threatened to punish him and, indeed, he had done so again and again, but still he remained incorrigible. At last he threatened that if a certain form of disobedience should be repeated, he would be publicly beaten. The time soon came for the fulfillment of the threat, but the master could not bear that the boy should be punished, yet, at the same time, he felt that the honor of the school and the maintenance of his own authority in it required that it should be so. He told the lads that he was willing to spare the erring one, “yet,” he said, “discipline will be at an end, my word will be broken, you will never believe in me again and, moreover, the school will be dishonored by this boy being allowed to act as he does without punishment.”

Musing for a minute, he took down the ruler, put it into the hand of the disobedient boy and then held out his own hand, bade the boy strike and he received the punishment that was due to the culprit. The effect produced upon the boy was not a matter of surprise to those who know what fervent love will do. He offended no more and the school was maintained in the highest possible condition of discipline. This is a faint picture of what God has done. In the Person of His well-beloved Son, He says, “I will suffer because you are guilty. Somebody must be punished for your sin and if you suffer the just penalty for your evil deeds, it will crush you to the lowest Hell. You cannot endure it, but I, Myself, will bare My shoulders to receive the stripes which are your due. I will take upon Myself your sins. My Law shall have a terrible yet complete vindication—I shall be just and yet I shall be able to fully and freely forgive you and to accept you.” Nothing ever displayed all the attributes of God so gloriously and especially His Immutable Justice, as the atoning death of His well-beloved and only-begotten Son! So, Beloved let there be no question about your assenting to the plan of Substitution. God is content with it. You yourself can see how it honors Him, so be satisfied with it! Do not be a skeptic, doubting and questioning.

There is an old proverb which says, “Don’t quarrel with your bread and butter,” but I may with even greater emphasis say, “Do not quarrel with your own salvation.” If I must quibble at anything, surely I will not quibble against my own soul and try to prove that I cannot be saved, putting my wits to work to show the absurdity of God’s way of saving me! Oh, never, never let this be the case with you! But rather cheerfully accept what Infinite Wisdom has arranged!

Thus, you see, that the laying of the hand of the offerer on the head of the sacrifice meant the confession of sin and consent to the way of salvation by substitution. It also meant a great deal more than that.

In the third place, it meant the acceptance of that particular victim in the sinner’s place. By laying his hand upon it, he practically said, “This animal is to stand instead of me.” Here is the main point, the essential point of the whole matter. Will you accept Christ as standing in your place—the Divine yet Human Savior, perfect in His Humanity, yet also perfect in His Deity? He has lived. He has suffered. He has died. He has risen again. He has gone back into Glory at His Father’s right hand. God has honored Him with full acceptance—will you also accept Him? The root of the matter lies there! Oh, may His blessed Spirit sweetly guide your will so that you shall say, as I do, “Accept Him? Ah, blessed be His holy name that He permits me to accept Him! Surely I will do so. I will trust Him—He shall be mine.” If you have done so, then He is yours, for that is all He asks of you—to receive Him, to lay your hand upon Him and say, “There! Jesus Christ shall be the Sacrifice for me! I will rest in Him and in Him alone.”

I hope that I do not need to multiply words in urging this decision upon you. I trust that the softening influence of the Holy Spirit is already at work among you, leading some of you who have delayed until now, to say, “We will accept Jesus as our Substitute and accept Him now.” Why should you delay any longer to stretch forth your hand and lay it upon Jesus, by faith, even as the offerer laid his hand upon the head of the sacrifice?

But this laying on of the hand meant even more than that, though that was the very essence of it all. It also meant a belief in the transference of the sin. He who laid is hand upon the sin offering did, as it were, as far as he could, put his sin from himself on that bull, or goat, or lamb which was about to die, because it had become the sinner’s substitute. That laying on of his hand was a token of the transference of his guilt to the appointed victim and if you will have Christ to be your Savior, you must believe that He, “His own Self, bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” Do you believe this? Then, see what follows from it. Sin cannot be in two places at one time—if it is laid upon Jesus, it is taken off of you! If you do, in your very soul, accept Christ as your Substitute, then it is clear that the Lord has laid upon Him your iniquity and, therefore, your iniquity has passed away from you and your sin is gone forever! Christ has taken all your iniquities and carried them away where they shall never be mentioned against you anymore!

Oh, what a blessed Truth this is! If a man, who has been blind for 50 years could have his eyes opened, and could be taken out to see the stars, or to look up to the sun, how he would clap his hands and cry, “What a wondrous sight it is!” And I know that when I first perceived that Christ stood in my place and that I stood in His place—that I was accepted because He was rejected, that I was Beloved because He endured His Father’s wrath on my account—my soul felt as if it had never lived before and had never known anything that was worth knowing till it perceived that wondrous Truth! The Lord give you, dear Heart, to perceive that it is even so in your case, for then you, also, will be truly glad.

That laying of the hand on the head of the sin offering also meant one thing more—it was dependence, a leaning on the victim. According to the Rabbis, the offerer was to lean with great pressure upon the bullock or the goat. If it was so, there is great significance about that act, for it teaches that you should depend like that upon Jesus—lean hard upon Him, lean with all your weight of sin, and all your load of iniquity, upon Him whom God has appointed to stand in the sinner’s place. Accept Him as your Substitute, lean upon Him, rest upon Him. Say in your soul, “If I perish,” though that can never be, “I will perish leaning upon Christ. He shall be my soul’s only Dependence.”

The Puritans speak of faith as a recumbency, a leaning. It needs no power to lean—it is a cessation from our own strength and allowing our weakness to depend upon another’s power. Let no man say, “I cannot lean.” It is not a question of what you can do, but a confession of what you cannot do and a leaving of the whole matter with Jesus! No woman could say, “I cannot swoon”—it is not a matter of power. Die into the life of Christ! Let Him be All-in-All while you are nothing at all!

“Well,” says one, “but I can hardly think that I shall be saved simply by depending upon Christ.” Then, let me tell you that this was all that any of the saints of old ever had to depend upon—and this is all that any of the children of God who are now alive, have to depend upon! I bear my own personal testimony that my only hope for everlasting life lies in the death of Him who suffered in my place! I have trusted in Him, I have accepted Him as standing in my place. Gladly have I seen my sin transferred to Him and His righteousness transferred to me! I have no other hope, nor even the shadow of another hope! Prayers, tears, repentance, preaching, almsgiving, yes, and faith itself—all these put together are nothing at all as a ground of dependence for the soul! It is the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, the one great Substitute for sinners, upon which we all must rely. There, Soul, if you have nothing else to depend upon, you have as much as I have! And if you accept Jesus Christ to be your Savior, you have the same hope that I have. I will even dare to be bondsman for you and to perish with you if you can perish trusting is Christ! But that can never be. As this blessed Book is true, and as Christ ever lives, there is not a soul, that shall rely upon Him, whom He will not assuredly bless and pardon here below and take to Himself to dwell in His bosom forever and ever in Heaven!

There you see what is the intent of the laying of the hand upon the head of the sin offering. If you have been helped to follow me thus far—if you have really laid your hand upon Christ—I bless and praise the name of the Lord!

II. Now I have only a few minutes left for speaking, in the second place, upon THE SIMPLICITY OF THIS SYMBOL. What was required was just the laying of the hand of the offerer upon the victim’s head—that and nothing more.

Notice that there was no preparatory ceremony. There was the animal provided for a sacrifice, just as God has provided our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to be the Lamb of God. And the one thing to be done was for the sinner to lay his hand upon the head of the sacrifice. In like manner, there is no preliminary ceremony needed before coming to Christ. This is the first thing, Sinner, that you have to do, simply lay your hand upon Him and say, “He is mine.” “But must I not be prepared in a certain way, so that I may come to Him aright? Must I not do, or feel, or be something?” No, the Cross is at the head of the Way of Life—it is the true wicket gate which leads unto Everlasting Life. Believing in Jesus is the first thing you have to do—you live not until you believe in Him. Come, then, to Jesus! Come now! The first thing for you to do is to accept Him as your Substitute and to rely wholly upon Him.

You also perceive, dear Friends, that the hand that was to be laid upon the head of the sacrifice had nothing in it. The man who came thus to confess his guilt, did not bring a silver shekel or talent of gold in his hand. That was not at all necessary. All he had to do was to lay his hand upon the sin offering and, in like manner, you must say, with Toplady—

*“Nothing in my hand I bring—  
Simply to Your Cross I cling.”*

And, as there was to be nothing in the hand of the sinner, so there was to be nothing on his hand. If he had a dozen diamond rings on his fingers, he could not lay his hand on the bull’s head any the better. He who had no ornament at all could do it just as well! And if you have no virtues, no excellences—if you are poor, if you are illiterate, if you have even lost your character—if your hand is a foul hand, a black hand, yet if you lay it, by faith, upon the head of Jesus Christ, if you take Him to be your Savior, you have made the all-important decision—

*“‘Tis done, the great transaction’s done!”*You are your Lord’s, and He is yours, for, “he that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” He has it already in present possession, so let him go in peace, rejoicing in the blessing that he has received from the Substitute and Savior!

Observe, too, that there was nothing to be done with that hand except to lay it on the head of the sacrifice. There were to be no mystic crossings or moving to and fro, no cunning show of skill—the sinner was just to lay his hand upon the head of the animal that was to die as his substitute. You know that in the Revelation, the woman arrayed in purple and scarlet, that is, the Church of Rome, has upon her forehead the name, “Mystery,” and you probably recollect what follows, “Babylon the great, the mother of harlots.” But the chaste bride of Christ, the Church which He has redeemed by His blood, is not a partaker of that mystery! And Christ, in the Gospel, gives us nothing but simplicities. As the laying of the hand on the head of the sacrifice was all that was needed for the forgiveness of the sinner under the Law, so all that you need now is to take Christ to be your Substitute and Savior! Therefore, by the eternity of bliss or woe which depends upon your decision, in the name of God, who has sent me to proclaim His Gospel, I demand of you, man or woman, that you should come to the right decision upon this all-important matter! Let there be no putting off and no offering to do something else—what is required is that you should lay your hand, by faith, on the head of the sinatoning Lamb of God. Have you done so? If not, you have neither part nor lot in Him—and if you remain in your present condition, you will perish in your sin! But if you will accept Christ as your Substitute, you need no earthly priest or mediator. So, take Him as yours—

*“Take Him now, and happy be.”*

The symbol was one of extreme simplicity, for, finally, there was nothing to be done to the man’s hand. The priest was not to wash it, or to read the lines upon it by the aid of palmistry, or to tattoo it with some sacred sign. No, the man came, remember, because he was a sinner. And he laid his hand on the sacrifice because he was a sinner. The hand that he laid there was a sinner’s hand, and I believe in Jesus Christ with a sinner’s faith. I say to Him, at this moment, as I said when first I trusted Him—

*“Just as I am—without one plea  
But that Your blood was shed for me,  
And that you bade me come to You,  
O Lamb of God, I come.”*

Do not come to Christ as saints—come as sinners! Come just as you are, sinful, vile, and polluted—and lay the hand of simple yet trembling confidence upon the head of Jesus and say, “He shall be mine.” If you come to Him thus, He will not refuse or reject you, for He has said, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.”

There are some of you who have been here a long time and you are not yet converted. If you go to Hell, I am clear of your blood. Often have I wept over you when preaching here and I have set Christ before you as the one only and open door of salvation. And I have entreated and besought you to enter, but if you will not enter, I can do no more—the rest must lie with yourselves. You will melt the wax that seals your own death warrant. The responsibility rests wholly upon you—lay it not upon God. If any man is saved, it is of God’s Grace and God’s Grace, alone. But if any man is lost, it is by his own free will and his free will alone. The will of man is the source of damnation—the will of God is the source of salvation. Both those statements are true! Therefore, if you reject the Gospel of the Grace of God, you bring upon yourselves the just punishment of your sin.

I do not know that I can say anymore upon this theme except just this. There may be someone who is saying, “This plan of salvation is too simple.” Surely you will not quarrel with it on that account! I guarantee you that if a man were going to be hanged and he could be delivered simply by accepting a free pardon, he would not say that such a plan was too simple! After all, the best things in the world are very simple. If I want to go from here to Glasgow, it is a simple method that I have to follow. I have to get to the proper railway station, take my ticket and enter the right carriage. Then, if all goes well, I shall get there all right. If I want to go to Heaven, it is just as simple. I go by faith to Christ and trust myself wholly to Him and so I get there. It is really a matter of trust when you enter a railway carriage and you reach your destination by a power above your own. If I want to communicate with a friend at the very ends of the earth, I have nothing to do but to step into a telegraph office, write down what I want to say, pay the proper charge and the message will go all right. Though I cannot trace the wire which connects the office with my distant friend, I know that he will get my cablegram in due course. There may be some mystery about the matter, yet, practically, it is a very simple thing.

And believing in the Lord Jesus Christ is just as simple as that. If a farmer wants a harvest, all the philosophers in the world cannot tell him how wheat grows, nor can they make it grow—he has only to drop his seed into the earth at the right time and it will grow by night and by day, though he knows not how! Therefore, act in the same simple, commonsense fashion. Leave off enquiring into mysteries which you cannot understand and puzzling over difficulties which your poor brain cannot comprehend—

*“Let artful doubts and reasoning be*

*Nailed with Jesus to the tree”—*  
and do you, as a little child, fully trust Jesus as your Savior and so you shall be saved! God help you to do this now, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **ISAIAH 53.**

Verse 1. Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? It is sometimes the lot of God’s most faithful servants to labor unsuccessfully. As old Thomas Fuller quaintly says, “He makes some to be as the clouds that empty their rain over Arabia, the stony— while others are pouring down their showers over Arabia the happy.” Yet we are accepted with God, not according to our success, but according to our faithfulness. Still, no true minister of Christ can be content unless men believe his report. It will be a matter for sighing and groaning if unbelief is the only answer to our earnest declarations concerning Christ.

2. For He—That is, Jesus—  
2. Shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He has no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. Carnal minds are unbelieving minds. They are so because the beauties of Christ are spiritual and in their natural state they have not the power to discern them. Jesus Christ has no loveliness in the eyes of self-righteous, self-sufficient men. What do they need with a Savior? What do they care for His atoning Sacrifice? They cannot truly admire the love and the holiness of Jesus Christ, for they do not know their own ugliness or their own unholiness! Alas, that God’s own Son, who is the loveliest of all beings, should be without form or comeliness to unspiritual eyes!  
3. 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. While the Redeemer was here below, His state of poverty, obscurity, suffering and shame, was of such a character that few would believe in Him. And even those who afterwards received Him, at the first did not so. He was despised and we, even we, His own people, esteemed Him not! Christ has forgiven us for all this, but shall we ever forgive ourselves? O eyes, shall you ever cease to weep over your former blindness? O heart, shall you ever cease to grieve over your former hardness? He who was Heaven’s darling was despised and rejected of men, and we partook in the guilt, for we also despised and rejected Him.  
4, 5. Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. It is Substitution, you see, all through—Christ suffering instead of us—the Innocent dying for the guilty—the Lord of Glory bearing the sin of rebellious men. Why do men quibble at this precious Truth? It is their only hope of salvation! Why do we still have to say, “Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” But those who are enlightened from above and led to see their own state of ruin, and their absolute need of a Savior, will rejoice to know that the Lord has laid help upon One who is mighty, and that He has anointed His only-begotten Son to stand in our place!  
6. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. There is a universal sin—“All we like sheep have gone astray.” There is also a personal sin, a sin peculiar to each individual—“We have turned, everyone, to his own way.” But Christ gathers up the sin—all kinds of sin of all sorts of men—and of His whole Church it is truly said, “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”  
7. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth. When a word could have released Him, He would not speak it. His was, indeed, golden silence. Oh, the wondrous eloquence of that patient speechlessness when He stood before Herod and Pilate and answered them not a word! He could have spoken with such authority as to have called legions of angels from Heaven for His protection, or a single word of His could have destroyed His enemies, as the leaves of autumn lie withered and dead—but, “He opened not His mouth.”  
7, 8. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearer is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? Who shall speak up for Him? It was the custom of the Jews, when a man was condemned to death, to allow a certain interval during which the heralds went through the streets and made proclamation that if any man knew any reason why the criminal should be spared, he should at once appear at the court and declare it. Someone often came forward with one plea or another, in arrest of judgment—but when our Lord was condemned to death, none would speak up for Him.  
8, 9. For He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of My people was He stricken. And He made His grave with the wicked.” Dying between two thieves, as though He had been the greatest criminal of the three—“He made His grave with the wicked,”  
9. And with the rich in His death. Lying in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea.  
9. Because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth. If He had used either violence or deceit, He might have escaped, but because He was harmless and true, therefore must He die.  
10. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief: when You shall make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, The grain of wheat, sown in the ground, abides not alone, but brings forth much fruit. Our blessed Savior presented both soul and body as an offering for sin, but He knew what He was doing, for “He shall see His seed.”  
10. He shall prolong His days. Up from the grave did He arise in newness of life and back to Heaven did He return to life immortal—“He shall prolong His days,”  
10, 11. And the pleasure of the LORD shall proper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied. Christ did not die in vain. He will never miss the great objective of His death, you may depend upon that! Those drops of blood are far too precious to fall in vain upon the earth.  
11. By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many. That is, by their knowledge of Him, by their trusting Him many shall be justified and saved.  
11. For He shall bear their iniquities. How very express this is—that Christ does not merely bear the punishment of His people, but their iniquities, too! There is a literal substitution of Christ in the place of His people and a most distinct imputation of their sin to Him, and of His righteousness to them.  
12. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He has poured out His soul unto death; and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. Blessed Intercessor, let Your almighty intercession avail for each one of us, for Your own name’s sake! Amen.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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THE SIN OFFERING

NO. 739

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 10, 1867, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“If the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he has sinned, a young bull without blemish unto the  
Lord for a sin offering.”  
Leviticus 4:3.**

In the previous chapters of the book of Leviticus you read of the burnt offering, the peace offering, and the meat offering—all types our Lord Jesus Christ as seen from different points of view. Those three sacrifices were sweet savor offerings, and represent the Lord Jesus in His glorious Person and perfect righteousness as an offering of a sweet smell unto God. The chapter before us, the whole of which we shall require as a text, describes the sin offering, which, although quite distinct from the sweet savor offerings, is not altogether to be separated from them, for the Lord Jesus Christ viewed in any light is very dear unto His Father.

And even when beheld as a sin offering, He is elect and precious unto God, as we shall have to show you in the type before us. Still, the sin offering does not set forth the acceptance of the substitute before the Lord, but rather brings out the abhorrence which God has towards sin, the putting away from His holy Presence of everything upon which sin is laid. This morning, if God shall enable us, we hope to impress upon your minds, first of all, the great evil of sin. And secondly, the great and wonderful power of the blood of atonement by which sin is put away.

Without any further preface we shall invite you, in meditating upon the type before us, first, to consider our Lord Jesus as made sin for us. Secondly, we shall ask you to observe, carefully and prayerfully, His blood in its efficacy before the Lord. And thirdly, we shall bid you look at His substitution in the shame which it involved.

I. First, Brethren, let us, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, view our blessed Lord as made sin for us, as He is here typified in the bull.  
1. His personal Character is set forth before us in the victim chosen, namely, a young bull without blemish. It was a bull, the most valuable of the sacrifices—an animal laborious in life and costly in death. It was a young bull in the fullness of its strength and vigor. It was without blemish and the slightest fault disqualified it from being laid upon the altar of God. Behold, O Believer, your Lord Jesus, more precious by far than ten thousands of the fat of fed beasts! A Sacrifice not to be purchased with gold, or estimated in silver! Full of vigor, in the very prime of manhood, He offered up Himself for us!  
Even when He died, He died not through weakness, for that cry of His at His death, “with a loud voice,” proved that His life was still firm within Him and that when He gave up the ghost, His death was not one of compulsion but a voluntary expiring of the soul. His glory is as the firstling of the bull, full of vigor and of strength. How distinctly was our Lord proved to be without blemish! Naturally born without sin, practically He lived without fault. In Him there was neither deficiency nor excess. In no virtue did He come behind, and no fault could be found in Him. The prying eyes of the prince of this world could find nothing in Him, and the still more accurate search of the all-seeing God found no fault in Him.  
This spotlessness was necessary, for how could He have been made an offering for our sin if it had not been true that personally, “He knew no sin”? Shall one bankrupt stand in the debtor’s court as a substitute for another? How shall one penniless wretch pay the debt of another who is about to be cast into prison? If the king requires service of any man, how shall another from whom service is equally due, offer himself as a substitute for him? No, the Savior of others must have no obligations of His own. He must owe no personal debts. There must be no claims on the part of justice against Him, on His own account, or He cannot stand “the Just for the unjust,” to expiate the sins of men.  
You holy souls, feast your eyes upon the spotless Son of God! You pure in heart, delight your purified vision with a sight of His perfections! You shall one day be like He—this will be your Heaven! Meanwhile make it your rapture, your Paradise on earth, to gaze upon the unrivaled beauties of the Altogether Lovely. “In Him was no sin.” In Him was all excellence. His body and soul are alike—white as the lily for holiness—though made by suffering red as the rose. Alabaster and bright ivory overlaid with sapphires are but dull and soiled types of His purity. Come, you virgin souls, and let the eyes of your holy love survey Him that you may see how fit He was to suffer as “the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.”  
The act of transference of sin to the victim next calls for our attention. You will have noticed, in reading the chapter, that our Lord’s being made sin is set forth to us by the very significant transfer of sin to the bull, which was made by the priest, or by the elders of the people, as the case might be. We are expressly told, “He shall lay his hands upon the bull’s head,” which act, our good Dr. Watts has interpreted in his well-known verse*—  
“My faith would lay her hands  
On that dear head of Yours,  
While like a penitent I stand;  
And there confess my sin.”*  
This laying of the hand does not appear to have been a mere touch of contact, but in some other places of Scripture has the meaning of leaning heavily, as in the expression, “Your wrath lies hard upon me” (Psa. 88:7).  
Surely this is the very essence and nature of faith, which does not only bring us into contact with the great Substitute, but teaches us to lean upon Him with all the burden of our guilt, so that if our sins are very weighty, yet we see Him as able to bear them all! And mark, the whole weight of our iniquity taken off from us, who must have been crushed to the lowest Hell thereby, and laid on Him who took the weight and bore it all, and then buried it in His sepulcher forever! From of old it was decreed, “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”  
Jehovah made to meet upon the head of the Substitute all the offenses of His covenant people. But each one of the chosen is brought personally to ratify this solemn covenant act of the great God, when by Grace he is enabled by faith to put his hands upon the head of the “Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world.” My fellow Believers, do you remember that rapturous day? My soul recalls her day of deliverance with delight! Laden with guilt and full of fears, I saw my Savior willing to be my Substitute, and I laid my hand, oh, how timidly at first, but courage grew and confidence was confirmed!  
I leaned my soul entirely upon Him, and now it is my unceasing joy to know that my sins are no longer imputed to me, but laid on Him! And like the debts of the poor wounded traveler, Jesus, like the good Samaritan, has said of all my future sinfulness, “Set that to my account.” Oh, blessed discovery, sweet solace of a repenting heart!—  
*“My numerous sins transferred to Him,  
Shall never more be found!  
Lost in His blood’s atoning stream  
Where every crime is drowned!”*  
We must now beg your notice of the sins transferred. In the case of the type, they were sins of ignorance. Alas, the Jew knew nothing about a sin offering for sins of presumption but there is such a sin offering for us. Our presumptuous sins were laid on Christ. Our willful sins. Our sins of light and knowledge are pardoned by His blood. The mention of sins of ignorance suggests a very comfortable reflection, that if there are any sins which I know not, they were, notwithstanding my ignorance, laid on my Substitute and put away by His Atonement. It is not sin as we see it which was laid on Christ, but sin as God sees it—not sin as our conscience feebly reveals it to us, but sin as God beholds it—in all its unmitigated malignity and unconcealed loathsomeness.  
Sin in its exceeding sinfulness Jesus has put away. Not sham sin, but real sin—sin as before the Lord, sin as sin—Jesus has made an end of. Child of God, you will not misuse this Truth of God and deny the need of repentance, for you well know that you cannot practically feel the power of this blood except as your sin is known to you. This, indeed, is intimated in the type, for, according to verse fourteen, the bull was only offered when the sin was known. It was to be laid by the elders upon the head of the bull when the sin was no longer hidden from the eyes of the congregation.  
Sin unknown, the sacrifice is unheeded. It is only as you know and perceive sin that you can consciously know and prize the Atonement by which it is taken away. Mark, it is when you perceive sin that then you are to trust the blood—not when you perceive holiness in yourself, and goodness and virtue—but when you perceive sin, and iniquity, and defilement! It is then you are to lay your hands upon the head of the great Atoning Sacrifice. Jesus is a sinner’s Savior. “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.”  
It is not written, “If any man is holy, he has an Advocate,” but, “if any man sins, we have an Advocate,” so that in all our sin and iniquity, blackness and defilement—when overwhelmed with our own vileness—we may still come to Christ and believe that our most horrible and detestable sins were laid upon Him. And over and above that, those sins which we do not feel, which may be even more detestable, even those, and what is more, the sinfulness of our nature itself—that black and polluted fount from which the streams of our trespasses take their rise—the guilt of all actual and original sin was laid upon Jesus and by Him forever put away!  
Passing on, still keeping to the same point, we would remark that the sin was laid upon the bull most conspicuously “before the Lord.” Did you notice the frequent expressions: “shall bring him to the door of the congregation before the Lord”? “Kill the bull before the Lord”? “Shall sprinkle the blood seven times before the Lord, and shall put some of it upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord”? Clearly the most important part of the sacrifice was not before the people, but before the Lord. All that the onlookers outside could have seen was the bull, when dead, carried by the priests outside the camp.  
Some of them who came nearer might have seen the pouring of the blood at the bottom of the bronze altar, but they certainly never did and never could see the priest sprinkle the blood towards the veil, nor yet see him put it upon the horns of the golden altar—for the court of the priest was concealed from their view. We are very much mistaken if we think that the ceremonies of Jews were much seen by the people. They were mainly unseen except by the priests. The ritual of the Old Covenant must have been very little a matter of sight, for the Israelite, pure and simple, never penetrated beyond the first court. He stood before the bronze altar and he never went further.  
All that was done in the next court of the priests, and especially all that was done in the Most Holy Place, must have been entirely a matter of faith to all the people. The fact was, the sacrifices were not so much for men to look at as for God Himself to gaze upon, and though this may seem to you a strange observation, there is no little value in it. You will hear men nowadays say that the purpose of Atonement has reference to men and not to God. Depend upon it, there is a fatal error in this doctrine and we must denounce it!  
Although its advocates take some few expressions of certain of our hymns and pretend to believe that we teach that the blood placated an angry God, we never taught anything of the kind and they know we never did! Yet we are not to be frightened into denying or qualifying our assertion that the action of God towards man has been wondrously affected by the Atonement of Christ. God the Judge would have condemned us to punishment had not Jesus suffered in our place, so that, in justice, we might be permitted to go free. Not only is man made willing to love God by the manifestation of the love of God in Christ Jesus, but it has become possible for God to extend the hand of amity towards sinful man through the Atonement! And this would not have been possible, consistently with the Divine attributes, if it had not been for the atoning Sacrifice.  
We must still stand to it, that the blood is not merely a comfort to the wounded conscience, but is really a satisfaction to Divine Justice. It is a covering, a propitiation, a Mercy Seat for the Most Holy God. That is a striking passage concerning the Passover and the destroying angel in Egypt. Thus spoke Jehovah, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” It was not, “When you see the blood.” The spared ones did not see the blood at that moment, for, you will remember, they were all inside the house feasting upon the lamb. The father of the family had put the blood outside upon the lintel and the side-posts, not for the inmates to see, but for God to see!  
And so, though a sight of the precious blood, thanks be to God, does bring us faith, and joy, and peace, yet the real work of our salvation is not the effect of the blood upon us, but the effect of the blood upon God Himself! Not, it is true, a change produced in God, but a change which is thus produced in the action of Divine Justice. Apart from the blood we are guilty and condemned—washed in the blood, we are accepted and beloved. Without the Atonement we are aliens and strangers, heirs of wrath even as others. But, as seen in the eternal covenant purpose, through the precious blood of Jesus, we are accepted in the Beloved. The great stress of the transaction lies in its being done “before the Lord.”  
Still, further, carefully observe that as soon as ever the sin was thus “before the Lord,” laid upon the bull, the bull was slain. “He shall lay his hands upon the bull’s head, and kill the bull before the Lord.” So, in the fifteenth verse, “The elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bull before the Lord, and the bull shall be killed before the Lord.”  
Ah, yes. As soon as the sin is transferred, the penalty is transferred, too. Down fell the pole-axe the minute that the priestly hands had been laid on the bull. Unsheathed was the bloody knife of sacrifice the moment that the elders had begun to lean upon the sacrificial head. So was it with our Savior. He must smart, He must die—for only as dying could He become our sin offering. Ah, Brethren, those who would preach Christ, but not Christ crucified, miss the very soul and essence of our holy faith. “Let Him come down from the Cross, and we will believe in Him,” is the Unitarian cry! Anything but a crucified God!  
But there, indeed, lies the secret of that mystery, and the very core and kernel of our confidence. A reigning Savior I do rejoice in! The thought of the splendor yet to come makes glad our eyes! But after all, it is a bleeding Savior that is the sinner’s hope. It is to the Cross, the center of misery, that the sinner turns his eyes for comfort, rather than to the stars of Bethlehem, or to the blazing sun of the millennial kingdom. I remember one joining this Church who said, “Sir, I had faith once in Christ glorified, but it never gave me comfort. I have now come to a faith in Christ crucified, and I have peace.”  
At Calvary there is the comfort, and there only. That Jesus lives is delightful! But the basis of the delight is, “He lives who once was slain.” That He will reign forever is a most precious doctrine of our faith, but that the hand that wields the silver scepter once was pierced, is the great secret of the joy! O Beloved, abide not in any place from which your eye cannot behold the Cross of Christ! When you are thinking of the doctrines of the Gospel, or the precepts of the Word, or studying the prophecies of Scripture, never let your mind relinquish the study of the Cross! The Cross was the place of your spiritual birth! It must ever be the spot for renewing your health, for it is the sanatorium of every sin-sick soul.  
The blood is the true balm of Gilead. It is the only catholicon which heals every spiritual disease. Come, sin-sick Soul, and breathe the air which was purified when the blood of the heart of Jesus fell from His wounds to the ground, for no spiritual disease can abide the Presence of the healing blood. Hasten, you weak ones, to Calvary, and partake in Godgiven strength and vigor! It is from Calvary that you shall see the Sun of Righteousness arising with healing beneath His wings! The beloved Physician meets His patients at the foot of the Cross and relieves them from all their ills.  
I shall not ask you to dwell on any further details of the type, as they refer to the Substitution, but I cannot leave the topic till I have asked each one this all-important question—“Is the Lord Jesus made a sin offering for you? It is written, “He has made Him to be sin for us,” and from this it appears that sin was laid upon Jesus by God Himself. But still it is true that each Believer by faith lays his own sins there, and the hymn, “I lay my sins on Jesus,” is quite Scriptural. Have you, dear Friend, seen your sins laid on Jesus?  
Has your faith laid its hands upon His head? My dear Hearers, we shall soon, each one of us, have to pass through the vale of death. It may be but a very short time before some of us will know what are the solemnities of our last, departing hour. Are you ready? Quite ready? You have been a professor for years—are you ready now to die? Can you hope that if at this moment the summons were given, sitting where you are, can you hope you are so really and truly resting in the precious blood that sin would not disturb your dying peace because it is forgiven and put away?  
Search the ground of your hope, I pray you, and be not satisfied unless your faith is surely built upon the Rock of Ages. Get as much assurance as you can, my Brothers and Sisters, but beware of presumption! I have seen some of those fine Christians who will not say*—  
“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in You,”*  
and I think very little of them. It is their boast that no hymns will suit them but those which are full of assurance and conscious enjoyment. I admire their confidence, if it is the fruit of the Spirit. But I fear, in many cases, it is the offspring of proud, vain self-conceit. I know that in shaking times, when I am sorely vexed with bodily pain and mental distractions, I am glad enough to say*—  
“Let me hide myself in You!  
Let the water and the blood,  
From your riven side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure,  
Cleanse me from its guilt and power!”*  
Without boasting, I can declare as much about strong faith in God as most men. And I can usually rejoice in the fullest confidence of my acceptance in the Beloved. But there are times with me of deeply awful depression of spirit, and horror of great darkness—and at such periods my joyous confidence takes the form of humbly pleading the blood once shed for sinners, and saying, with a broken heart*—  
“Nothing in my hands I bring:  
Simply to Your Cross I cling.”*

It seems to me, that humbly resting upon Jesus is the best position for us. And I ask each of you, very affectionately, whether that is your position at this present moment? Does your heart rejoice in the Substitute? Do you rejoice in the language of these two precious verses?*—*

*“When Satan tempts me to despair,  
And tells me of the guilt within,  
Upward I look, and see Him there  
Who made an end of all my sin.  
Because the sinless Savior died,  
My sinful soul is counted free,  
For God, the Just, is satisfied  
To look on Him, and pardon me.”*

II. Let us turn to the second part of the subject. The chapter sets forth before us the efficacy of the precious blood of Jesus. As soon as the bull was slain, the priest carefully collected the blood. The bull was slain in the court of the Israelites. Look, there it lies at the foot of the bronze altar, with the blood in a basin. The priest passes into the court of the priests, passes by the golden altar of incense which stood in the holy place, and proceeds to dip his finger in the basin and to sprinkle the blood seven times towards the veil which concealed the Holy of Holies. Whether the blood fell on the veil or not we are not certain. But we have good reason to believe that it was cast upon the veil itself.

The veil, of costliest tapestry, would thus become by degrees more and more like a vesture dipped in blood. Seven times towards the veil the blood of the sin offering was sprinkled by the priest. Why did he begin there? It was to show that our communion with God is by blood. The veil was not then, of course, torn. It showed that the way of access to God was not then revealed. The sprinkling of the blood showed that the only thing that could open the way of access to God was the blood—that the blood, when it should be perfectly offered, seven times sprinkled—would tear the veil.

The blood of Jesus has to the letter fulfilled the type. When our Lord had sprinkled, if I may say so, seven times His own heart’s blood upon the veil, He said, “It is finished,” and, “the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom.” Beloved, through the perfect offering of the precious blood we have access with boldness into this Divine Grace where we stand! And we who have faith in that blood have intimate communion with the living God, and come near to His Mercy Seat to talk with Him who dwells between the cherubim, as a man talks with his friend.

The priest began at the innermost point because the first thing which a Christian loses through sin is communion with God, and free access to Him. And consequently the first thing to be restored to him must be this communion with his God. Suppose, my Brother, my Sister, you backslide. There are some things which you will not lose at once. You will still be able to pray in a feeble style. You will still have some sense of acceptance, but certainly your enjoyment and fellowship with God will be suspended as soon as you have fallen from your first estate. Therefore the blood is sprinkled upon the veil to show you that through the blood, and through the blood only, you can renew your access!

You advanced Christians. You who have lived in the very heart of God and have stood like Milton’s angel in the sun. You who have been made to sit at the banqueting table and to drink of the wines on the lees well refined. You who have been the King’s favorites, and, like Mephibosheth, have always been made to sit at the King’s own table and to eat of the choice portions of His dainties—if you have lost your heavenly fellowship—it is through the blood, and through the blood alone, that you can again have access unto the heart of God!

The next act of the priest was to retire a little from the veil to the place where stood the golden altar of incense, adorned with four horns of gold, probably of a pyramidal shape, or fashioned like rams’ horns. And the priest, dipping his finger in the basin, smeared this horn and the other, until the four horns glowed with crimson in the light of the golden candlestick. The horn is always, in the Oriental usage, indicative of strength. What was the blood put upon the altar for, then? That incense altar was typical of prayer, and especially of the intercession of Christ— and the blood on the horn showed that the force and power of allprevailing intercession lies in the blood!

Why was this the second thing done? It seems to me that the second thing which a Christian loses is his prevalence in prayer. First he loses communion with God when he backslides. The next thing he loses is his power in supplication. He begins to be feeble upon his knees. He cannot win of the Lord that which he desires. How is he to get back his strength? Here the great Anointed Priest teaches us to look to the blood for renewed power, for look, He applies the blood to the horns of the altar and the sweet perfume of frankincense ascends to Heaven and God accepts it! O Beloved, think of this! Christ’s intercessory power with God lies in His precious blood, and your power and mine with God in prayer must lie in that blood, too.

Oh, to see the horns of that altar smeared with blood! How can you ever prevail with God unless you plead the blood of Jesus? Believer, if you would overcome in prayer, tell the Lord of all the groans of His dear Son! Never dream of arguing except with arguments fetched from Jesus’ wounds! These are potent pleas with God—the bloody sweat, the flagellation, the nails, the spear, the vinegar, the Cross—these must be the mighty reasons with which to overcome the Infinite One. Let the altar of your incense be smeared with blood!

This being finished, the priest goes backwards still further and enters the court of the Israelites. There stood the great altar of brass, whereon was consumed the burnt offerings. And now the priest, having his basin full of the blood of which only a small quantity had been used in sprinkling the veil and touching the horns of the golden altar, pours the whole of the remaining blood in a great stream at the foot of the altar of burnt offering. What does that typify? Did He not thus teach us that the only ground and basis (for mark, it is put at the foot of the altar), of the acceptance of our persons and of our thank offerings is found in the blood of Jesus?

Did it never strike you how the whole tabernacle must have been smeared with blood everywhere? Blood was on every side! The priest himself, when at his work, with garments on which showed every stain, must have looked as though all besmeared with gore! You could not look at his hands or at his vestments without seeing blood everywhere! Indeed, when consecrated, he had blood on his ear, blood on his foot, blood on his hand—he could not be made a priest without it. The Apostle says, “Almost everything under the Law was sprinkled with blood.” It was blood, blood everywhere!

Now, this could have been very far from a pleasant sight, except to the spiritual man who, as he looked at it, said, “What a holy God is the God of Israel! How He hates sin! See, He will only permit sinners to approach Him by the way of blood!” And then the inquiring mind would ask, “What blood is this which is here intended?” We know that the blood of bulls and of goats was but the visible symbol of the sufferings of Jesus, the great Sacrifice, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation for our sins. All the blood-marks pointed to the “Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.”

Let us rejoice in the precious blood of Christ, the Lamb without blemish and without spot, who was foreordained from the foundations of the world, but was manifest in these last days for us! Will you now make a summary of what has been spoken? Come with me outside the Tabernacle. Let us begin at the opening in its curtains leading to the outer court. We have sinned, and desire acceptance with God—that must be the first blessing. The bronze altar of burnt offerings is standing before us, and we wish to offer our thank offering, may we do so? How can we be accepted?

Look at the bottom of the altar! What do you see there? A pool of blood all around it, as though the altar stood in blood! What does this mean? Surely the blood of Jesus is the basis of our acceptance before God, and here we stand as citizens of Heaven, not accursed, but beloved! Not rejected and abhorred, but elect and blessed through the blood which is the ground of our acceptance as Believers and citizens of Zion!

Now we have come so far, we remember that we are not only citizens of the new Jerusalem, but priests unto God, and as priests we desire to enter the court of the priests. And there is the golden altar, but where is our power to minister before the Lord? How shall we approach with the love of our hearts, our joyful thanks, and our fervent intercessions? Behold the answer to our inquiries! Observe with joy the blood-marks on the four horns! It is not our prayers that will be in themselves prevalent, nor our praises, nor our love—but the BLOOD gives prevalence, acceptance, and power to all! Come here, then, and let us lay our heart itself, all bleeding, upon that altar and let our prayers and praises rise to Heaven, like pillars of smoke, accepted through the blood!

But, Beloved, this is not all. We are something more than priests—we are children of God, dear to His heart! Let us, then, seek fellowship with our Father who is in Heaven. How can we enter into the Most Holy Place and commune with the God who hides Himself? What is the mode of entrance into that which is within the veil? We look, and lo, the veil is torn! And on the floor, right across where the veil used to hang, we see a line of blood, where, times without number, the blood had been sprinkled! And on the two pieces of the veil through which we pass, we can see many distinct traces of blood—yes, and when we come right up to the Mercy Seat we can see the blood there, too!

What does this mean but that the blood is the means of access to God, and by no other means is He to be approached? When we shall be nearest to God and see Him face to face, and dwell with Him in Heaven forever, it will be because Jesus Christ loved us and died for us, and sprinkled His blood for us that we be permitted to have this close and wonderful communion with God which even angels never had—for even they can only veil their faces with their wings, and must not dare to look upon God as we shall do, when our eyes shall see Him as our Father and our Friend!

Thus I have tried to set forth the threefold prevalence of the precious blood, but let it not be forgotten that the blood also put away sin! For you find at the end of the chapter, “His sin shall be forgiven.” First forgiven, then accepted, then prevalent in prayer, and then admitted into access with boldness to God—what a chain of blessings! All, all through the blood of Jesus!

III. Thirdly, the most painful part of our sermon remains, while I beg you to view the shame which our Lord endured. While it is all so well for us, so sweet for us, I want you now to reflect how bitter, how shameful it was for our Lord! The offerer who brought the sin offering has been forgiven. He has been accepted at the bronze altar. His prayers have been heard at the golden altar, and the veil has been sprinkled on his behalf. But what of the Victim itself? Draw near and learn with holy wonder!

In the first place, albeit that our Lord Jesus Christ was made sin for us, it is noteworthy that, though nearly all the bull was burned outside he camp, there was one portion left and reserved to be burnt upon the altar of burnt offering—the fat. Certain descriptions are given as to the fat which was to be consumed upon the altar, by which we believe it was intended to ensure that the richest part of the fat should be there consumed. As much as if God would say, “Though My dear Son must be made sin for this people, and consequently I must forsake Him, and He must die outside the camp, yet still He is most dear and precious in My sight. And even while He is a sin offering, yet He is My beloved Son in whom in Himself I am still well pleased.”

Brethren, whenever we speak about our Lord as bearing our sins, we must carefully speak concerning Him—not as though God ever did despise or abhor the prayer of His afflicted Son, but only seemed to do so while He stood for us—representatively made sin for us, though He knew no sin. Oh, I delight to think that the Lord smelled a sweet savor unto God, even as a sin offering! The fat, the excellence of His heart, the consecration of His soul were acceptable to God and sweet in His esteem even when He laid upon Him the iniquity of His people!

Still, here is the shameful part of it—the priest then took the bull, and gathering up all the innards, every part of it, the skin, the dung—all mentioned to teach us what a horrible thing sin is and what the Surety was looked upon as being when He took our sin—he took it all up, and either himself personally, or assisted by others, took it away out of the camp. We are told that in the wilderness, so large was the camp that it may have been the distance of four miles that this bull had to be carried.

I think I see the sad procession—the priest all smeared with blood, carrying the carcass of the bull, taking it right away down the long line of tents. First through the abodes of one tribe and then of another—through the long streets of tents—while the people stood at their doors and saw the ghastly sight. It was killed at the altar of burnt offering. Why was it not burnt there? That altar was holy, and as soon as ever sin was laid upon the bull, it ceased to be any longer looked upon as a holy thing! It could not, therefore, be burnt in the holy place. It must be taken away. So the priest carried it away—a terrible load—till he reached the usual place where the ashes were kindled, and he put the bull there, and heaped the hot ashes upon it till the whole smoked up to Heaven, and was utterly consumed as a sin offering.

My Beloved, try if you can, to grasp the idea of Jesus being put away from God! I cannot give you the thoughts, but if you could hear the air pierced with the dreadful cry, “Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabacthani?” “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” you would see Christ put away because He was made sin. It was not possible for God to look upon sin, even when it was in Christ, with anything like complacency. “It pleased the Father to bruise Him. He has put Him to grief.” If you have read the order of the burnt offering, you will have noticed that when the bull of the burnt offering was offered, it was washed, to show the perfection of Christ as He is a sweet savor, all pure and clean. But in this case there is added that humiliating word, “with the dung.”

What a humiliating type of Christ! Ah, but what are your sins and mine that were laid upon Jesus? How could our iniquities and transgressions be better set forth than by that bleeding, mangled mass which the high priest had to carry out away from the camp, as though it were a thing abhorred, which could not be endured in the camp any longer? It is your Savior made sin for you and put away on your behalf!

After the removal, they gathered the hot ashes, they kindled the fire, and burnt it all. See here a faint image of the fire which consumed the Savior upon Calvary! His bodily pains ought never to be forgotten because there is so intimate a relation between physical suffering and mental grief that it were hard to draw the line. But still the sufferings of His soul must have been the very soul of His sufferings! And can you tell what they were?

Have you ever suffered from a raging fever? Have you felt at the same time the pangs of some painful disease? Has your mind refused to rest? Has your brain been tossed like the waves of a sea of fire within your head? Have you questioned whether you should lose your reason or not? Have you ever been near unto distraction? Have you ever been near unto the breaking of the cords of life? If so, you may feebly guess what He suffered when He said, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.” And when He “began to be sorrowful and to be very heavy.” Those were the coals of juniper which were being heaped over the sin offering.

As you see Jesus scourged by Herod and by Pilate, and afterwards bleeding on the accursed tree, you see the fire of Divine wrath consuming the sin offering because our sin had been laid upon Him. I will not dwell longer on this, only ask the Holy Spirit to make you feel the shame that Christ suffered for you. Sometimes I cannot grasp the thought, when I have tried to think that He who made the heavens, to whom the whole blue arch is but as a span, and the depths of the seas as the hollow of His hand, should be made flesh! And then suffer for such an insignificant worm as I am!

That He should suffer, however, never amazes me so much as that He should bear my sin. Oh, marvelous! The angels say, “Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God of Sabaoth!” What could they have said when He, whom they hymned as “glorious in holiness,” bowed His head and gave up the ghost, because “made sin for us”? Blessed Son of God! Where we cannot understand we will adore!

The Apostle Paul suggests to us the most practical conclusion of our sermon. He tells us that as our Savior, having given His blood to be sprinkled within the Tabernacle for us, was then taken outside the camp, so it is our duty, yes, and our privilege, to go forth unto Him outside the camp also, bearing His reproach. You have heard how He was reproached for you! Are you unwilling to be reproached for Him? You have heard how He went outside the camp in that shameful manner! Are you unwilling to go outside the camp for Him? Too many Christians try to be Christians in the camp, but it cannot be done. “Be not conformed to this world, but be you transformed by the renewing of your minds.”

There is so much of worldly conformity among us! But the promise is not to worldly-minded Christians, but, “Come you out from among them. Be you separate. Touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you.” How much we lose by affinities with the world! How much of distance there is between us and God because of the nearness there is between us and the world! Come out, you lovers of the Savior, and tread the separated way which your Savior walked before you!

And now, should there be any here who are unsaved, I should not wonder but what some of them will make the remark, the almost, no, the quite profane remark, “Why, he spoke so much of blood!” Ah, Sinner, and we need to speak much of it to you, for it is your only hope! God will either have your blood or Christ’s blood, one of the two. If you reject Christ, you shall perish in your sin. “The blood is the life thereof,” says the Word of God. And your life must be taken unless Christ’s life shall avail for you. The very heart of Christ was broken to find out the way to save a sinner. And, Sinner, there is no other!

If you refuse the purple road, you shall never reach the pearly gate. Trust in the blood of Jesus! Do you doubt? How can you? Is there not efficacy enough in the blood of the Son of God to take away sin? Do you contradict God’s declared Truth, “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin”? Oh, believe it, and cast your soul upon it, and we will meet within the veil, one of these days, to sing, “To Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood...to Him be glory forever and ever.” Amen.

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THE SPRINKLING OF THE BLOOD OF THE SACRIFICE  
NO. 1780

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 11, 1884, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary. And the priest shall put some of the blood**

**upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation; and shall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which  
is at the door of the tabernacle  
of the congregation.”  
Leviticus 4:6, 7.**

I HAVE preached, before, to you upon the types of our Lord’s Sacrifice—the subject is as large as it is important. We began with the laying of the hands upon the offering and we went on to the all-important matter of the slaying of the victim [See Sermon Nos. 1771 and 1772.] Now we come to the use which was made of the blood of the sacrifice after it had been slain. In thinking upon this subject, I seem to hear a voice saying to me, “Put off your shoes from off your feet, for the place whereon you stand is holy ground.” This is the central mystery of our religion. It becomes us to be reverent in heart as we approach it. The Doctrine of Substitution is the heart of the whole matter—our whole heart needs to be awakened while we speak upon it. The Son of God, Himself, assuming human nature and, in that Nature bleeding and dying in our place, is the Revelation of Revelation, the wonder of wonders, the Glory of the glorious God! Solemnity and awe may well fill us while we meditate on such a theme.

Oh, that the Spirit of God may rest upon us now! May His melting power be over this vast assembly! May the speaker feel it and may the hearers experience it, so that we may, with one consent, in spirit and in truth, look to Him who, by the Eternal Spirit, offered up Himself without spot unto God! The sacrifices under the Law of God were varied according to the uppermost thoughts in the offerers’ minds and their peculiar conditions before God. A burnt offering, a peace offering, or a sin offering might be brought, according as men wished to give unto the Lord, to have fellowship with Him, or to confess their sin to Him. There was a sacrifice specially arranged for the anointed priest, another for all the congregation, another for a ruler and yet another for one of the common people—in truth the typical sacrifices all pointed to the one Great Sacrifice, but they indicated various marks and characteristics of the undivided Lamb of God.

The victims varied from a bullock or a lamb down to a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons. We take different views of the Sacrifice of Christ according to our capacity to see it, but all these views may be quite in accordance the Truth of God, for the Atonement is many-sided and operates in many directions. The Levitical types represent the different views which believing minds take of our Lord Jesus Christ. They set forth but one Christ, but that one Christ from various standpoints. The mercy is that the Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus is suitable to you and equally suitable to me—and to all that come to Him by faith. The rich, the poor, the brave, the timid, the amiable and the immoral all find, in Jesus, that which fits their individual case. You may be a person of great mind and profound thought, but you shall find, in Jesus, all that your high intelligence can desire! I may be a person of slender education and of narrow powers of thought, but I shall find the Lord Jesus humbling Himself to my limited capacity.

The manna is said, by the rabbis, to have pleased every man’s taste and, even so, the Christ of God is every man’s Christ, so that no man who comes to Him shall be disappointed, but each shall find His needs supplied. Each man shall find his case perfectly met by the Savior’s Atonement, as much so as if Jesus were prepared for that man, only—as if that man were the only sinner under Heaven—or Jesus a Redeemer sent to him, alone, of all the family of man! Oh, the depth of the wisdom and of the Grace of God in the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ! Note particularly, with great interest, that there were sacrifices provided for sins of ignorance under the Law—therefore we safely conclude that a sin of ignorance is a sin. There is not that intensity of evil in a sin of ignorance which is to be seen in willful, deliberate transgression, but still, there is sin in it—for no law can allow ignorance to be an excuse for trespass since it is the duty of the subject to know the law. Even if I do that which is wrong with a sincere wish to do right, still, my wrong act has a measure of sin in it. No amount of sincerity can turn injustice into righteousness, or transform falsehood into truth.

You can illustrate this by the stern facts of Nature. Certain inventors have thought that they could fly and they have, in perfectly honest faith, leaped from a lofty crag. But their honest belief has not saved them from the result of violating the law of gravity—they have fallen to the ground— and have been dashed in pieces just as surely and terribly as if they had felt no real belief in their powers of flight. If a man partakes of a deadly poison believing it to be a health-giving medicine, his sincerity will not hinder the natural course of Nature—he will die in his error. It is precisely so in the moral and spiritual world. Sins committed in ignorance must be, still, sins in the sight of the Lord, or else no expiation would have been provided for them. Without shedding of blood, there is no remission even for sins of ignorance!

Paul persecuted the saints ignorantly, but he thereby incurred sins which required to be washed away—so Ananias told him and so he felt— for he called himself the chief of sinners because he persecuted the Church of God. When the people sinned through ignorance and the thing was hid from the eyes of the assembly, they were to bring an offering as soon as the sin was known. If you have transgressed ignorantly, my Brothers and Sisters, the time may come when you will find out that you were sinning—and it will then rejoice your heart to find that the Lord Jesus has made Atonement for your sins before you knew them to be sins! I am greatly rejoiced to think there should be such a Sacrifice provided, since it may yet turn out that the larger number of our sins are sins of which we have not been aware because our heart has prevented our discovering our error. You may have sinned and have no conscience of that sin at this present time—yes, and you may never have a conscience of that particular offense, in this world—yet it will be sin all the same.

Many good men have lived in an evil habit and remained in it unto death—and yet have not known it to be evil. Now, if the precious blood of Jesus only put away the sin which we perceived in detail, its efficacy would be limited by the enlightenment of our conscience and, therefore, some grievous sin might be overlooked and prove our ruin. But inasmuch as this blood puts away all sins, it removes those which we do not discover as well as those over which we mourn. “Cleanse You me from secret faults” is a prayer to which the Expiation of Christ is a full answer. The Atonement acts according to God’s sight of sin and not according to our sight of it, for we only see it in part, but God sees it all and blots it all out.

When we discover our iniquity, it is ours to weep over it with true and deep repentance. But if there are some sins which, in detail, we have not discerned and, consequently, have not, by a specific act of repentance, confessed them separately, yet, for all that, the Lord puts away our sin, for it is written, “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” Those unknown sufferings of Christ which the Greek Liturgy mentions so wisely, have put away from us those unknown sins which we cannot confess in detail because we have not yet perceived them. Blessed be God for a Sacrifice which cleanses away, forever, not only our glaring faults, but those offenses which the most minute self-examination has not yet uncovered!

After the blood had been spilt by the killing of the sacrifice and thus atonement had been made, three several acts were to be performed by the priest—we have them described in our text—and if you will kindly look, you will see that very much the same words follow in the 17th and 18th verses, as, also, in the 25th verse and the 34th verse, where, with somewhat less detail, much the same act is set forth. “And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven times before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary. And the priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation; and shall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.”

All this is symbolic of the work of the Lord Jesus and the manifold effects of His blood. There were three things—first, “the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven times before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary.” This represents the atoning sacrifice in its reference to God. Next, “The priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord.” This sets forth the influence upon the offering of intercessory prayer. Thirdly, we read, “He shall pour all (the rest) of the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering.” This displays the influence of the blood of Christ on all our service for the Lord. Oh, for the Spirit’s power to us to show the things of Christ!

I. We begin with THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST IN ITS RELATION TO THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL.  
In the type before us the prominent thing before God is the blood of atonement. No mention is made of a meat offering, or a drink offering, or even of sweet spices upon the golden altar—the one conspicuous object is blood. This was sprinkled before the Lord before the veil of the Most Holy place. I am well aware that some persons cry out, “The preacher continually talks about blood and, this morning, from the first hymn to the last, he has brought before us constant allusions to blood. We are horrified by it!” I wish you to be horrified for, indeed, sin is a thing to shudder at—and the death of Jesus is not a matter to be treated lightly! It was God’s intent to awaken in man a great disgust of sin by making him see that it could only be put away by suffering and death.  
In the Tabernacle in the wilderness, almost everything was sanctified by blood. The purple drops fell, even, on the Book and all the people. The blood was to be seen everywhere. As soon as you entered the outer court you saw the great bronze altar—and at the base of it bowls of blood were constantly being poured out! When you passed the first veil and entered the Holy Place, if you saw a priest, he was spattered from head to foot with blood—his snow-white robes bringing the crimson spots most vividly before your eyes. If you looked around, you saw the horns of the golden altar of incense smeared with blood—and the gorgeous veil which hid the innermost sanctuary was bedewed with a frequent sprinkling of the same! The holy tent was by no means a place for sentimentalists—its emblematic teachings dealt with terrible realities in a boldly impressive manner— its ritual was not constructed to gratify the taste, but to impress the mind!  
It was not a place for dainty gentlemen, but for broken-hearted sinners. Everywhere, the ignorant eye would see something to displease—but the troubled conscience would read lessons of peace and pardon! Oh, that my words would cause triflers with sin to be shocked at the abominable thing! I would have them filled with horror of that detestable thing which cannot be put away except by that which is infinitely more calculated to shock the instructed mind than rivers of the blood of bulls and of goats—I mean the sacrifice of God’s own Son—whose soul was made an offering for sin!  
The blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled before the veil seven times, signifying this—first, that the Atonement made by the blood of Jesus is perfect in its reference to God. All through the Scriptures, as you well know, seven is the number of perfection, and in this place it is doubtless used with that intent. The seven times is the same as once and for all—it conveys the same meaning as when we read, “For Christ also has once suffered for sins.” And again, “We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once.” It is a complete act. In this text we understand that the Lord Jesus offered unto the justice of God an absolutely complete and satisfactory Atonement by His vicarious suffering and death for guilty men. There is no need of further offering for sin. “It is finished.” He has purged our sins! In old times—before the coming of our Lord—the veil hung darkly between the place of God’s glorious Presence and His worshipping people. It was only lifted for a moment, once a year, and then that only one of all living men might enter into the Holy of Holies for a brief time— the way into the Holiest not yet being made manifest. But still, the blood was sprinkled towards the place where the Glory of God was pleased to dwell indicating that access to Him could only be by the way of the blood.  
Albeit that modern thought will contradict me, I shall not cease to assert perpetually that the greatest result of the death of the Lord Jesus was Godward. Not only does He reconcile us unto God by His death and turn our enmity into love, but He has borne the chastisement of our peace, and thus magnified the Law and made it honorable. God, the Judge of All, is enabled without the violation of His justice to pass by transgression, iniquity and sin. The blood of the sin offering was sprinkled before the Lord because the sin was before the Lord. David says—“Against You, You only, have I sinned,” and the prodigal cries, “I have sinned against Heaven and before you.” The Sacrifice of Christ is so mainly a Propitiation before God, so thoroughly a vindication of Divine Righteousness, that this one view of the Atonement is sufficient for any man, even if he obtains no other!  
But let him beware of trusting to a faith which does not look to the great Propitiation! This is the soul-saving view—the idea which pacifies conscience and wins the heart! We believe in Jesus as the Propitiation for sin. The lights which stream from the Cross are very varied, but as all the colored rays are found in the white light of day, so all the varied teachings of Calvary meet in the fact that Jesus suffered for sin—the Just for the unjust! Do not your hearts feel glad to think that the Lord Jesus Christ has offered a perfect Atonement, covering all, removing every obstacle to the mercy of God—making a clear way for the Lord most justly to justify the guilty? No man need bring anything more, or anything of his own with which to turn away the anger of God—he may come just as he is—guilty and defiled, and plead this precious blood which has made effectual Atonement for him. O my Soul, endorse the doctrine! Feel the sweet experiences that flow from it and stand, now, in the Presence of God without fear—for seven times has the blood spoken for you unto God!  
Note next, that not only is the Atonement, itself, perfect, but that the presentation of that Atonement is perfect, too. The sevenfold sprinkling was typical of Christ, as a Priest, presenting Himself unto the Father as a Sacrifice for sin. This has been fully done. Jesus has, in due order, carried the Propitiation into the sanctuary and appeared in the Presence of God on our behalf. Here are the Apostle’s own words, “by His own blood He entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” It is not our presenting of the blood, but Christ’s presenting of the blood which has made the Atonement—even as it is not our sight of the blood, but Jehovah’s sight of it which causes us to escape—as it was written concerning the Passover, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” Jesus at this moment sets His Atonement within view of a righteous God and, therefore, the Judge of all the earth is able to look on the guilty with eyes of mercy! Let us rest perfectly satisfied that all we require to bring us near to God has been done for us—and we may now come boldly unto the Throne of the heavenly Grace—  
*“No longer far from God, but now,  
By precious blood made nigh,  
Accepted in the Well-Beloved  
Near to His heart we lie.”*  
We now pass on to a few thoughts about ourselves in relation to this type. This sevenfold sprinkling of the blood upon the veil meant that the way of our access to God is only by virtue of the precious blood of Christ. Do you ever feel a veil hanging between you and God? In very truth, there is none, for Jesus has taken it away through His flesh. In the day when His blessed body was offered up, the veil of the Temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom, showing that there is now nothing to divide the Believer from his God. But still, if you think there is such a separating veil; if you feel as if the Lord had hidden Himself; if you are so despondent that you are afraid you will never draw near to the Mercy Seat, then sprinkle the blood towards the Throne of Grace—cast it on the very veil which appears to conceal your God from you! Let your heart go towards God, even if you cannot reach Him, and let this blood go before you, for rest assured nothing can dissolve obstacles and furnish you with an open access to God except the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God!  
Rest assured that you are already come unto God if boldly, yes, even if timidly with trembling finger, you do but sprinkle the blood in the direction which your faith longs to take! If you cannot present the Atonement of Christ, yourself, by the firm hand of an undaunted faith—remember, Christ’s own hand has presented the Propitiation long before—and, therefore, the work will not fail because of your feebleness! O that by a simple confidence in the Lord, your Redeemer, you may, this day, by His Grace, imitate the example of the priest under the Law, for Jesus makes you a priest by the Gospel! You may now look towards the Lord and plead that all-prevailing blood which makes us near, who were once afar off! I have often admired that blessed Gospel precept, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth,” for suppose I cannot see, yet if I look, I have the promise of being saved! If there should be a mist and a cloud between me and the bronze serpent, yet if I look that way I shall be healed! If I cannot clearly discern all the glories of my Lord and Savior, yet if I look with the glance of trust, blessed be God, He saves me!  
Turn, then, your half-opened eyes which only at one corner admit light! Turn them, I say, Godward and Christ-ward—and know that by reason of the atoning blood you are saved! The blood-spattered way is the only one which a sinner’s feet can traverse if he would come to God! It is easy, plain and open. See, the priest had the Gospel at his fingertips—at every motion of his hand, he preached it, and the effect of such preaching remained wherever the drops found a resting place!  
I further think that the blood was sprinkled on the veil seven times to show that a deliberate contemplation of the death of Christ is greatly for our benefit. Whatever else you treat lightly, let the Sacrifice of Calvary be seriously considered again and again—even unto seven times let it be meditated on! Read the story of our Lord’s death in the four Evangelists and ponder every detail till you are familiar with His griefs. I would have you know the story by heart, for nothing will do your heart so much good! Read over the 22nd Psalm and the 53rd of Isaiah every day if you are in any kind of trouble of heart about sin—and pray to God for enlightenment that you may see the exceeding greatness of His Grace to us in Christ Jesus! Oh, that you may with all your heart believe in the Lamb of God! Angels desire to look into these things, therefore, I pray you, do not neglect so great a salvation! Think lovingly of the atoning Sacrifice. Earnestly consider it a second time, do it a third time, do it a fourth time, do it a fifth time, do it a sixth time, do it a seventh time!  
Remember, too, that this sets out how great our guilt has been, since the blood must be sprinkled seven times before the work of Atonement is fully seen by you. Our guilt has a sevenfold blackness about it and there must be a sevenfold cleansing. If you plead the blood of Jesus once and you do not obtain peace thereby, plead it again! And if the burden still lies upon your heart, still go on pleading with the Lord the one prevailing argument that Jesus bled! If for the present you do not gain peace through the blood of the Cross, do not conclude that your sin is too great for pardon, for that is not the fact since, “all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.” A fuller acquaintance with Him who has made peace by His blood will calm the tempest of your mind. Christ is a great Savior for great sinners and His precious blood can remove the blackest spots of iniquity. See it sprinkled seven times for a seven-times polluted sinner and rest your soul on Him though seven devils should have entered into you! God, who bids us forgive unto 70 times seven, sets no limit to His own forgiveness.  
Reflect that if your case seems to yourself to be very difficult, it is provided for by this sevenfold sprinkling of the blood. If you say, “My heart is so hard! I cannot make it feel.” Or if you say, “I am so frivolous and foolish I seem to forget what I once knew,” then continue to look to the blood of Jesus and draw hope from it even to seven times. Do not go away from that, I charge you—where else can you go? The devil’s desire will be to keep you from thinking about Christ, but remember, thoughts about anything else will do you very little good. Your hope lies in thinking about Jesus, not about yourself! Masticate and digest such a text as this every morning—“He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.” Go to bed at night with this verse upon your tongue, “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” Or this, “Him that comes unto Me I will by no means cast out.”  
That dear man of God, Mr. Moody Stuart, somewhere tells us that he once talked with a woman who was in great trouble about her sins. She was a well-instructed person and knew the Bible thoroughly, so that he was in a little difficulty what to say to her, as she was so accustomed to the all-saving Truth of God. At last he urged upon her, very strongly, that passage, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,” and he noticed that she seemed to find a quiet relief in a gentle flow of tears. He prayed with her and when she rose from her knees, she seemed much comforted. Meeting her the next day and seeing her smiling face—and finding her full of rest in the Lord—he asked, “What was it that worked you deliverance?” “Oh,” she said, “it was that text, ‘Jesus Christ came to save sinners.’” “Did you not know that before?” asked Mr. Stuart. Yes, she knew the words before, but she found that in her heart of hearts she had believed that Jesus came to save saints and not sinners!  
Do not many awakened persons abide in the same error? Well, I want you, poor troubled heart, yes, and you, also, who are of a joyful spirit, to keep on with this sevenfold presentation of the Sacrifice of Christ unto God. And even if a veil should hang between you and the Lord, I beg you to continue to sprinkle the veil with blood until, before the eyes of your faith, the veil tears in two and you stand in the Presence of your reconciled God, rejoicing in Christ Jesus!  
II. Our second head is this—THE BLOOD IN ITS INFLUENCE UPON PRAYER. “The priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord.” The priest, in this case, goes from the inside of the Holy Place towards the outer court, having dealt with the veil of the Holy of Holies. He turns round

and finds close at his side the altar of incense made of gold and surmounted with a golden crown—to this he goes deliberately and places a portion of the blood upon each of its horns. Horns signify power and the explanation of the symbol is that there is no power in intercessory prayer apart from the blood of expiation.  
Remember, first, that the intercession of Christ Himself is based upon His Atonement. He is daily pleading before the Throne of God and His great argument is that He offered Himself without spot unto God. It seems to me most clear and blessed that our Lord Jesus makes this the main plea with the Father on our behalf—“I have finished the work which You gave Me to do.” He has suffered in our place and every day He pleads these sufferings for us. His blood speaks better things than that of Abel. He seeks no new plea, but always urges this old one—His blood shed for many for the remission of sins. “It pleased the Father to bruise Him,” and now it pleases the Father to hear Him! The bruised spices of His passion are an incense of sweet smell and derive a double acceptance from the blood-smeared altar upon which they are presented.  
And now take the type to yourselves. You and I are to offer incense upon this golden altar by our daily intercession for others, but our plea must always be the atoning blood of Jesus. I pray you, dear Friends, to urge this much more than you have been accustomed to do in your prayers. We are to cry to God for sinners and we are to cry to God for saints—but the sacrifice of Jesus must be our strength in petitioning. Intercession is one of the most excellent duties in which a Christian can be engaged—it has about it the honor both of priesthood and kingship. The incense altar ought to be continually smoking before the Lord God of Israel, not only in our public Prayer Meetings, but in our private supplications. We should be continually pleading for our children, for our friends, for our neighbors, for those who are hopeful and those who seem hopeless. But the great plea must always be, “By Your agony and bloody sweat! By Your Cross and passion.”  
Offer sweet spices of love, faith and hope, and lay on the burning coals of strong desire. But on the horn of your altar smear the blood— *“Blood has a voice to pierce the skies!  
‘Revenge,’ the blood of Abel cries.  
But the rich blood of Jesus slain  
Speaks, ‘Peace’ as loud from every vein.”*  
Take care you never advance another plea, or if another, let it be very subsidiary to this master reason. We may say, “O Lord, save men because their immortal souls are precious. Save them that they may escape from endless misery and that they may display the power of Your Grace. Save them, also, that Your Word may not return unto You void, and that Your Church may be built up by their means.” But we must never be content with these pleas! We must go on to plead the name of Jesus, for whatever we ask in that name we shall receive. He who once poured out His soul unto death and now makes intercession for the transgressors, will see to it that our pleas shall not be rejected! In all our intercessions we must remember Calvary—the incense altar, for us, must, on the horn of its strength, be always sprinkled with the blood!  
And, dearly Beloved, as this must be the plea of our intercession, so it must be our impulse in making intercession. When we pray, we come, as it were, to this golden altar and we look thereon—what do we see? Stains of blood! We look again, and again see crimson spots, while all the four horns are red with blood. Did my Lord pour out His soul unto death for men and shall not I pour out my soul in living earnest when I pray? Can you now bow your knee to plead with God and not feel your heart set upon the good of men when you see that your Lord has laid down His life that they may be saved? Cold prayers and dull pleas would vanish if we would but remember how Jesus loved—how being in an agony He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood.  
Brothers and Sisters, we are sadly blameworthy for neglect of intercessory prayer! I cannot tell how much of a blessing is being withheld because we do not pray importunately for our fellow men! May the Lord awaken us! May He never permit us to neglect the precious use of the Mercy Seat! When the late Dr. Bacchus was ill and near to death, a surgeon visited him. And as he left the room, he was observed to speak to the servant. The good old Divine begged the attendant to tell him what the surgeon said. After some pause, he said, “Dear Sir, he told me not to leave you, for you could not live more than another half-hour.” “Then,” said the saint, “help me out of bed, let me get upon my knees and spend my last half hour on earth in praying for the Church of God and for the salvation of men.”  
What a blessed way of spending one’s last half-hour! Let me rather say—what a blessed way of spending half-an-hour at any time! Try it this afternoon! I do not know any method of benefiting our friends which is more constantly open to us all than that of intercessory prayer. And I cannot give you a better argument for why you should use it than this— your Lord has sprinkled the golden altar of intercession with His own blood! Where He poured out His blood, will you not pour out your tears? He has given His bleeding heart for men—will not you give your pleading lips?  
I think, too, I must say that this smearing of the horns of the altar with blood is meant to give us very great encouragement and assurances whenever we come to God in prayer. Never give anybody up, however bad he may be. If you know a man that is as much like the devil as two peas in a pod, still have hope for him, because when you come to the golden altar to offer your prayers on his behalf what do you see? Why, there is the blood of Christ! What sin is there which it cannot remove? “Oh,” you ask, “did Jesus die for sinners like this man and shall I despair of him and, therefore, refuse to pray for him?” This is logical argument. We are slow to labor for men because we are slow of heart in expecting their salvation—and this arises out of our narrow views of our Lord Jesus. I pray you enlarge your ideas of God’s mercy and of Christ’s power to cleanse! Pray not with a phantom hope, but with solid confidence, and say, “Lord, I do but follow with my tears where You have been with Your blood. I am pleading for this man’s pardon and You are also making intercession for transgressors. I am pleading for those whom You have bought with Your blood and, therefore, I am confident that my desire is in consonance with Your will and that I shall be heard in Heaven, Your dwelling place.”  
When we pray, let us with vehement desire plead the blood of Jesus Christ! Perhaps fewer petitions and more urging of the merit of Christ would make better prayers. If we were shorter in what we ask for but longer in pleading the reason why we should obtain it, we might prevail more easily. I suggest that we use fewer nails, but take care that those nails are driven in with Calvary’s blood-stained hammer and clenched with this argument—“For Jesus’ sake.” May this sort of prayer be used by all of us in private and in public—and then we must and shall prevail!  
III. Time flies too quickly this morning and, therefore, I must pass over many things I had thought to dwell upon. The last point is, THE BLOOD IN ITS INFLUENCE UPON ALL OUR SERVICE. You see we have been coming outwards from the veil to the golden altar and now we pass outside the Holy Place into the outer court. And there in the open air stands the great bronze altar—the first object that the Israelite saw when he entered the sacred precincts. As soon as he entered into the first enclosure, his eye lighted upon the great altar of brass upon which burnt offerings were burned and oblations were presented unto the Lord. It was at the foot of this bronze altar that the bowls of blood were continually poured out—so that the altar was encrimsoned with it—and the soil around was soaked with the sanguine flood.  
That altar represents a great many things and among the rest of them, our Lord Jesus presenting Himself to God as an acceptable Sacrifice. Whenever you think of our Lord as being an offering of a sweet smell unto God, never dissociate that fact in your mind from His being slain for sin, for all our Lord’s service is tinged by His atoning death. It is a great mistake, when you are trying to explain any one of the Levitical sacrifices to run entirely upon one line, for there is a blessed union of all of them in Christ. The offerings of a sweet savor were, all of them, in a sense, sin offerings—there are clear indications of this. At the same time the sin offering was not altogether an abomination, but, in part, a sweet savor offering, for the fat, as we have seen in our reading, was presented upon the altar. What God has joined together let no man put asunder. You may look at your Lord under various headings and separately think of His life and of His death—but never stereotype even that division, for His death was the climax of His life—and His life was necessary to His death. Always think of Jesus, in all your meditations upon Him, as presenting Himself to God and pouring out His soul unto death by way of atonement. When I see that great bronze altar, I do not forget how our Lord was accepted of God, but when I see the floods of blood at the foot of the altar, I am reminded of the fact that, “He His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.”  
Viewing the type in reference to ourselves, let us learn that whenever we come to offer any sacrifice unto the Lord, we must take care that we present it by virtue of the precious blood of Christ. The worship of this morning—God knows our hearts—He knows how many have really adored Him. And He knows, out of those who worship, how many of us have presented our sacrifice, thinking only of the merit of Jesus as the reason why it should be received. When you rise from your knees after your morning prayer, have you really pleaded the precious blood? Your petitions will not be acceptable to God if you have not. When you are praying at eventide and speaking with your heavenly Father, have you your eyes upon Christ? If not, your devotion will be rejected.  
As it is with worship in the form of prayer, so is it with worship in the form of praise. Sweet sounds are very delightful when we sing the praises of God, but unless the altar is blood-stained upon which we lay our Psalms and hymns, they will not be accepted for all their music! We also bring to God our gifts as He prospers us. I trust we are all ready to give Him a portion of our substance—but do we present it upon the altar which sanctifies the giver and the gift? Do we see the blood of Christ upon it and present our gold and silver through that which is more precious by far? If not, we might as well keep our money. When you go, this afternoon, to your Sunday school classes, or go out into the streets to preach, or go round with your tracts, will you present your holy labor to God through the precious blood? There is but one Altar on which He will accept your services—that Altar is the Person of His dear Son—and in this matter Jesus must be viewed as pouring out His blood for us.  
We must view the Atonement as connected with every holy thing. I believe that our testimonies for God will be blessed of God in proportion as we keep the Sacrifice of Christ to the forefront. Somebody asked our Brother, Mr. Moody, how it was that he was so successful. And he is said to have replied, “Well, if I must tell you, it is, I believe, because we come out fair and square upon the Doctrine of Substitution.” In that remark he hit the nail on the head. That is the saving doctrine! Keep that before your own mind. Keep it before the minds of those whom you would benefit. Let the Lord see that you are always thinking of His dear Son.  
And, Beloved, do you not think that this pouring of the blood at the foot of this bronze altar indicates to us how much we ought to bring there? If Jesus has brought His life, there, and laid Himself thereon, ought we not to bring all that we are and all that we have—and consecrate all to God? Let us not offer a lean, scraggy sacrifice, or one that is half dead, or broken, or diseased—but let us bring our best at its best—and cheerfully present it unto the Most High through the precious blood of Christ. One said of a young man who had lately joined the Church, “Is he O and O?” And another answered, “What do you mean by that?” “Why,” said the first, “I mean—Is he out and out for Christ? Does he give himself—spirit, soul and body, to Jesus?” Surely, when we see the altar with Christ Himself upon it and His blood poured out there, we must acknowledge that if we could spend our whole life in zealous labor, and then die a martyr’s death, we should not have rendered even half what such amazing love deserves! Let us be stimulated and quickened by the sight of the blood upon the bronze altar!  
Lastly, you notice the blood was poured out at the bottom of the altar. What could that mean but this—that the altar of thank offering stood upon and grew out of a basis of blood. So all our deeds for God and our sacrifices for His cause must spring out of the love which He has manifested in the death of His dear Son. We love Him because—you know the “because”—because He first loved us. And how do we know that He loves us? Behold the death of Jesus as the surest proof! I long to put my whole being upon that altar and I should feel, as I did so, that I was not giving my God anything, but only rendering to Him what His dear Son has bought a million times over by once shedding His life-blood! When we have done all, we shall be unprofitable servants and we shall say so. All that we have given to God has been presented out of gratitude for the fact that God so loved us that He gave His only-begotten Son to die for us that we might live through Him.  
Load the altar! Heap it high! Let sacrifices smoke thereon, for it is built upon God’s unspeakable Gift! When sin is removed, service is accepted— “then shall they offer bullocks upon Your altar.” Attempt no offering of your own works till then, for unpardoned sinners bring unaccepted offerings! First, let the blood be recognized and let the full Atonement be rejoiced in. Service rendered to God with a desire for personal merit is abominable in His sight. But when our merit is all found in the Divine Person of His Son, then will He accept us and our offering, too, in Christ Jesus! God grant unto you, dear Hearers, to be accepted in the Beloved. Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Leviticus 4:1-21; Isaiah 53.**  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—429, 285, 282.

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BLOOD EVEN ON THE GOLDEN ALTAR  
NO. 2369

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, JULY 15, 1894. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MAY 6, 1888.

**“And the priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which is in the Tabernacle of the Congregation.”  
Leviticus 4:7.**

ALL through Holy Scripture you constantly meet with the mention of “blood.” “Without shedding of blood is no remission.” “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” “You were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ.” The word, “blood,” is recorded over and over again, and if any complain of the preacher that he frequently uses this expression, he makes no kind of apology for it—he would be ashamed of himself if he did not often speak of the blood! The Word of God is as full of references to blood as the body of a man is full of life and blood.

But what does, “the blood,” mean in Scripture? It means not merely suffering, which might very well be typified by blood, but it means suffering unto death. It means the taking of a life. To put it very briefly, a sin against God deserves death as its punishment, and what God said by the mouth of the Prophet Ezekiel still stands true, “The soul that sins, it shall die.” The only way by which God could fulfill His threatening sentence and yet forgive guilty men was that Jesus Christ, His Son, came into the world and offered His life instead of ours. His life, because of the dignity of His Person, and the majesty of His Nature, was so vast in its value that He could give it not only for one man, but for the whole multitude of men who should believe in Him! Now, that by which men are saved is the suffering of Jesus Christ even unto death, as Peter writes, “Christ, also, has once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” Paul puts it, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” And again, “He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

All the sacrifices under the Law of God, when their blood was poured out, were typical of the life of Christ given for men as a Sacrifice in the place of those who had offended unto death against the Law of God and, therefore, were doomed to die. You who hear me constantly know very well what I mean. Have I ever given any uncertain sound about this great central Truth of God? There is no way of salvation under Heaven but by faith in the Substitutionary Sacrifice of Jesus Christ! And the way by which we are redeemed from eternal wrath is by Christ having stood as Substitute for us and having died in our place, as it is written, “The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed.”

It is worthy of note that in the death of Christ, the shedding of blood was made very conspicuous, as if to refresh our memories about the teaching of the types of the Mosaic Law. Jesus was scourged unto bleeding. His temples were pierced and lacerated with a crown of thorns. His hands and feet were nailed with iron to the Cross. His side was opened by the soldier’s spear and forthwith there flowed blood and water. There are many ways by which men may die without the shedding of blood— the capital punishment of our own country is free from this accompaniment—but our Savior was ordained to die by a death in which the shedding of blood was conspicuous, as if to link Him forever with those sacrifices which were made as types and symbols of His great atoning work! My dear Brother, Mr. Pearce, in his prayer, seemed to set forth Christ evidently crucified among you. I wish that even though you have to use your imaginations a little, you would think that you see Jesus on the Cross. Picture Him here, tonight, and lovingly watch Him. You will need few words from me if you do but catch sight of Him. Behold your Savior pouring out His life’s blood that He might bear your guilt away, dying for you that you might live forever!

In the verse before our text we read that the priest was to take of the blood of the bullock of the sin offering and sprinkle it seven times “before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary.” The veil concealed the inner dwelling place of God and this veil was to be sprinkled seven times, that is, perfectly. There was to be a perfect presentation of the precious blood before the place where God was concealed. After that was done, the priest was to take some of the blood of the bullock and smear with it the four horns of the golden altar which stood just in front of the veil, and near the golden candlesticks. This altar was intended for the burning of sweet incense upon it and the priest was to smear with blood the four horns of it. What was meant by that act? Let me read the text again and then at once seek to explain it. “The priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord.”

I. My first observation is this—THE ATONEMENT WAS PRESENTED WITH A VIEW TO THE LORD.  
Have you not often heard it said that all the Atonement accomplished was something in relation to us? We think upon the death of Christ and it stirs our affections, but some teachers say that is the only result—it brings us to God, but it does not bring God to us! That is what they say, but when we turn to Holy Scripture we find that the blood shedding was with reference to God, Himself, as well as with reference to us, because in the text it is distinctly said, “The priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord.”  
Its place was where the Lord would especially see it. I would like the young people, when they get home, to take a pencil and mark in the first chapters of the Book of Leviticus how often the expression is used, “before the Lord.” The bringing of the bullock, the killing of the sacrifice, the sprinkling of the blood—all was to be done, “before the Lord.” Whether any man saw it or not, was of small account, for it was, “before the Lord.” True, it was done in the presence of the congregation, but it is specified over and over, again, that it was, “before the Lord.” I would remind you that in the memorable type of the paschal lamb, the Lord gave special instructions as to where the blood was to be sprinkled. Was it to be within the house? Remember that all the people were inside the house—on the Passover night there was not a man outside! Where, then, was the blood put? Upon the interior walls of the house where they could see it? Might it not tend to comfort them if they could look upon it? That was not the Lord’s plan—the blood was not put where the people could see it—it was sprinkled outside the house! And the Inspired account tells us that the Lord, Himself, said to Moses and Aaron, “And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses...and when I see the blood, I will pass over you.” It was put where God could see it, and, as if to show that that was the main point, it was put where the people could not see it—that it might be distinctly said to them, “It is, after all, God’s sight of the great sacrifice which saves you.”  
Next, the place of the blood is where the Lord sees it in reference to us. Understand where the Lord sees it with reference to us. They charge us with teaching that the Atonement in some way changes the Nature of God. We have never said so and we never dreamed anything of the kind! Above all things, we have always taught that God is Immutable and cannot be changed either in His Nature or in His purpose. They tell us that we teach and, they tell others that we teach, that the Sacrifice of Christ was offered to make God love His people. We have, over and over and over again, denied this, and declared that—  
*“’Twas not to make Jehovah’s love  
Towards the sinner flame,  
That Jesus, from His Throne above,  
A suffering Man became!  
’Twas not the death which He endured,  
Nor all the pangs He bore,  
That God’s eternal love procured,  
For God was love before.”*  
Christ in His Sacrifice is the result of God’s love, not the cause of it! Yet, dear Friends, we do confess, without any hesitation, to this fact, that the death of Christ has a reference to God’s dealing with us in this way— the claims of Divine Justice must be met. The Judge of all the earth must do right and He cannot suffer sin to go unpunished! Our own conscience confirms that Truth of God—there is no sinner, even when he is most hardened, who deep down in his soul does not know that to be true! And when he lies dying, it causes him great trouble to think that he is going where God must visit his sin upon him!  
Now, what Christ has done is this—the Father has given us, in Christ, that which satisfies the claims of Infinite Justice. God can be just and yet the Justifier of him that believes. Executing the death penalty upon our Surety, He declares that whoever believes on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life! Oh, dear Friends, it is God’s looking on and seeing in His Son the vindication of His law, the honoring of His holiness—it is this which is the very essence of Christ’s Sacrifice as to its result upon us!  
I believe that the great Lord, the just Judge of all, looks on Jesus Christ with extreme delight as having suffered for His people. He sees in the sufferings of Christ the honoring of His own holiness. Jesus loved holiness so much that He would sooner die than that holiness should be impugned. He was so true, so upright, so just, that He would rather suffer to the death on the tree than that God should, in the least degree, violate His Word, or infringe His Justice. The Father looks on Christ’s great Sacrifice and He takes great delight in it because He sees in it His own holiness honored and glorified!  
And what a delight He must take in the love of Christ when He sees that Jesus loved us with a love which many waters could not quench, and which death, itself, could not drown! The great Father looks to the death of Christ and sees Christ’s love triumphant on the tree, and He is charmed with it. I do not think that you and I can ever tell what pleasure the Father has in the finished work and Sacrifice of His dear Son. We read that He “smelled a savor of rest” in what was only a typical sacrifice—but what a savor of rest must the great heart of the Infinite Jehovah find in the Infinite Sacrifice of His Well-Beloved! You look upon it with bleared and bedimmed eyes, yet you see enough to make you wonder and adore. But what does God see in the Atonement of Jesus? Ah, Beloved, we cannot fully answer you, but we know that He sees there that which He eternally looks upon with infinite complacency and, for the sake of it, He looks upon us, poor guilty ones as we are, with complacency, too! He loves us because of what Christ has done in reference to us!  
That is my first remark and though I have but feebly set it forth, yet, Beloved, it is a great and glorious Truth of God! The Atonement has a bearing towards the Lord, Himself, and, therefore, in this ancient type, the blood was smeared upon the altar of sweet incense before the Lord.  
II. But now, secondly, coming to the very heart of the text—THE ATONEMENT GIVES POWER TO THE ITERCESSION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.  
That altar of sweet incense was the type of Christ pleading for men, making intercession for the transgressors. The horns of the altar signify the power of His intercession and the power of Christ’s intercession lies in His Sacrifice—lies in the blood. If I might be allowed to picture such a scene, I seem to see the Divine Son pleading with His Father and He pleads the merit of His own blood.  
The Father sees it, first, as a reason why the Son should plead with Him, for the blood shows His nearness of kin to man. Has Jesus blood? “Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He, also, Himself, likewise took part of the same.” Here is the token to His Father that He is truly Man! Here is the sure testimony of His identification with His people for whom He makes intercession! The mark is made by His own blood upon the horns of the altar and its presence there proves that He is qualified to plead for men, seeing that, while He is God, His blood shows that He is evidently also Man!  
I hear Him begin to plead and if Justice would stay Him and say, “How can You plead for the guilty? Before this Great White Throne, unsullied by a stain, how can You ask that God should bless the impure and foul?” Jesus points to His own blood as the token of His removal of impeding sin. “The Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world,” has taken it away by the shedding of His own blood! “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” “Hear Me, My Father,” He cries, “hear My plea on behalf of the penitent sinner! I have put away his sin. Answer My prayer and bless him, for I have taken away the sin that cursed him. I have borne its penalty and made expiation for it by My death.”  
Do you not think, also, that this blood, which is the very power of Christ’s intercession, signifies His fulfillment of Covenant engagements? We read of “the blood of the Everlasting Covenant.” Jesus had engaged with His Father “to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness,” and He has done so! By His death, He could say, of His work as the Messiah, “It is finished!” By that death He had fulfilled His Suretyship engagement to His Father in connection with the Covenant of Grace and this, Beloved, is the very sinew of His strength in interceding for His people—this is the very essence of His pleading! He has done all that He agreed to do, therefore He asks the Father to fulfill His part of the Everlasting Covenant and to save the people redeemed by the blood shed on Calvary.  
And, it seems to me, that Christ also uses His blood as the great power of His pleading in His claim of reward. “Have I not died for My people? Then will You not let them live, O My Father? Behold, O Justice, with uplifted sword, if you seek Me, let these go their way.” Jesus seems to say, “My Lord, My God, I have become Your Servant. I took upon Myself the form of a Servant and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. And I have performed all the service You did lay upon Me. Reward Me, then, for all My toil. Let Me see of the travail of My Soul. Let Me be satisfied according to the promise which You did make to Me when I undertook this work.”  
Do you not see, then, my Brothers and Sisters, that the blood on the horns of the altar means this—that Christ’s blood is the very strength of His pleading with God? Because He died for guilty men, therefore, today, when He asks for the sinner’s salvation, He will have it granted to Him, for the blood prevails with God, speaking better things than that of Abel!  
III. And now, in the last place, I want to say to you that THIS BLOOD GIVES ACCEPTANCE TO OUR WORSHIP.  
We bring to God sweet incense through Jesus Christ our Savior. Our prayers, our praises, our services are like the mixture of sweet perfumes which were burnt of old upon the altar before God. But it is the bloodmark on the altar that makes the incense acceptable. It is the atoning Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ that gives prayer, praise and service acceptance in the sight of God.  
In beginning to speak upon this point, I want you to notice that the blood is on the altar before we begin to pray. It was the blood that gave acceptance to the incense burnt upon the altar—it was not the stacte, onycha and galbanum—those, “sweet spices with pure frankincense,” that, by themselves, ascended with fragrance unto the Lord. There must be the blood of the sacrifice sprinkled on the horns of the altar! What does this mean? Why, Beloved, that God accepts us in Christ because of Christ, Himself, and Christ, alone! It is true that we are to bring forth good works, for faith without works is dead. Still, the reason of our acceptance with God is not our good works, but Christ and His atoning Sacrifice, alone! As we come to Him, we sing—

*“Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Your Cross I cling.”*

Before you have performed a single work of holiness, before you have felt any of those sweet emotions which come out of the possession of Divine Love shed abroad in your heart, if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are accepted with God—Christ has saved you! Therefore is it that a man is justified by faith without works, for it is the faith that justifies him as it lays hold on Christ. There shall be an abundance of sweet spices on the altar, by-and-by, but apart from them, and before there has been a living coal smoking there, the altar has been consecrated unto God by the sprinkling of the blood of the Sacrifice! I like to think of that glorious fact! Let your good works be multiplied, but keep all of them at a distance from the Sacrifice of Christ! Never dream of adding them to Christ’s Sacrifice to make it complete, for it is perfect without anything of yours. When you repent of sin, if you begin to trust in your repentance, away with your repentance! When you serve God, if you begin to trust in your service, away with it! Away with it! It becomes an antichrist if it takes the place that should be occupied by Jesus, only, for His precious blood, alone, can put away sin!

But now I want you to note, dear Friends, that whenever you come to God with your worship, you must take care that you notice the blood on the altar, because it removes the sin of our worship. The best worship that we ever render to God is far from perfect. Our praises, ah, how faint and feeble they are! Our prayers, how wandering, how wavering they are! When we get nearest to God, how far off we are! When we are most like He, how greatly unlike He we are! This I know, that my tears need be wept over, and my faith is so mingled with unbelief that I have to repent of that sad admixture! Brothers and Sisters, keep your eyes fixed on the blood of Jesus! There is no prayer, no praise that can come before God, of itself, for it is so imperfect. Therefore, keep your eyes on the blood of Jesus, that even the sin of your holy things may be put away by the Sacrifice once offered on Calvary.

Do you not think, also, that we would pray a great deal better if we thought more of the blood on the altar as our plea in prayer? I remember a Primitive Methodist Prayer Meeting at which a Brother could not get on with his supplication. He was very earnest and fervent, but he could not make any progress. He did not seem as if he had power to pray. He shouted, as Methodists do, but there is not much in that—yet he could not get on with real praying till a friend at the back end of the room cried out, “Plead the blood, Brother! Plead the blood!” He did so and then he began to pray with mighty power! Here lies the force of all your pleas in prayer—if you can plead for Jesus’ sake and in His name, by His agony and bloody sweat, by His Cross and passion—then you have discovered the great secret of prevailing with God! Your hand is on the lever and you can move the world if you will!

Should we not, also, make the precious blood of Jesus the highest note of our praises? When we are praising God, we think a great deal of the music. I do not blame anybody for doing that, especially if he is the leader of the Psalmody, but, Brothers and Sisters, we may come to think more of the melody and the harmony than we do of the heart and soul of praise! Keep your eyes on the crucified Christ and then sing as loudly as you like. Fix your gaze on those five precious wounds—they shall help you to praise Christ better than all the notes of the scales, for what higher note can we ever reach than this, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood”? Now you have sounded out the very highest note in the scale! Oh, the precious blood, the atoning Sacrifice, the great Substitution of our Lord Jesus Christ! The Hallelujah Chorus of all the redeemed shall have no nobler note than this, “He loved us and saved us. He loved us and died for us and we are washed in His blood.”

Let me here say that every sort of worship, not only prayer and praise, but every kind of worship that we can render to the Lord, will be acceptable with God in proportion as we exhibit, with it, the blood upon the altar. I find it a very sweet way of worshipping God to sit down and meditate. I hope you feel the same. You do not need any words at such seasons. You have been reading a chapter of the Bible and God has spoken to you and you, perhaps, have knelt in prayer and have spoken with Him. Now you sit down and meditate. I like to sit quite still and look up, or sit quite still with closed eyes, and just think. Now, the thinking, the meditating, the contemplation which will be best for you and most acceptable with God is that which keeps close to the Cross and near the precious sacrifice. Do you notice what holy men and women say when they come to die? You stand at their bedside and talk to them. If they are in any trouble and distress of conscience, what do they begin to talk about? Why, about the precious Sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross! It does not matter to what sect they belong, or to what denomination they have been joined in life—they always come back to this point at the last. There is no passing out of this life with comfort—there is no hope of entering into Heaven with delight—except as we are resting upon the precious blood of Christ!

Ah, dear Friends, there may be some here who do not think much of this theme. There always were such. It is nothing to you that Jesus should die. But if there is anything that sanctifies, any Truth of God that digs deep into the heart and puts the Seeds of Life into the very center of our being—if there is anything that makes the Christian devout, humble, holy—it is the Doctrine of the Cross! I can almost gauge your piety to a certainty by what you think of the bleeding Savior. If He is nothing to you, you are not in the blessed secret. But if Jesus Christ is first and last with you. If you preach Christ crucified—if you love Christ crucified—in that proportion God dwells in you and you dwell in Him! This is not theory that I am talking—this is no Truth of God that lies upon the borders of the Christian religion and may, or may not be accepted! This is the very heart of the Gospel and if you take this away, you have killed it!

You are no Christian if you disbelieve this Truth of God! If you are not saved by the precious blood of Christ, you are damned! There is but one gate of life and that is sprinkled with the blood of Christ. If you turn away from that door, you have chosen the broad road that leads to destruction. O you who feel your guilt, come to my Lord for pardon! O you who confess your sin, come to His blood for cleansing! It is still true that—

*“There is life for a look at the Crucified One! There is life at this moment for you.”*

How many years have I come to this pulpit, telling this old, old story, telling it very poorly and very imperfectly, and yet you are not tired of hearing it! Look how the crowds still throng this house! I might have given you some pretty novelties every now and then, but had I done so, I believe I would have lost you! But this old Truth of God, even if you do not accept it, commands your attention. You cannot help coming to hear it—oh, that you would also believe it! It has made me supremely happy. I was about to say that it has given me an angel’s happiness and, sometimes, I could even say without exaggeration it gives me solid peace with which I can live, and with which, by-and-by, I hope to die!

It enables me to stand alone against unnumbered foes and feel as happy as if everybody were with me, for, in this great Truth that Jesus died for me, that Jesus bore my sins in His own body on the tree, there is a rock beneath my feet! He who is on that rock may stand there and defy even death and Hell! Oh, that you would come and trust my Lord, you restless ones, you who do not know what peace means! Trust Him! Believe that He died for you! Trust Him and you shall have peace like a river—and righteousness like the waves of the sea!

May we now come to the Communion Table thinking much of the precious blood once shed for many for the remission of sins!  
EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**Leviticus 16:1-31; Hebrews 9:1-22.**

Verse 1, 2. And the LORD spoke unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died, and the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron, your brother, that he come not at all times into the Holy Place within the veil before the Mercy Seat, which is upon the Ark, that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the Mercy Seat. The way into the heavenly places was not yet made manifest. The inner shrine called the Holy of Holies, was specially guarded from human access. No one could have said, in those days, “Let us come boldly unto the Throne of Grace,” for only the High Priest could approach the Mercy Seat at all—and he must go within the veil strictly in accordance with the instructions given to Moses by the Lord. Nadab and Abihu appear to have entered into the Presence of God wrongfully. They had probably been drinking, for there was a command, afterwards, given that no priest should drink wine or strong drink when he went into the House of the Lord. God, in His righteous anger, slew these young men at once and now, lest any others should intrude into the secret place of communion, a Law was given to tell when and how man might approach his God.

3. Thus shall Aaron come into the Holy Place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering. There is no access to God except by sacrifice—there never was, and there never can be any way to God for sinful man except by sacrifice!

4. He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen belt, and with the linen miter shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on. Our great High Priest offered Himself without spot to God and He is, Himself, without sin. But the Jewish High Priest must make himself typically pure by putting on the snow-white garments of holy service and, before doing so, he must wash himself with water, that he might come before God acceptably. None might approach the Holy God with impurities upon them.

5, 6. And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an Atonement for himself, and for his house. These priests were sinful and, therefore, they must first, themselves, be purged from guilt before they could come near to God; but the true High Priest of God, our Lord Jesus, needed to offer no sacrifice for Himself, for He was pure and without blemish or stain or sin.

7. And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation. These two goats were not for himself, but for the people. You must regard them as if they were but one offering, for it needed both of them to set forth the Divine Plan by which sin is put away—one was to die and the other was, typically, to bear away the sin of the people.

8. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat. One goat was to show how sin is put away in reference to God by sacrifice, and the other goat was to show how it is put away in reference to us, God’s people, by being carried into oblivion.

9-14. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD’S lot fell and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an Atonement with Him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness. And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an Atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself: and he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil: and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the Mercy Seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not: and he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the Mercy Seat eastward; and before the Mercy Seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. This was his first entrance within the veil, with holy incense to denote the acceptance which Christ has with God, though He is always well-beloved, dear and precious to His Father. This incense sent up a cloud that veiled the Glory of the Shekinah which shone between the two wings of the cherubim and so the High Priest was better able to bear the wondrous brilliance by which God revealed His Presence. When Aaron had thus filled the place with the sweetly-perfumed smoke, he took the blood of the bullock of the sin offering and carefully sprinkled it seven times on the Mercy Seat, and on the ground around the Mercy Seat. What a mercy it is for you and me that the spot where we meet with God is a place where the blood of the Great Sacrifice has been sprinkled, yes, and that the ground of our meeting with God, the place on which the Mercy Seat rests, also has the blood mark upon it!

15. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the Mercy Seat, and before the Mercy Seat. Twice, you see, is the Holy Place thus sprinkled, first with the blood of the bullock and then with that of the goat.

16. And he shall make an Atonement for the Holy Place because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the Tabernacle of the Congregation that remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness. If God is to dwell in the midst of sinful men, it can only be through the blood of the Atonement. Twice, seven times, were the Holy Place and the tabernacle to be sprinkled with blood, as though to indicate a double perfectness of efficacy of the preparation for God’s dwelling among sinful men.

17-19 And there shall be no man in the Tabernacle of the Congregation when he goes in to make an Atonement in the Holy Place, until he come out, and has made an Atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel. And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the LORD, and make an Atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel. Even this altar to which we bring our prayers and our thank offerings has sin upon it. There is some defilement, even, in the saltwater of our penitent tears! There is some unbelief, even, in our most acceptable faith! There is some lack of holiness about our holiest things! We are unclean by nature and by practice, too—what could we do without the sprinkling of the blood? See how the Lord insisted upon it in the case of His ancient people, yet there are some in these modern times who deride it. God forgive their blasphemy!

20, 21. And when he has made an end of reconciling the Holy Place, and the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. Notice the, “all,” in this 21st verse—“Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness.” This was the second part of the Atonement showing not sacrifice, but the effect of sacrifice, and explaining what becomes of sin after the sacrifice has been accepted and the blood has been presented within the veil.

22-25. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness. And Aaron shall come into the Tabernacle of the Congregation and shall put off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the Holy Place, and shall leave them there: and he shall wash his flesh with water in the Holy Place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people, and make an Atonement for himself, and for the people. And the fat of the sin offering shall he burn upon the altar. Only the fat of it, the best of it, was burnt upon the altar, for sin offerings were not acceptable to God. They were regarded as being filled with impurity by reason of the sin which they brought to mind. For this reason the bullock and the goat of the sin offering had to be burnt outside the camp—“Therefore Jesus, also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate,” as our Sin Offering. Yet, inasmuch as the fat was accepted upon the altar, so is Christ, even as our Sin Offering, acceptable before God.

26, 27. And he that let go the goat for the scapegoat shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp. And the bullock for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make Atonement in the Holy Place, shall one carry forth outside the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung. All must be burnt—and the last is mentioned because it more strikingly sets forth the impurity of the sin connected with the sin offering! All must be burnt right up. There must not be a particle of the sin offering left unconsumed.

28. And he that burns them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp. Everything that has to do with God’s service must be clean and purified by fire, and purified by water. An Atonement cannot be made by that which is, itself, defiled— it must be without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing before it can put sin away. This is the virtue of Christ’s Atonement, for He was altogether without sin of any kind.

29-31 . And this shall be a statute forever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it is one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourns among you: for on that day shall the priest make an Atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It shall be a Sabbath of rest unto you, and you shall afflict your souls, by a statute forever. This shows what sacredness the Lord attached to the great Day of Atonement and gives us more than a hint of the preciousness of our Lord’s atoning work for us. Now let us turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews and see how the Apostle spiritualizes the services of the Mosaic dispensation.

Hebrews 9:1 Then verily the first Covenant had also ordinances of Divine service and a worldly sanctuary. An external sanctuary, a material structure and, therefore, belonging to this world.

2. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread: which is called the sanctuary. Or, “the Holy Place.”

3-8. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All; which had the golden censer, and the Ark of the Covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the Tables of the Covenant; and over it the Cherubims of glory shadowing the Mercy Seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the Second went the High Priest, alone, once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Spirit thus signifying that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing. Notice especially those words, “Not without blood.” There could be no approach to God under the old dispensation without the shedding of blood and there is no access to the Lord, now, without the precious blood of Christ.

9-22. Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause He is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testators. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator lives. Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the Book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God has enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the Law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. That is the great Gospel Truth that was set forth by all the sacrifices under the Law of God—“without shedding of blood is no remission.”

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Sermon #1386 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

SINS OF IGNORANCE  
NO. 1386

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 25, 1877, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And if a soul sins and commits any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord; though he knew it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity. And he shall bring a ram**

**without blemish out of the flock, with your estimation, for a trespass offering, unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance  
wherein he erred and knew it not, and it shall be forgiven him.” Leviticus 5:17, 18.**

IT is supposed in our text that men might commit forbidden things without knowing it. No, it is not merely supposed, but it is taken for granted and provided for. The Levitical law had special statutes for sins of ignorance and one of its sections begins with these words, “If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord.” If you will, at your leisure, read the 4th and 5th chapters of Leviticus, you will find, first of all, it is supposed that a priest may sin. They knew nothing of infallible priests and infallible popes under the Mosaic Law! It was known and recognized that priests might sin and sin through ignorance, too.

“The priest’s lips should keep knowledge,” but as they were compassed with infirmities, they learned to have compassion on the ignorant by being made, themselves, conscious that they were not perfect in understanding. In the 4th chapter a sacrifice is prescribed for “the priest that is anointed, if he sins according to the sin of the people.” The highest in office, who ought to be best read in the things of God, might, nevertheless, err through misunderstanding, forgetfulness, or ignorance. The priests were teachers, but they needed, also, to be taught. As Trapp says, “The sins of teachers are teachers of sins” and, therefore, they were not overlooked but had to be expiated by trespass offerings.

Further on in the chapter it is supposed that a ruler may sin (see verse 22). A ruler should be thoroughly acquainted with the Law which he has to dispense, but yet he might not know every point and, therefore, might err. Therefore it is written, “When a ruler has sinned, and done somewhat through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord his God concerning things which should not be done, and is guilty. Or if his sin, wherein he has sinned, comes to his knowledge; he shall bring his offering.” There existed no fiction among the Jews that the king can do no wrong—however excellent his intentions, he might be misinformed upon the Divine Law and so fall into error. Errors in leaders are apt to breed mischief and, therefore, they were to be repented of and put away by an expiatory sacrifice.

It was, also, according to the Law, regarded as very likely that any man might fall into sins of ignorance, for in chapter four, verse 27, we read, “And if any one of the common people sins through ignorance, while he does somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord.” The sin

even of the most common person was not to be winked at and passed over as a mere trifle, even though he could plead ignorance of the Law! It was not to be said, “Oh, he is quite an insignificant person and he did it in ignorance and, therefore, there is no need to take any note of it.” No, on the contrary, he was, also, to bring his trespass offering that the priest might make an atonement for him. Ignorance was common enough among the common people, but it did not constitute a license for them, nor screen them from guilt.

But we need not, dear Friends, go to these Scripture references, for we are well assured by our own observation and the verdict of our own experience that sins of ignorance are possible, for we have often, ourselves, sinned in this fashion, and we have had to mourn deeply over the fact when we have been convinced of it. Very much in which we once allowed ourselves we would not do again, for we see the evil of it, though once we judged it to be right enough. An enlightened conscience mourns over sins of ignorance which it would never do if they were innocent mistakes.

The word rendered, “ignorance,” may, also, bear the translation of inadvertence. Inadvertence is a kind of acted ignorance—a man frequently does wrong for lack of thought, through not considering the outcome of his actions—or even thinking at all. He carelessly and hastily blunders into the course which first suggests itself and errs because he did not think about whether or not it was right. There is very much sin of this kind committed every day. There is no intent to do wrong and yet wrong is done. Culpable neglect creates a thousand faults. “Evil is worked by lack of thought as well as lack of heart.” Sins of inadvertence, therefore, are undoubtedly abundant among us and in these busy, thoughtless, railway days they are apt to increase.

We do not take time enough to examine our actions! We do not take good heed to our steps. Life should be a careful work of art in which every single line and tint should be the fruit of study and thought, like the paintings of the great master who was apt to say, “I paint for eternity.” But, alas, life is often slurred over like those hasty productions of the scene painter in which present effect, alone, is studied, and the canvas becomes a mere daub of colors hastily laid on. We seem intent to do much rather than to do well—we want to cover space rather than to reach perfection. This is not wise. O that every single thought were conformed to the will of God!

Now, seeing that there are sins of ignorance and sins of inadvertence, what about them? Is there any actual guilt in them? In our text we have the Lord’s mind and judgment—not that of the Church or of some eminent Divine—but of the Lord God Himself and, therefore, let me read it to you once again. “If a soul sins and commits any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord; though he knew it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity.” Sins of ignorance, then, are really sins needing atonement because they involve us in guilt! Yet let us clearly understand that they greatly differ in degree of guilt from known and willful sins.

Our Lord teaches us this in the Gospels and our own conscience tells us that it must be so. The Savior puts it, “That servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.” He who knew not his lord’s will was less punished than the intentional offender, but he was still beaten—and beaten with stripes, of which a few will be far more than you and I may wish to bear! The fewest stripes that will come from the hand of justice will be enough to grievously afflict us!

One stroke has made good men lie in the dust and moan in sorrow. Sins caused by ignorance are punished, for the Prophet says (Isaiah 5:13), “My people are gone into captivity because they have no knowledge.” And again in Hosea, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” Paul, also, tells us, “the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God.” These are to be punished, it seems, though their sinful ignorance is mentioned in the threat. Yes, and according to my text there is sin in ignorance, itself, for the 18th verse declares, “the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he erred.”

Ignorance of the Law among those who dwelt in the camp of Israel was essentially sinful. The Israelite had no business to be ignorant. The Law was plain and within his reach. If he neglected to study the statute, his breach of the statute could not be excused by his neglect, seeing the neglect was, in itself, an act of omission of a censurable kind. Willful ignorance of the Lord’s will is, in itself, sin, and the sin which comes of it is grievous in the sight of the Lord our God. Blessed be God, the solemn declaration of the text concerning the guilt of sins of ignorance needs not drive us to despair, for a sacrifice is permitted for it!

The offender, on discovering his error, might bring his offering and pay the trespass money for any damage which he had caused by his action. And there was a promise given in connection with the atoning sacrifice which was, no doubt, often realized by the contrite in heart— “It shall be forgiven him.” Be it ours, this morning not to attempt excuses but to seek forgiveness! May the Spirit of God work in us a tender-hearted confession of that sin which we did not, before, know to be sin. And while we are confessing it, may the Divine Spirit apply the precious blood that we may have a sweet sense of pardon. May the Lord make us rejoice in the Truth of God that, “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

The teaching of my text does three things, of which I shall speak. First, by it the commandment is honored. Secondly, by it the conscience is enlightened. And thirdly, by it the Sacrifice is endeared.

I. By the Divine declaration that sins of ignorance are really sins, THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD IS HONORED. I need not multiply words to prove it so. The Law of God is, by this solemn sentence, lifted into a place of dignity. If it is really so, that to break one of its precepts involves us in guilt, even if we did not know that we were offending, then is the Law, indeed, enthroned upon a terrible eminence and girt around with fire. Enlarging upon this thought I would observe, first, dear Friends, that hereby the Law is declared to be the supreme authority over men. The Law is supreme, not conscience.

Conscience is differently enlightened in different men and the ultimate appeal as to right and wrong cannot be to your half-blinded conscience or to mine. I might condemn what you allow and you would scarcely tolerate

what I approve—we are, neither of us, judges, but both culprits upon trial when we come under the Law. The ultimate appeal will be to, “Thus says the Lord”—to the Law itself, which is the only perfect standard by which the deeds and actions of men can be measured. The Law of God, from the supremacy into which this text lifts it, says to us, “You will not be excused because your conscience was unenlightened, nor because it was so perverse as to put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. My demands are the same in every jot and tittle, whatever your conscience may condemn or allow.”

Conscience has lost much of its sensitiveness through the Fall and through our actual sins, but the Law is not lowered to suit our perverted understanding. If we break the Law, although our conscience may not blame us, or even inform us of the wrong, the deed is still recorded against us—we must bear our iniquity. The Law is, also, set above human opinion, for this man says, “You may do that,” and a second claims that he may do the other, but the Law changes not according to man’s judgment and does not bend itself to the spirit of the age or the tastes of the period. It is the supreme judge, from whose Infallible decision there is no appeal. Right is right though all condemn, and wrong is wrong though all approve. The Law is the balance of the sanctuary, accurate to a hair, sensitive, even to the small dust of the balance.

Opinions continually differ, but the Law of God is one and invariable. According to the moral sensitiveness of a man will be his estimate of the act which he performs, but would you have the Law of God vary according to man’s fickle judgment? If you would desire such a thing, God’s infinite wisdom forbids it. The Law is a fixed quantity, a settled standard and if we fall short of it, though we know it not, yet are we guilty and must bear our iniquity unless an atonement is made. This exalts the Law above the custom of nations and periods, for men are very apt to say, “It is true I did soand-so, which I could not have defended in itself—but then, it is the way of the trade—other houses do so, general opinion and public consent have endorsed the custom. I do not, therefore, see how I can act differently from others, for if I did so, I should be very singular and should probably be a loser through my scruples.”

Yes, but the customs of men are not the standard of right! Where they have been, at first, correct through strong Christian influence, the tendency is for them to deteriorate and sink below the proper standard. Habit, perpetuity and universality of wrong at last enable men to call the false by the same name as the true—but there is no real change worked thereby—the customary wrong is still a wrong, the universal lie is still a falsehood. God’s Law is not changed! Our Lord Jesus said, “It is easier for Heaven and earth to pass away than one tittle of the Law to fail.” The Divine Law overrides custom, tradition and opinion—these have no more effect upon the eternal standard than the fall of a leaf upon the stars of Heaven.

“If a man does any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord; though he knew it not, yet is he guilty.” All the customs in the world cannot make wrong right! if everybody that ever lived from Adam down to this hour had done a wrong thing and declared it to be righteous, yet would it make no moral difference in the evil deed. A thousand ages of whitewashing cannot make a vice a virtue. God’s commands stand fast forever and he who breaks it must bear his punishment. Thus you see that by the declaration of my text, the Law of God is enshrined in the place of reverence.

Note again, if a sin of ignorance renders us guilty, what must a willful sin do? Do you not perceive at once how the Law is, again, set on high by this? For if an inadvertent transgression covers the soul with guilt which cannot be put away without a sacrifice, then what shall we say of those who knowingly and advisedly, with malice aforethought, break the commands of God? What shall we say of those who, again and again and again, being often reproved, harden their necks and go on in their iniquities? Surely their sin is exceedingly sinful! If I may become a transgressor by breaking a Law of God which I did not know, by what name shall I be called if, when I do know, I presumptuously lift up my hand to defy the Lawgiver and violate His statutes?

Thus again, dear Friends, by the teaching of our text, men were driven to study the Law, for if they were at all right-hearted they said, “Let us know what God would have us do. We do not wish to be leaving His commands undone, or committing transgressions against His precepts through not knowing better.” They would, therefore, run to the Prophets and other teachers and ask them, “Tell us, what are the statutes of the Law of God? What has Jehovah ordained?” And right-minded men would be led by a desire to obey, to become earnest students of the will of God, as I trust, beloved Friends, we, also, shall be moved to be. Lest we should break the Law through not knowing its commands, let us make it our continual study. Let us search it day and night! Let it be the man of our counsels and the guide of our lives.

Let this be the prayer of each one of us—“What I know not, O my God, teach me. Make me to understand the way of Your precepts. Let me not be as the horse and the mule which have no understanding, but enlighten me in my inmost heart lest I ignorantly transgress Your commandments.” Thus, you see, the Law was glorified in the midst of Israel and men were led to search it to know what the Lord required of them. A holy fear, lest they should inadvertently fall into sin, moved them to diligent reading of the commands. Thus they were often checked when about to perform a hasty deed, and were made to ask themselves, “What would the Lord have us do?”

Without such an ordinance as our text, they might have acted hurriedly and so have sinned, and sinned again in the blundering haste of a thoughtless spirit. But by this they were checked in their heedlessness, called to consideration and made to have the fear of God always before them. They were thereby warned to look at their actions and examine their ways lest, through thoughtlessness, they should sin against the Law of God. And you will see at once, Beloved, that this would lead every earnest Israelite to teach his children God’s Law, lest his sons should err through ignorance or inadvertence. The pious Jew carefully taught his children all things concerning the Passover and the yearly feasts, the daily sacrifice, the worship in the Temple and what was due to the service of God.

He made him learn the moral Law and endeavored, as far as he could, to enlighten his conscience, knowing that “for the soul to be without knowledge is not good.” He said to his son, “Take fast hold of instruction. Let her not go. Keep her, for she is your life.” Without knowledge a man will fall into many pitfalls and snares which the true light would have enabled him to avoid. Good men, therefore, spent much of their time in training their families. “Come, children,” they said, “hearken unto me. I will teach you the fear of the Lord.” They were, also, zealous to make known the Law of God as far as they could, saying each one to his fellow, “Know the Lord.” Fear of committing sins of ignorance was a spur to national education and tended greatly to make all Israel honor the Law of the Lord.

I close these thoughts by noting that to me the sin-revealing power of the Law of God is wonderfully displayed as I read my text. I know the Law to be exceedingly broad. I know its eye to be like that of an eagle and I know its hand to be heavy as iron. But when I find that it accuses me of sins which I knew not, that it searches the secret parts of my soul and brings to light what my own eyes of self-examination have never seen, then I am filled with trembling! When I discover that I may stand before the bar of God charged with iniquities which I shall be quite unable to deny, but of which, at this moment, I am not at all conscious, then am I bowed in the dust! What a Law this must be! What a light is this in which our conduct is placed!

If you set your character side by side with that of your fellow man, you may begin to compliment yourself. If you look at it by the dim candlelight of public opinion, you may begin to flatter yourself. If you go no further than a diligent search by the aid of your own judgment, you may still be somewhat at ease. But if the light in which we shall stand at last will be the light of Jehovah’s own ineffable purity! If His Omniscience detects iniquity where we have not perceived it and if His justice will visit sin even where we were not cognizant of it, our position is solemn, indeed! What a Law this is by which men are bound! How severe and searching! How holy and how pure must God, Himself, be?

O thrice holy Jehovah, we are filled with awe of You! The heavens are not clear in Your sight and You charged Your angels with folly! How, then, can we be just with You? After reading this, Your own Word, we see how justly You will charge us with folly and how impossible it is for us to hope to be justified in Your sight by any righteousness of our own! Thus, my Brothers and Sisters, we see that the Law of God is honored.

II. Secondly, by the teaching of the text, THE CONSCIENCE IS AWAKENED. I feel, when I read these words, as if a great gulf opens at my feet! “If a soul sins and commits any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord; though he knew it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity.” You know, dear Friend, that you are a willful sinner and have broken God’s Law consciously. But if you may be a sinner though you knew it not, how the solid earth rolls away from under you as in a dreadful earthquake and, almost like Korah, Dathan and Abiram, you stand in dread as the devouring fire pours forth from the mysterious abyss!

Nothing which is human can be thought certain after this. Think of the sins you may have committed—sins of thoughts which have too rapidly flitted through your mind for you remember them—thoughts which pass over your mind as mere imaginations, like clouds floating aloft in the sky which cast a flying shadow over the landscape and are gone. Think of your evil thoughts, your pleasure in hearing of uncleanness, your desires, wishes and excuses of evil—these are all iniquities. Then, too, our words, our hurried words of anger, of falsehood, of petulance and pride. Our idle words, our murmuring words, our unbelieving words, our irreverent words—words scarcely meant which fell from us without thought! What a multitude of these may be laid at our door and all of them are full of sin!

And actions in which we have excused ourselves very thoroughly because we have never looked at them in God’s light, but have been content to regard them in the dim ray of custom—are there not many of these which contain sin? When I think of all the forms of evil, I am compelled to fear that much of our life may have been a continuous sin and yet we may have never condemned ourselves, or even thought about it! Remember that great command, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” How far short of that you and I have come!

Mentally we have not served God to perfection, neither have the affections loved Him with all possible intensity, nor has the soul, with its desires, gone after Him so eagerly as it should. Truly we are guilty, guilty much more than we have ever imagined! And as to that second Commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”—who among us has done so? Have we loved our fellow man with a love that even approximated to our love to ourselves? O God, amid the varied lights of Your Ten Commandments, all comprehended in the white light of that one word, “love,” we stand convicted and we perceive that our ignorance affords no covering for us! We hear Your voice and tremble before it while You say, “Though he knew it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity.”

Our ignorance, dear Friends, is evidently very great. I do not suppose that the best instructed Christian here will claim to possess much wisdom. The usual rule is that the more we really know, the more conscious we are of the littleness of our knowledge. Our ignorance, therefore, I may take for granted all round, has been very great. What scope, then, has there been beneath the mantle of that mist of ignorance for sin to hide and multiply! As the conies swarm in the holes of the rocks, the bats in the sunless caves of the earth and the fish in the deep abysses of the sea, so do our sins swarm in the hidden parts of our nature. “Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults!”

The ignorance of very many persons is, to a large degree, willful. Many do not read the Bible at all, or very seldom, and then without desiring to know its meaning. Even some professing Christians take their religion from a monthly magazine, or from some standard book written by a human author and adopted by their sect—few go to the Word of God itself— they are content to drink of the muddied streams of human teaching instead of filling their cups at the crystal fountain of Revelation itself.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, if you are ignorant of anything concerning

God’s mind and will, it is not, in the case of any of you, for lack of the Bible, nor for lack of a willing guide to instruct you in it for, behold, the Holy Spirit waits to be gracious to you in this respect. “If any man lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives liberally, and upbraids not.” If we do not know, we may know it. Our ignorance has been willful if, in this privileged country, we remain ignorant of the Gospel. Where there is confessedly such a mass of willful ignorance, who among us can imagine what myriads of evil shapes of sin swarm in the grim darkness? The Prince of Darkness holds his court in the blackness of that ignorance which we, ourselves, have willfully created by refusing to come to the Light of God.

The enemy sows the seed of evil by night and amid Egyptian darkness the accursed grain grows to an awful ripeness and brings forth a hundred-fold! Break in, O eternal Light! Break in upon the dimness of our ignorance, lest it thickens into the eternal midnight of Hell! Now, it will be vain for any man to say in his mind, as I fear some will do, “God is harsh in thus dealing with us.” If you say thus, O Man, I ask you to remember God’s answer. Christ puts your rebellious speech into the mouth of the unfaithful one who hid his talent. He said, “I knew that you were an austere man, gathering where you had not sown.”

What did his master say? Instead of excusing him, which is far beneath the dignity of our great God to do, he took the man at his own confession and said, “You knew that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow. Why, then, did you not put my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required my own with interest?” If you know God to be harsh, or say you think so, then remember how earnest you ought to be to come up to His standard, for, call that standard what you like, it is the standard! Count it to be severe if you will, it is binding upon you for all that—and by it you will have to be tried, at the last, so that there is no escape for any of us by impeaching our Maker!

Wiser, far, is it to submit and beg for mercy. Let us remember, in order that our doctrine may appear less strange, that it is according to the analogy of Nature that when God’s Laws are broken, ignorance of those Laws should not prevent the penalty from falling upon the offenders. The natural law is an instructive type of the moral and spiritual Laws of God and from it we may gather much teaching. Here is the law of gravitation, by which objects are attracted to each other. It is inevitable that heavy matters will fall to the earth. A man thinks that he can fly—he puts on his wings and climbs to the top of a tower. He is fully persuaded that he is about to fly like a bird. Spectators are invited to behold the wonder and expectations are excited. The law of gravitation is against the inventor, but he does not think so. Poor man, he firmly believes in his ability to fly. But the moment he leaps from the tower he falls to the earth and is gathered up a mangled corpse.

Why did not God suspend His natural law because the man did not intentionally violate it? No, the law is stern and changes not, and he who offends in ignorance pays the penalty. I have read that the Chinese at Peking often endure severe winters. They have coal just under them, but they refuse to dig the coal for fear they should disturb the equilibrium of the earth and cause the celestial empire, which is now at the top of the universe, to turn over to the bottom. The celestials are thoroughly conscientious in this belief, but does the weather alter to suit their philosophy? Does God make them warm in winter without coal? By no means! If they refuse the means of warmth, they will be cold—their ignorance does not raise the temperature so much as half a degree!

A physician, with the best possible motive, endeavors to discover a new drug so that he may alleviate pain. In conducting his experiments, he inhales a deadly gas which he did not know to be fatal. He dies as surely as if he had willfully taken poison. The law is not suspended to reward his benevolence and avert the fatal result of his mistake. Whatever his motives may have been, he has broken a natural law and the appointed penalty is exacted of him. Truly, as it is in the natural so will you find it to be in the spiritual world!

But let us go into the question a little, by way of argument. It is necessary that it should be according to this declaration. It is not possible that ignorance should be a justification of sin, for, first, if it did so, it would follow that the more ignorant a man was the more innocent he would be! It would then assuredly be true that ignorance is bliss, for perfect ignorance would be under no responsibilities and free from all sin! All that you and I would have to do, in order to be perfectly clear from all charges, would be to know nothing. To burn the Bible, refuse to hear the Gospel and rush away from civilization would be the nearest way to freedom from all guilt!

Do you not see that if things were so, knowledge might be regarded as a curse and that the light which Christ comes to bring into the world would be a man’s most solemn affliction if it shone upon him? I proclaim that, in my unregenerate state, if I had been sure that ignorance would have rid me of responsibility, I would have closed every avenue of knowledge and would have labored to abide in darkness! But such a supposition is not to be borne—it is inconsistent with the first principles of common sense! If, again, the guilt of an action depended entirely upon a man’s knowledge, we should have no fixed standard at all by which to judge right and wrong! It would be variable according to the enlightenment of each man and there would be no ultimate and infallible court of appeal.

Suppose the statute book of our own country should be constructed on the principle that in proportion only to a man’s knowing the law should be his guilt in breaking it? We should have numbers of persons truthfully pleading ignorance and a great many more endeavoring to do so—and such a simple and easy method of obtaining acquittal would become popular at once! The art of forgetting would be diligently studied and ignorance would become an enviable inheritance. We would have gentlemen brought up for being drunk and disorderly who had paid 40 shillings and costs a score of times, who would still say that they did not know that they could be punished again since they had paid the fine so often! Ignorance would be so continually pleaded that there would be practically an end of all law and the very foundations of the State would be undermined! The thing cannot be endured—it is absurd upon its very face.

Moreover, ignorance of the Law of God is, itself a breach of the Law, since we are bid to know and remember it. Thus spoke the Lord by His servant Moses—“You shall lay up these, My Words, in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall teach them to your children,

speaking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house, and upon your gates.” Knowledge of the Law was a duty and ignorance a crime.

Can it be possible, then, that one sin is to be an excuse for another? It is a sin, on a man’s part, to refuse to search into the Word of God. Can it be that because he commits this sin, he is to be excused for the faults into which his willful ignorance leads him? It is out of the question! If sins of ignorance are not sins, then Christ’s intercession was altogether a superfluity. You remember that our text, last Sunday morning was, “He made intercession for the transgressors,” and we illustrated it by the text, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” But if there is no sin when a man does not know what he does, why did our Lord pray for pardon for ignorant transgressors? Why ask forgiveness, if there is no wrong? The correct way of putting it would have been, “Father, I do not ask You to forgive, for there is no offense, seeing that they know not what they do.” But by the fact of His having pleaded for forgiveness, it is clearly proved that there is guilt in the sin of ignorance.

The work of the Holy Spirit, too, would be an evil instead of a good work in the hearts of men if ignorance were an excuse for sin, for He has come to convict the world of sin. But if unconvicted of sin they are innocent of sin, why convict them of it? Of what use is it to quicken a conscience and to enlighten it and make it bleed over a transgression if it would be no transgression, provided that conscience had never been made cognizant of it? Who is he that shall so blaspheme the Holy Spirit as to say that His work is needless and even idle? Sins of ignorance, therefore, must be sinful! Look at one other consequence which would follow from the contrary doctrine.

The more wicked a man is, the more hardened he becomes and the more ignorant he grows as to the beauty of holiness. Everybody knows that. A sin which troubles a child when at home with his godly father will not trouble him at all when he gets to be 50 years of age, provided he has indulged in a course of vice. From one sin to another the man descends, and, as he descends, his mental and moral eyes grow dim and he perceives less and less the sinfulness of sin. If a man who has arrived at the utmost pitch of infamy can commit any atrocity without the smallest idea of its being wrong—if he can cheat, lie, swear and I know not what and yet call it all nothing and wipe his mouth—if that man is guilty of less sin because of the growing deadness of his conscience and the limited degree of his spiritual knowledge, then, truly, things are turned upside down!

But it is not so. The test of the guilt of an action is not a man’s conscience, nor his perception of evil, nor his knowledge, but the Law itself! Sin is a transgression of the Law of God, whether that Law is known or unknown. The statute stands immovable and immutable—and the sinner, blind though he may be—if he falls upon it shall be broken. Once again, I am sure that many of us now present must have felt the truth of this in our own hearts. You who love the Lord and hate unrighteousness, must, in your lives have come to a point of greater illumination where you have said, “I see a certain action to be wrong. I have been doing it for years, but God knows I would not have done it if I had thought it wrong. Even now I see that other people are doing it and thinking it right, but I cannot do so any more. My conscience has, at last, received new light and I must make a change at once.”

In such circumstances, did it ever come to your mind to say, “What I have done was not wrong because I did not know it to be wrong”? Far from it! You have justly said to yourself, “My sin in this matter is not so great as if I had transgressed willfully with my eyes open, knowing it to be sin.” But yet you have accused yourself of the fault and mourned over it. At least I know I have. A man like John Newton, who in his early years had been connected with the slave trade and thought it right, as most Christian men did in those times, did not excuse himself in his later years when his conscience was awakened to the iniquity of slavery.

Do you think that the good man would say, “I was quite right in doing as I did because everybody else did it and I knew no better”? Ah, no! It was right or wrong whether he knew it or not and his conscience, when it became enlightened, told him so. My conscience and your conscience may need to be enlightened about several matters which now we are doing complacently enough, without any notion that we are sinning—but the action bears its own character of right or wrong—whatever our judgment may be. Does not this show us the utter impossibility of salvation by works? If you expect to be saved by keeping the Law of God, you must be a bolder man than I dare to be! I know that I cannot keep the Law of God and the doctrine of my text makes it impossible beyond all other impossibility, because the Law accuses me of doing wrong even when I do not intend it and am not conscious of it!

O you who hope to be saved by works, how can you ever enjoy a moment’s peace? If you think your righteousness will save you if it is perfect, how can you ever be sure that it is perfect? You may have sinned ignorantly and that will spoil it all! Think of this and be dismayed! I beseech you, believe our testimony when we assure you that the road to Heaven by your own righteousness is blocked! Ten great Krupp guns which fling, each one of them, a bolt huge enough to dash your soul to Hell, stand pointed against you if you attempt to make your way to Heaven by that steep ascent!

There is another path! Yonder Cross directs you to it, for it is the signpost of the King’s highway! That royal road to Heaven is paved with Divine Grace—God freely forgives the guilty because they trust in Christ! That path is so safe that no lion shall be there, neither shall any ravenous beast go up on it—but as for the road of Legal Righteousness, attempt it not, but listen to what we have further to say to you!

III. By the grand and awful truth of the text, THE SACRIFICE IS ENDEARED. Just according to our sense of sin must be our value of the Sacrifice! God’s way of delivering those who sinned ignorantly was not by denying their sin and passing over it, but by accepting an atonement for it. “The priest shall make an atonement concerning his sin wherein he has erred, and knew it not, and it shall be forgiven him.” The forgiveness was to come through atonement! How greatly you and I need an atonement for our sins of ignorance, seeing our ignorance is great!

O blood of Christ, how much we need You! O Divine Substitute, how greatly do we require Your cleansing blood! How gracious it is on God’s part to be willing to accept an Atonement, for if His Law had said there shall be no atonement possible, it would have been just—but infinite Grace devised the plan by which, through the Sacrifice of Another, pardon is possible for the ignorant sinner! Behold how generous God is, for He has Himself provided this Sacrifice! The man who had erred under the Law had to bring an offering, himself, but ours is brought for us! Jesus, the Son of God, was not spared by the great Father, but He gave Him out of His bosom that He might bleed and die!

The Incarnate God is the great Bearer of the sin of ignorance! And today He can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way, for He has made an Atonement for them. Under the Law this atonement was to be a ram without blemish. Our Lord had no sin, nor shade of sin. He is the spotless Victim which the Law of God requires. All that Justice, in his most severe mood, could require from man by way of penalty, our Lord Jesus Christ has rendered, for in addition to His Sacrifice for the sin, He has presented a recompense for the damage, as the person who sinned ignorantly was bound to do.

He has recompensed the honor of God and He has recompensed every man whom we have injured. My Brothers and Sisters, has another injured you? Well, since Christ has given Himself to you, there is a full recompense made to you, even as there has been made to God! Blessed be His name, we may rest in this Sacrifice! How supremely efficacious it is! It takes away iniquity, transgression and sin. My dear Hearers, you are bound to confess your sins to God—but if pardon were offered you upon the condition that you should mention every sin you have committed—not one of you would ever be saved! We do not know, and if we ever did know, we cannot remember all our shortcomings and all our transgressions!

But the mercy is, though we do not know them, HE does and He can blot them out! Though we cannot weep over them with a distinct knowledge of them because they are not known to us, yet Jesus bled for them with a distinct knowledge of them all—and they are all put away by His unknown sufferings—all cast into the deeps where an angel’s eye can never trace them! By the immense and unsearchable agonies He endured for us and by His merits, infinite as His Divine Nature, our Redeemer has taken away that thick darkness of iniquity which we were not capable of comprehending!

O believing Sinner, the debt you know not, your glorious Surety has nevertheless borne and discharged for you! Blessings on His name. Rest in Him and then go your way and rejoice! Amen.

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THE CLEAN AND THE UNCLEAN  
NO. 499

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

**“Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These are the beasts which you shall eat among all the beasts that are on the earth. Whatever parts the hoof and is cloven footed and chews the cud, among the beasts, that shall you eat.”  
Leviticus 11:2, 3.**

THE Mosaic law attached great importance to meats and drinks—the Christian religion attaches none. The Apostle Peter was shown by the vision of a sheet let down from Heaven not only that all nations were now to receive the Gospel message, but that all kinds of food were now clean, and that all the prohibitions which had formerly been laid upon them for legal purposes were now, once and for all, withdrawn. A Christian may, if he pleases, put himself under restrictions as to these matters. You will remember that the Apostle Paul says, “I know and am persuaded of the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself, but to him that esteems anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.”

I know our Apostle was tender of weak consciences, but he could expostulate with the Brothers and Sisters somewhat thus, “If you are dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you dogmatize—touch not this, taste not that, handle not the other—and all about things which perish with the using?” The doctrine of the New Testament is expressly laid down, “Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it is received with thanksgiving.” And as for the practice enjoined upon Believers, “All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient.”

In the example of Paul we have full liberty. He would put no embargo upon the conscience. But in his example we have also fervent charity—he would put no stumbling block in his Brother’s way. “If meat makes my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world stands.” The Levitical law enjoined many precepts as to meats and drinks—and those carnal ordinances were imposed until the time of reformation. Since then, this Mosaic institution was not designed to be perpetual, we feel certain that it must have had some use at the time when it was first established, and during the time in which it was sustained.

As that was peculiarly a typical dispensation, we feel persuaded that we shall not exaggerate the uses of the text if we show that there was something instructive to us, and something typical of the better Covenant in the command that the people were to eat no creatures but those which divided the hoof and those which chewed the cud.

I. It is our firm belief that these distinctions of meats were laid down on purpose TO KEEP THE JEWS AS A DISTINCT PEOPLE, and that herein they might be a type of the people of God, who are also, throughout all ages, to be a distinct and separate people—not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world.

You that are conversant with the old Levitical rule, well know that it was quite impossible for the Hebrews to mix with any other nation without violating the statutes they were commanded to keep. Their food was so restricted that they could not possibly enter into social intercourse with any of the neighboring peoples. The Canaanites, for instance, ate everything—even the flesh that had been torn by dogs—and the dogs themselves. Now, a Jew could never sit at a Canaanites table, because he could never be sure that there would not be the flesh of some unclean and accursed thing upon it.

The Jews could not even eat with the Arabs, who were near akin to them, for they frequently partook of the flesh of the camels, the hare and the coney, all which, as we shall see presently, were forbidden to the Jew. The Arabs on the south, and the Canaanite nations all round Palestine, were the most likely people with whom the Jews would associate. But this command about what they should and should not eat prevented them, forever, from mingling with these people, and made them a distinct and isolated republic so long as they were obedient to the Law. We are told by Eastern travelers that the Mohammedan regulations, which are far less strict than those of the Jew, prevent their becoming socially intermingled either with the idolaters or with Christians.

It is a well-known fact that no people that have prescriptions about meats and drinks have ever changed their religion to that of another people, because the familiarity which seems necessary, in order to proselyte, is quite prevented by the barrier that precludes from dining at the table. It is at the social table men enjoy the most genial dealings—it is there they pour out their souls with the least reserve, and mix their thoughts, one with another, in the greatest freedom of conversation. Check them there— prevent their sitting at the same table, and there is no likelihood that they will ever blend or intermingle in any kind of affinity—the races must be distinct.

I believe, dear Friends, though I have been somewhat prosy in explaining myself, that it was God’s real intention to keep the children of Israel, until the coming of Christ, separate from all the nations that were upon the face of the earth. They could not join in the worship of other nations, for other nations sacrificed to their gods the very animals which to the Jew were unclean. They could not join in social contact, as we have already seen. And therefore marriage with any other nation would be, not only, as it were, prohibited by the Law, but would be actually prevented by the possibilities of the case. It must, in each instance, put the transgressor beyond the pale of his own tribe.

They would remain as much a distinct people as if a great wall of brass had been built all around them, or as if they had been transported to some island, and an impassable gulf had been put between them and any other kindred upon earth. They were separated forever. Now Friends, you will say, “What is the use of this to us?” I answer, it is the earthly type of a heavenly mystery. When the Jews were put away as the people of God for a time, then the Gentiles were grafted into their olive branch, and though we did not inherit the ceremonies, we did inherit all the privileges to which those ceremonies point. Thus all of you who name the name of Christ, and are truly what you profess to be, are solemnly bound to be forever separated from the world.

Not that you are to leave off your daily dealings with men. Our Savior did not do so. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Yet, you know, He was always in the company of sinners, sitting at their table, seeking their good, and hunting after their souls. He was with them, but He was never of them. He was among them, but always distinct and separate from them—not conforming Himself to them, but transforming them to Himself. He has set us an example. It is not the seclusion of a hermit, nor the exclusion of yourselves in a monastery, where you would be of no service to your fellow men.

It is a higher and more spiritual separation which I claim of Christians tonight. You are to be in the world, and among the world. You are to mingle with all sorts and conditions of men—but still to maintain the dignity of your new-born character, and to let men see that you are among them as a speckled bird, as a light in the midst of darkness, as salt scattered over putridity, as heavenly angels in the midst of fallen men. So are you to be a distinct people, a chosen generation.

But you will ask of me in what respects are you to be distinguished? In a pure consistency always—in a vain eccentricity never—this shall be my first reply. Not in your garments, my Brothers and Sisters. All those inventions of broad-brimmed hats, and coats without collars, perish in the using. Let your dress be, nevertheless, so distinguished from that of some other men, that there shall be none of the pride and foolish quality in which they delight. The Apostle Peter has well laid down the regulations by which our Sisters in Christ are to adorn themselves. But I need not mention what you know so well and practice so little—that chaste and becoming neatness which is always right in the sight of God—and beautiful in the assembly of Christians.

Not by any peculiar dialect in your speech are you to be known. For my part I abhor in any man that sanctimonious tone and sacred whine which many affect—even in the pulpit I despise it. I believe that the reason why the pulpit has lost so much of its former power is because men must needs mouth our blessed Saxon tongue, and talk as if everything natural were to be eschewed there, and men, metamorphosed into ministers, were to be as unnatural and grotesque in their modes of speech as possible. No, not these, not these! All such artificial separations we leave to the people whose vanity feeds on its own conceit.

Nor need you make any straining effort to be distinguished by any stiff rigid formality of your own. Do not try to make yourself look like a Christian. True Christians can do a great many things that sham Christians must not do. As for me, I am never afraid to laugh, for I shall never crack the paint on my face, laugh as I may. A sincere man may do a great many things that a hypocrite dare not do, for he will split the garments of his hypocrisy if he ventures to run as a Christian may. Heavenly realities

within do not always need to be plastered up and labeled outside, so that everybody may see and recognize you and say, “There goes a saint.” There are other modes of being distinguished from the world than any of these.

What are they, then? Well, Brothers and Sisters, we ought ever to be distinguished from the world in the great Object of our life. As for worldly men, some of them are seeking wealth, others of them fame. Some seek after comfort, others after pleasure. Subordinately you may seek after any of these, but your main and principal motive as a Christian should always be to live for Christ. To live for glory? Yes, but for His glory. To live for comfort? Yes, but be all your consolation in Him. To live for pleasure? Yes, but when you are merry, sing Psalms and make melody in your hearts to the Lord. To live for wealth? Yes, but to be rich in faith. You may lay up treasure, but lay it up in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust does corrupt, where thieves break not through, nor steal.

It is thought, you know, that ministers live for God—merchants should do the same. I would, my Brothers and Sisters, that you would trade and do your merchandise for His service. Do your plowing, and sowing, and reaping, and mowing—do it for Christ! Would God you could do this quite as much in His service, as we do ours, when we preach for Christ! You can make the most common calling become really sacred. You may take the highest orders by dedicating your daily life wholly to the service of Jesus. There is such a thing—and let those that deny the possibility stand self-convicted that they obey not the precept—“Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

By your spirit, as well as your aim, you should likewise be distinguished. The spirit of this world is often selfish—it is always a spirit that forgets God, that ignores the existence of a Creator in His own world, the land which He makes fat by His own bounty. Men with God’s breath in their nostrils forget Him who makes them live. Now, your spirit should be one of unselfish devotion, a spirit always conscious of His Presence, bowed down with the weight, or raised up with the cheer of Hagar’s exclamation—“You God see me.” A spirit which watches humbly before God and seeks to know His will and to do it through the Grace of God given to you—such a spirit as this—without the drab of one sect, or the phylacteries of another, will soon make you quite as distinct from your fellow men as ever meats and drinks could make the Jews a separate people.

Your maxims, too, and the rules which regulate you, should be very different from those of others. The world says, “Well, it is usual in the trade. There is no use in being over scrupulous. We must not be too Puritanical, or too severe—we shall never get on if we are picking at this, and frowning at that.” A Christian never considers what is usual, but what pleases God. He does not estimate a wrong by its commonness—he counts that a fraud, and a falsehood will be a fraud and falsehood—though all the world shall agree to practice it. The Believer reads things, not in man’s light, in the obscurity of which so many blind bats are willing to fly, but he reads things in the sunlight of Heaven.

If a thing is right, though he lose by it, it is done. If it is wrong, though he should become as rich as Croesus by allowing it, he scorns the sin for his Master’s sake. We want our merchants on the Exchange, our traders in their shops, and our artisans in their factories. Yes, and we want all masters, employers, and overseers, too, to be distinguished as the clean from the unclean, in the maxims that govern their daily life, and thus manifestly separate them from the world.

This will naturally lead to the next point—the Christian should be separate in his actions. I would not give much for your religion unless it can be seen. I know some people’s religion is heard of—but give me the man whose religion is seen. Lamps do not talk, but shine. A lighthouse sounds no drum, it beats no gong, and yet, far over the waters its friendly spark is seen by the mariner. So let your actions shine out your religion. Let your conduct talk out your soul. Let the main sermon of your life be illustrated by all your conduct, and it shall not fail to be illustrious. Have I not told you before that the only bit of ecclesiastical history we have in the whole New Testament is—what? The sermons of the Apostles? No, no, the “Acts of the Apostles.” So let your history be written, so that it may have this title—“The acts of such-and-such a man.” This will furnish the best proof that you have been with Jesus.

A Christian is distinguished by his conversation. He will often trim a sentence where others would have made it far more luxuriant by a jest which was not altogether clean. Following Herbert’s advice—“He pares his apple—he would cleanly feed.” If he would have a jest, he picks the mirth but leaves the sin. His conversation is not use to levity—it is not mere froth—it ministers Divine Grace unto the hearers. He has learned where the saltbox is kept in God’s great house, and so his speech is always seasoned with it, so that it may do no hurt but much good.

Oh, commend me to the man who talks like Jesus, who will not for the world suffer corrupt communications to come out of his mouth! I know what people will say of you if you are like this—they will say you are straight-laced, and that you will not throw much life into company. Others will call you mean-spirited. Oh, my Brothers and Sisters! Bold-hearted men are always called mean-spirited by cowards. They will admonish you not to be singular, but you can tell them that it is no folly to be singular, when to be singular is to be right. I know they will say you deny yourselves a great deal, but you will remind them that it is no denial to you.

Sheep do not eat carrion, but I do not know that sheep think it a hardship to turn away from the foul feast. Eagles do not prefer to float on the sea, but I do not read that eagles think it a denial when they can soar in higher atmosphere. Do not talk of self-denial. You have other ends and other aims—you have wells of comfort that such men know not of. It would be a shame for you to be eating husks with swine, when your Father’s table is loaded with dainties.

I trust, my dear Brothers and Sisters, that you know the value of the gold of Heaven too well to pawn it away for the counterfeits of earth. “Come you out from among them. Be you separate, and touch not the unclean thing.” By a holiness which merely moral men cannot equal, stand as on a pedestal aloft above the world. Thus men may know you to be of

the seed of Jesus, even as they knew the Jew to be the seed of Israel. How shall I urge you to give more earnest heed to this holy separation?  
Let me add the voice of warning to that of entreaty. If we do not see to this  
matter we shall bring sorrow on our own souls. We shall lose all hope of  
honoring Christ, and we shall sooner, or later, bring a great disaster on  
the world. You know the world is always trying to nationalize the Church.  
What a mercy it is that there are some who will not have it! If you could  
once make the Church and the nation one, what would follow? It must be  
destroyed—it must fall. It was when the Church and the world became  
one in Noah’s day that the Lord sent the flood to destroy all people. No, the proper position of a Christian is not with the world, even in its  
best state, and its most exalted condition. We are to be separate from this  
present evil world according to the will of God. Our position today is as  
much as in Christ’s day—outside the camp—not in it. We are still to be  
protesters, still to be testifiers against the world. “You are of God, little  
children, and the whole world lies in the Wicked One.” Scripture never  
supposes that the world will get better till the coming of Christ. It does not  
propose to lift the world up, and marry it with the Church. It always supposes the Church to be as an alien and a stranger here until Christ, her  
Husband, shall come.  
On which side will you rank? Truce there cannot be! Links between the  
two there must not be. God and mammon cannot go together. For which  
will you be—for God—for Truth—for right? Or for Satan—for Hell—for the  
wrong? Which shall it be? May the Spirit of God whisper in your heart tonight and say, “Believe in Christ Jesus. Take up your cross and follow  
Him, and be enlisted on His side from now on and forever.”  
II. We have now a second and an important matter to bring forward.  
The distinction drawn between clean and unclean animals was, we think,  
intended by God TO KEEP HIS PEOPLE ALWAYS CONSCIOUS THAT  
THEY WERE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF SIN.  
Just let me picture it. I have caught the idea from Mr. Bonar, though I  
fear I cannot paint it in words so well as he has done. An Oriental Jew,  
sensible and intelligent, walks out in the fields. He walks along close by  
the side of the high road, and what should he see but a string of camels  
going along? “Ah,” he says to himself, “those are unclean animals.” Sin,  
you see, is brought at once before his mind’s eye. He turns away from the  
road and walks down one of his own fields, and as he goes along a hare  
starts across his path. “Ah,” says he, “an unclean animal again. There is  
sin in my path.”  
He gets into a more retired place, he walks on the mountains. Surely he  
shall be alone there. But he sees a Coney burrowing among the rocks—  
“Ah,” he says, “unclean. There is sin there!” He lifts his eye up to  
Heaven—he sees the osprey, the bald eagle, flying along through the air  
and he says, “Ah, there is an emblem of sin there!” A dragonfly has just  
flitted by him—there is sin there. There are insects among the flowers. Now every creeping thing and every insect, except the locust, was unclean to the Jew. Everywhere he would come in contact with some creature that would render him ceremonially unclean, and it were impossible  
for him, unless he were brutish, to remain even for ten minutes abroad  
without being reminded that this world, however beautiful it is, still has  
sin in it.  
Even the fish, in sea, or river, or inland lake, had their divisions—those  
that had no scales or fins were unclean to the Jew. So the little Hebrew  
boys could not even fish for minnows in the brook, but they would know  
that the minnow was unclean, and so their young hearts were made to  
dread little wrongs and little sins—for there were little sins in the little  
pools—even as there were leviathan sins floating in the deep and nude  
sea. Ah, Friends, we want to have this more before our minds. Look at the  
fairest landscape that your eye has ever beheld—see the towering Alps,  
the green valley and the silver stream—  
*“These are Your glorious works,  
Parent of good, Almighty,”*  
but the slime of the serpent is on them all—  
*“Keep me, O, keep me King of kings,  
Beneath the shadow of Your wings.”*  
When I walk abroad in this temple of nature and seek to behold nature’s God, I may not light upon a spot in the universe where the curse of  
sin has never inflicted a blight, or where the hope of redemption should  
not inspire a prayer. Sometimes, Brothers and Sisters, you get all alone  
and quiet, but do not imagine that you are even, there, free from sin. As  
the most beautiful landscape, so the sweetest retirement cannot shut out  
uncleanness. As the fly or the insect would intrude into the arbor where  
the Jew would worship, so sin will haunt and molest us even in the closet  
of devotion.  
Get up, Christians, and be upon your watchtowers. You may sleep, but  
your enemies never will. You may suppose yourselves safe, but then you  
are most in danger. See that you put on the whole armor of God, and are  
armed from head to foot. And having done all, watch and pray lest you enter into temptation. Every morning we ought to ask the Lord to keep us  
from unknown sins, to preserve us from temptations that we cannot foresee, to check us in every part of life if we are about to go wrong, and to  
hold us up every hour that we sin not.  
You will say it must have been an unpleasant thing for the Jew always  
to have sin before his eyes, nor would you wish every aspect of life to be  
thus fouled before your eyes. But it will not be so unpleasant for you, my  
Brothers and Sisters, because you know there is a redemption, and your  
faith can realize the end of the curse by sin being put away. Shut not your  
eyes to sin, but keep Christ always before you, and you will walk aright. I wish that some of my Hearers had sin before their eyes now. Oh, you  
that trifle with it, you do not know what it is! Fools make a mockery of  
sin. You laugh at it now—you do not understand what a fire it is that you  
have kindled to consume your soul! Oh, you that think it is such a little  
thing, its deadly poison will soon envenom all your blood—and then you  
will discover that he that plays with sin plays with damnation. May the  
Lord set sin straight before your eyes, and then set the Cross of Christ  
there, too, and so you will be saved.  
Two prayers I ask all my hearers to pray—they are very brief—“Lord show me myself.” If there is any man here who says he would pray, but he does not know what to pray for—pray that every night and morning— “Lord show me myself.” And if God hears you, you will soon be in such a wretched state that you will want another prayer. And then I give you this—“Lord show me Yourself.” And then if He shall show you Himself hanging on the Cross, the expiation for guilt, the Great God become Man that He might put away sin—your salvation will be accomplished. It is all the prayer that is wanted—“Lord show me myself. Lord show me Yourself. Reveal sin and reveal a Savior.” Lord, do this for all of us for Your name’s  
sake.  
III. And now, I come to show you a third teaching of my text. As this injunction was meant to separate the Jews from other nations, and to keep  
the pious Israelite in constant remembrance of his danger of falling into  
sin, so it was also intended to be A RULE OF DISCRIMINATION BY  
WHICH WE MAY JUDGE WHO ARE CLEAN AND WHO ARE UNCLEAN,  
THAT IS, WHO ARE SAINTS AND WHO ARE NOT.  
There are two tests, but they must both be united. The beast that was  
clean was to chew the cud—here is the inner life—every true-hearted man  
must know how to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the sacred  
Word. The man who does not feed upon Gospel Truth and so feed upon it,  
too, that he knows the sweetness and relish of it, and seeks out its marrow and fatness—that man is no heir of Heaven. You must know a Christian by his heart, by that which supports his life, and sustains his frame. But then the clean creatures were also known by their walk. The Jew at  
once discovered the unclean animal by its having an undivided hoof. But  
if the hoof was thoroughly divided, then it was clean, provided that it also  
chewed the cud. So there must be in the true Christian a peculiar walk  
such as God requires. You cannot tell a man by either of these tests  
alone—you must have them both. But while you use them upon others,  
apply them to yourselves. What do you feed on? What is your habit of life?  
Do you chew the cud by meditation?  
When your soul feeds on the flesh and blood of Christ, have you  
learned that His flesh is meat, indeed, and that His blood is drink, indeed? If so it is well. What about your life? Are your conversation and  
your daily walk according to the description which is given in the Word of  
Believers in Christ? If not, the first test will not stand alone. You may profess the faith within, but if you do not walk aright without, you belong to  
the unclean. On the other hand, you may walk aright without, but unless  
there is the chewing of the cud within, unless there is a real feeding upon  
the precious Truths of God in the heart, all the right walking in the world  
will not prove you to be a Christian.  
That holiness which is only outward in moral, and not Spiritual, does  
not save the soul. That religion, on the other hand, which is only inward  
is but fancy—it cannot save the soul, either. But the two together—the  
inward parts made capable of knowing the lusciousness, the sweetness,  
the fatness of Christ’s Truth. And the outward parts conformed to Christ’s  
image and Character—these conjoined point out the true and clean Christian with whom it is blessed to associate here, and for whom a better portion is prepared hereafter.  
If you read the chapter through you will find there were some two or  
three animals about which the Jew would have some little difficulty. There  
was the camel that did chew the cud, but did not exactly divide the hoof.  
Now this animal seems to me fitly to represent—though it may not have  
been so intended—those men who seem really to feed on the Truth of God,  
and yet their walk and conversation are not aright. Their feet have been  
formed rather for the sandy desert of sin than for the sacred soil of godliness.  
Oh, I know some of you! Come, let us be personal—there are some of  
you, if I would always preach the doctrine of predestination, or some other  
doctrine of that kind, how sweet it would be to you! But your lives are not  
what they should be. Thank God there are not many of that sort who  
come here. They get angry with me very quickly and go off to other places  
where

hey can get sweet and savory morsels, which exactly suit their  
taste. They hear no admonitions about their lives whatever. May the Lord,  
for my Master’s sake, deliver my ministry from ever being comfortable and  
flattering to souls that live in sin!  
I hope you will sometimes have to say, “I must either give up that sin or  
else give up my seat here.” I know one who said, “Well! It has come to  
this—I cannot go there on Sunday evening, and keep my shop open in the  
morning. It will not do for me to go and sit there and hear the Word and  
sing with those people on Sunday evening, and then hear songs and join  
in revelries on weeknights.” I hope the Word of God here will be such a  
searching Word to some of you that you will even gnash your teeth at the  
preacher. He would sooner for you to do that than for you to say, “Peace,  
peace, where there is no peace,” sucking in sweet doctrine and yet living  
in sin.  
God deliver us from Antinomianism! We do preach against Arminianism, but that is a white devil compared with the black devil of Antinomianism. God save us from that! If there is any religion that will drug consciences, stimulate crime, crowd jails, and turn this world into an Aceldama, it is the religion of the man who preaches Divine sovereignty, but  
neglects human responsibility. I believe it is a vicious, immoral and corrupt manner of setting forth doctrine, and cannot be of God. It would undermine morality and put the very life of society in peril if it  
were largely believed, or if it were preached by men of any great weight  
who should have any great numbers to follow them. Oh, dear Friends! Be  
not as the animal which chews the cud, but yet divides not the hoof. Seek  
not merely to get precious doctrine, comforting to yourselves—but see that  
your walk is such as it should be.  
Then there was another animal. It did not chew the cud, still the Jews  
thought it did. This was the Coney—the nearest approach to it is the rabbit of our land—“The Coney, because he chews the cud, but divides not  
the hoof, he is unclean.” The Coney was a very timid creature, which burrowed in the rocks. “The conies are a feeble folk, but they make their  
dwellings in the rocks,” says Solomon. Now, there are some people who seem as if they like the Gospel Truth, and they may be put down in the class in which Moses puts the Coney—which appeared to chew the cud—  
though it did not really do so.  
We know there are hundreds of this sort. They like the Gospel, but it  
must be very cheap. They like to hear it preached, but as to doing anything to extend it, unless it were to lend their tongues an hour, they would  
not dream of it. The Coney, you know, lived in the earth. These people are  
always scraping. John Bunyan’s muck rake is always in their hands. Neither to dig nor to beg are they ashamed. They are as true misers, and as  
covetous as if they had no religion at all. And many of these people get  
into our Churches and are received, when they ought not to be. Covetousness ought to exclude a man from Church fellowship as well  
as fornication, for Paul says, “Covetousness, which is idolatry.” He puts  
the brand right on its forehead, and marks what it is. We would not admit  
an idolater to the Lord’s Table—nor ought we to admit a covetous man—  
only we cannot always know him. St. Francis Sales, who had a great  
many people come to him to confession, makes this note, that he had  
many men and women come to him who confessed all sorts of most outrageous crimes, but he never had one who confessed covetousness. It is a kind of sin that always comes in at the backdoor and it is always  
entertained at the back part of the house. People do not suspect it as an  
inmate of their own hearts. Mr. Covetousness has changed his name to  
Mr. Prudent-Thrifty—and it is quite an insult to call him other than by his  
adopted name. Old vices, like streets notorious for vice, get new names  
given them. Avaricious grasping, they call that, “the laws of social economy.” Screwing down the poor is, “the natural result of competition.”  
Withholding corn until the people curse, oh, that is, “just the usual regulation of the market.”  
People name the thing prettily and then they think they have rescued it  
from the taint. These people, who are all for earth, are like the conies,  
who, though they chew the cud, burrow in the ground. They love the precious Truths of God and yet they are all for this earth. If there are any  
such here, in spite of their fine experience, we pronounce them unclean—  
they are not heirs of Heaven.  
The next creature mentioned in the chapter is the hare—“The hare, because he chews the cud, but divides not the hoof, he is unclean.” See how  
he flies with bounding step over the ground! A clapping of the hands, and  
how he starts and is away! The hare is such a timid creature. She leaves  
her food and flees before the passerby. I would not say a harsh thing, but  
there are some people who appear to chew the cud, they love to hear the  
Gospel preached. Their eyes will sparkle sometimes when we are talking of  
Christ, but they do not divide the hoof. Like the hare, they are too timid to  
be domesticated among the creatures whom the Lord has pronounced  
clean.  
They do not come out from the world, enter into the Church, and manifest themselves wholly on the Lord’s side. Their conscience tells them they  
should be baptized as Believers—but they dare not. They know they  
should be united with the people of God, and confess Christ before men— but they are ashamed, ashamed, ashamed! One fears lest his wife should know it, and she might ridicule. Some start abashed lest their friends should know it, for the finger of scorn or the breath of raillery could frighten them out of their senses. Others of them are alarmed because the  
world might, perhaps, give them an ill name.  
Do you know where the fearful go? Not the fearing, not the doubting—  
for there are many poor, humble, doubters and fearers that are saved—  
but do you know where the fearful go? The fearful that are afraid of being  
persecuted, mocked, or even laughed at for Christ—do you know where  
they go? You will find it in the Book of the Revelation—“But the fearful  
and unbelieving shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire  
and brimstone, which is the second death.”  
Have you ever read that sentence which says, “Whosoever shall be  
ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed  
when He shall come in His own glory and in His Father’s and of the holy  
angels”? There you are, young men! You are ashamed of Christ. You have  
just come up from the country, and you did not pray to God the other  
night because there was another young man in the room, and you were  
ashamed of Him! In the name of God I entreat you. No, I COMMAND you—  
be not ashamed of your Master, Christ, and of the religion which you  
learned at your father’s knee.  
There are others of you who work in large shops, and you do not want  
to be jeered at, as the other young fellow is who works with you, because  
he is a Christian. You keep your love as a secret, do you, and will not let it  
out? What? If Christ had only loved you in secret, and had never dared to  
come here on earth to be despised and rejected of men, where would you  
have been? “No man lights a candle and puts it under a bushel.” Do you  
think that Christ has lit a candle in your hearts that you may hide it? Oh, I pray you, be not like the hare. Let your hoof be so divided from  
the rest of mankind that they may say, “There is a man—he is not as bold  
as a lion, perhaps—but he is not ashamed to be a follower of Jesus Christ.  
He does bear the sneer and gibe for Him and counts it his honor to be  
thought evil of for Jesus’ sake.” Oh, be not, I pray you, like the timid hare,  
lest you be found among the unclean!  
There is one other creature mentioned—“The swine, though he divides  
the hoof and is cloven-footed, yet he chews not the cud, he is unclean to  
you.” Now, the swine is the emblem of those who do act rightly. They  
make a profession—before men they are the most upright and the most  
devout. But then the inner part is not right. They do not chew the cud.  
The foot is right, but not the inward part. There is no chewing, no masticating, no digesting the Word of Life.  
“But,” says one, “why pick out a swine, because that does not seem to  
be a fair comparison.” Yes it is, for there are no people in the world more  
like swine than those Pharisees who make clean the outside of the cup  
and the platter—whose hoof is divided enough—but whose inward part is  
very wickedness. I do not know an animal that might more fitly picture  
out those vile, unclean Pharisees. You may say you think it is too harsh a  
picture for you. You are put down, thus, in the catalog, and I have no other place in which to put you. You are like swine, unless the Grace of  
God is in you.  
What good does the swine do? Of what concern is life to him but to feed  
grossly and slumber heavily? And so your life, since the inward part is  
wrong, brings no glory to God—you bring no good to your fellow men. Oh,  
that the Lord would show you that dead morality, unattended by the love  
of God in the soul, will most certainly be of no avail! “You must be born  
again.” “Except you are converted and become as little children, you shall  
in no wise enter into the kingdom of Heaven.”  
My text seems to be a dividing one—it divides the house in two. Remember, dear Friends, the day is coming when a greater division than any  
which can be described will occur to all of us. But the same rule will be  
enforced. We shall be assembled in one crowd, a mightier crowd than language can picture, or imagination grasp. The books shall be opened—  
books more terrible than this Book of Mercy. The Book of Life shall be unfolded and read, in which those washed in Jesus’ blood, and so made  
clean, shall find their names recorded.  
They will be borne to Heaven. Listen to the music of the angels as they  
bear them up to God’s right hand! Where will you be? Will you be with  
those who mount to Heaven, or with yonder trembling, shrieking, screaming souls, who, as Hell opens her mouth, descend alive into the pit? God  
help you if you are not on the right hand side!  
It is not too late. Jesus Christ is still preached to you. The way of salvation is very plain. It is this—Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you  
shall be saved. Believe in Jesus. Then make a profession of your faith in  
God’s own ordained way, and method, and you have His promise for it  
that you will be saved. God help you to believe, and you shall be saved  
through Jesus—and unto Him shall be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

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THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER  
NO. 353

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 30, 1860 BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.**  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

**“And if a leprosy break out abroad in the skin and the leprosy covers all the skin of him that has the plague from his head even to his foot, wherever the priest looks; then the priest shall consider: and, behold, if the leprosy has covered all his  
flesh, he shall pronounce him clean  
that has the plague: it is all turned white: he is clean.” Leviticus 13:12, 13.**

THIS is a singular paradox, but not a paradox to him who understands the Gospel. We have great reason to thank God that the terrible disease, leprosy, which was one of the demons of the East, is so little known in our own land. And even in the few cases where leprosy has broken out in our climate, it has always assumed a far more mild and mitigated shape than it did with the Jews in the land of Canaan. Yet since they had so frightful a disease, God, in His infinite mercy, made use of it as a sort of sermon to the people. Leprosy is to be considered by us as being the type of sin.

And as we read the chapters in Leviticus, which concern the shutting up or putting apart and the purification of a cleansed leper, we are to understand every sentence as having in it a Gospel sermon to us. They teach us what is the condition of a sinner in the sight of God, how that sinner is to be cured and how he can be restored to the privileges from which the leprosy of sin had utterly shut him out.

I shall need no preface, for the subject is deeply interesting and will be found especially so by many of us who can use the language of David in the Psalm which we have just read. If we have come up here conscious of guilt and laden with iniquity—I am quite certain and I speak positively and confidently—there will be somewhat in the discourse of this morning to cheer our hearts and to send us home rejoicing in the Lord our God. Carry in your thoughts the one key to our text, namely, that leprosy is the great type of sin.

And I shall want you, first of all, to see the leper and to see in the leper the sinner. After we have well looked to him we shall bring him before the priest and stand still while the priest examines him. This done and the sentence being pronounced, we shall listen attentively to the announcement of the rites and ceremonies which were necessary in order to cleanse this leper which were but representations of the way whereby we, too, must be cleansed. And then we shall have a little time to notice certain rites which follow after cleansing, which were not the cause of the cleansing itself, but necessary before the man could actually enjoy the privileges which the cleansing gained for him.

I. First, then, let me ask you to turn your eyes to the LOATHSOME AND GHASTLY SPECTACLE OF A LEPER.

A leper was extremely loathsome in his person. The leprosy broke out at first almost imperceptibly in certain red spots which appeared in the skin. They were painless, but they gradually increased. Perhaps the man who was the subject of the complaint scarcely knew that he had it at all, but it increased and further and further and further it spread. The perspiration was unable to find a vent and the skin became dry and pealed off in scales. The withering of the skin was too true an index of what was going on within, for in the very marrow of the bones there was a most frightful rottenness, which in due time would utterly consume the victim. The man would eat and drink, he would perform what is called by the physician, the naturalia—all the functions would be discharged as if in health. All things would go on as before and he would be subject to very little pain.

But by degrees the bones would rot. In many cases the fingers would drop off and yet without any surgical operation the rest of the body was healthy, so that there was no bleeding. When it came to its very worst phase, the body itself would drop altogether—all the strings being loosened, the whole house of manhood would become a horrible mass of animated rubbish rather than the stately temple which God originally made it. I could not in your presence this morning describe all the loathsomeness and ghastliness of the aggravated cases of Jewish leprosy. It would be too sickening, if not disgusting. But let me remind you that this, fearful as it seems to be, is a very poor portrait of the loathsomeness of sin.

If God could tell, or, rather if we could bear to hear what God could tell us of the exceeding wickedness and uncleanness of sin, I am sure we should die. God hides from all eyes but His own the blackness of sin. There is no creature, not even an angel before the Throne, that ever knew the intolerable wickedness of rebellion against God. Yet that little of it which God the Holy Spirit taught you and me when we were under conviction of sin was enough to make us feel that we wished we had never been born. Ah, well must I confess, though my life was kept and preserved as a child from outward immorality, when I first saw myself as I was by nature and in the thoughts and intents and imaginations of my heart, I thought that even devils in Hell could not be baser than myself.

Certain I am that whenever the Spirit of God comes into the soul, our good opinion of ourselves soon vanishes. We thought we were all that heart could wish—but when once taught of God the Holy Spirit—we think that we are vile and full of sin, that there is no good thing whatsoever in us. Loathsome, I say, as was the leper, it is not more so in the type than is sin in the estimation of every enlightened mind.

Think again. The leper was not only loathsome in his person, but was defiled in all his acts. If he drank out of a vessel, the vessel was defiled. If he lay upon a bed, the bed became unclean and whosoever sat upon the bed afterwards became unclean, too. If he touched but the wall of a house the wall became unclean and must be purged. Wherever he went he tainted the atmosphere. His breath was as dangerous as the pestilence. He shot baneful glances from his eyes. All that he did was full of the same loathsomeness as was himself. Now this may seem to be a very humiliating truth, but faithfulness requires us to say it—all the actions of the natural man are tainted with sin. Whether he eats, or drinks, or whatsoever he does, he continues to sin against his God. No, if he should come up to God’s house and sing and pray, there is sin in his songs for they are but hypocrisy—there is guilt in his prayers, for the prayers of the wicked are an abomination unto the Lord. Let him attempt to perform holy actions, he is like Uzziah who laid hold upon the censer of the priest while the leprosy was on his brow till he was glad enough to retire from the sacred place, lest he should be struck dead.

Oh, when we saw or thought we saw the sinfulness of sin, this was one of the darkest parts of it that we discovered—all our actions to be stained and tainted with evil. I know not whether I have any in this congregation who are prepared to deny what I assert. If there are, it is my duty to solemnly assure them that they are unclean and covered with an incurable leprosy. They are hopeless lepers who cannot be cleansed, for no man can be cleansed of sin till he is ready to confess that he is all unholy and unclean. Submission to this truth is absolutely necessary to salvation. I am not to condemn any man but still I must speak God’s Word and speak it in loving faithfulness. If you do not confess that all your actions before you were regenerate were full of sin and abominable in the sight of God, you have not yet learned what you are and it is not likely that you will wish to know what a Savior is.

Think of the leper yet again. Being thus the medium of contagion and defilement wherever he went, the Lord demanded that he should be shut out from the society of Israel. There was a spot outside the camp, barren, solitary—where lepers were confined. They were commanded to wear a covering over the mouth and upon the upper lip and if any passed by they were compelled to cry, “Unclean! Unclean! Unclean!” A sound which being muffled by reason of the covering which they wore, must have sounded more ghastly and deathlike than any other human cry.

Some of the Rabbi translate the cry, “Avoid! Avoid! Avoid!” One of the American poets has put it “Room for the leper! Room! But certainly the sense of it is generally understood to be, “Unclean! Unclean! Unclean!” Living apart from their dearest friends, shut out from all the pleasures of society, they were required never to drink of a running stream of water of which others might drink. Nor might they sit down on any stone by the roadside upon which it was probable any other person might rest. They were to all intents and purposes dead to all the enjoyments of life—dead to all the endearments and society of their friends.

Yes and such is the case with the sinner with regard to the people of God. Do you not feel, poor convicted Sinner, that you are unfit to join Christ’s Church? You can go and find such mirth as the company of your fellow-lepers can afford. But where God’s people are, you are out of place. You feel in yourself that you are shut out from the communion of saints. You can not pray their prayer nor sing their hymns. You know not their joys. You have never tasted of their perfect peace. You have never entered into the rest which remains for them, but which remains not for you while you are such an one as you are now.

This, however, is the fearful part of the leprosy of sin—that many who are shut out from goodness become contented with the exclusion. There be some who even pretend to despise the privileges which they cannot

enjoy. Since they cannot be holy, they make holiness the theme of ridicule. Since they must not envy the delights of piety they turn their heel upon them and say, “There is no joy in religion, nor bliss in love to Christ.” This is perhaps one of the most fearful parts of this leprosy of sin— that it deceives the man himself—makes him think himself to be healthy while he is full of disease. It makes him imagine the healthy ones to be diseased, while he who is the true leper thinks himself to be the only sane person in the camp.

Once more, the leper was wholly unable to come up to the house of God. Other men might offer sacrifices but not the leper. Others had a share in the great High Priest’s sacrifice and when he went within the veil he appeared for all others. But the leper had neither part nor lot in this matter. He was shut out from God, as well as shut out from man. He was no partaker of the sacred things of Israel and all the ordinances of the tabernacle were as nothing to him. Think of that, Sinner! As a sinner full of guilt, you are shut out from all communion with God.

True, He gives you the mercies of this life as the leper had his bread and water. But you have none of the spiritual joys which God affords to His people. You can not stand in His presence, for He is a devouring fire and would consume you. Your prayers are shut out from Him, your words are unheard. You are a prodigal son and your father is far from you. You have spent your substance in riotous living and no man will give to you, You have become the companion of the swine and you would fain fill your belly with the husks which the swine eat. No father’s eye greets you. At no father’s table do you sit. Your father’s hired servants have bread enough to spare, but you perish with hunger.

Oh, Sinner! If you who do not feel yourself to be as I describe you now, you will one day find it to be a very awful thing to be denied all fellowship with God. At last you may seek in vain to cross your father’s threshold. After death you will long to enter within the pearly gates and you shall be thrust back, for lepers and defiling ones can never stand in the sanctified presence of the holy God. Where angels veil their faces, lepers shall not exhale their putrid breath. God drove Satan out of Paradise because he sinned and will he suffer sin a second time to intrude into His presence? No, you shall find that as long as you and your sins are one, God will always be at war with you. As long as you are at peace with your guilt, the Eternal God draws His sword and vows eternal warfare with you.

Now I wish I could more forcibly put the position of a sinner in God’s sight this morning. Let me just recapitulate for a moment. Every man by nature is like a leper, loathsome in his person, infected in all his actions and in all that he does. He is incapable of fellowship with God’s people and he is shut out utterly and entirely by his sin from the presence and acceptance of God.

II. Having thus described the leper and the sinner, I shall now BRING THE LEPER UP TO THE HIGH PRIEST.  
There he stands. The priest has come out to meet him. Mark, whenever a leper was cleansed under the Jewish law—the leper did nothing—the priest did all. I invite you to read over this chapter when you are at home and you will see that previous to his being pronounced clean, the leper was passive—the priest did everything. The priest comes out from the sanctuary, comes to the place of the lepers—where no other man might go—but he in his priestly office. He calls up one leper before him. He looks at him and there is a spot on that leper which is not leprous—quick, raw, healthy flesh. The priest puts him aside, he is an unclean leper. Here is another and he has but one or two red spots appearing beneath the skin. All the rest of his body is perfectly sound, the priest puts him aside, he is an unclean leper.  
Here is another, he is from head to foot covered with a scaly whiteness of the filthy disease. The hair is all turned white, owing to the decay of the powers of nature which are unable now to nourish the roots of the hair. There is not a single speck of health in him from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot—all is pollution and filth. But hark! The high priest says to him, “You are clean.” And after certain necessary ceremonies he is admitted into the camp and afterwards into the very sanctuary of God. My text asserts that if there was found any sound place on him, he was unclean. But when the leprosy had covered him, where ever the priest looked, then the man became by sacrificial rights a clean leper.  
Now let me bring up the sinner before the Great High Priest this morning. How many there are, who, as they come up here, are ready to confess that they have done many things which are wrong, but they say, “though we have done much which we cannot justify, yet there have been many good actions which might almost counterbalance the sin. Have we not been charitable to the poor, have we not sought to instruct the ignorant, to help those that are out of the way? We have some sins, we do confess, but there is much at the bottom which is still right and good and we therefore hope that we shall be delivered.”  
I put you aside in God’s name, this morning, as unclean lepers. For you, there is no hope and no promise of salvation whatever. Here comes a second. He admits with candor that he has a very great measure of guilt— perhaps not open immorality—but he confesses that his thoughts and the imaginations of his heart have been evil and evil frequently. “But, still,” says he, “though I have not one good work of which to boast, nor any righteousness in which to glory, yet I do hope that by repentance I may amend. I trust that by a resolute persistence in good works I may yet blot out my past life and so may enter into Heaven.” I set him aside again, as being an unclean leper, for whom cleansing rites are not provided. He is one who must still be kept without the camp. He has not arrived at that stage in which it is possible for him to be made clean.  
But here comes another. Probably he is a really better man than either of the other two. But not in his own opinion. He stands before us and with many a sigh and tear confesses that he is utterly ruined and undone. “Sir, a month or two ago I would have claimed a righteousness with the very best of them. I, too, could have boasted of what I have done. But now I see my righteousness to be as filthy rags and all my goodness is as an unclean thing. I count all these things but dross and dung. I tread upon them and despise them. I have done no good thing. I have sinned and come short of the glory of God. If ever there was a sinner that deserved to be damned, Sir, I am that soul. If ever there was one who had not any excuse to make, but who must plead guilty, without any extenuating circumstances, I am that man.  
“As for the future, I can make no promise! I have often promised and so often lied. I have so often trusted in myself to reform. Often have I hoped the energy of my nature might yet heal my disease, that I renounce, because I cannot help renouncing all such desires. Lord, if ever I am made whole, Your grace must make me so. I do desire to be rid of sin, but I can no more rid myself of sin than I can pluck the sun from the firmament, or scoop the waters from the depth of the sea. I would be perfect, even as You are perfect, but I cannot change my heart. As well might the viper lose his will to poison, the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots, as I cease to do evil. Lord, at Your feet I fall, full of leprosy from head to foot. Nothing have I to boast of, nothing to trust to except Your mercy.”  
My Brother, you are a clean leper. Your sins are forgiven you, your iniquities are put away. Through the blood of Jesus Christ, who died upon the Tree, you are saved. As soon as ever the leprosy had come right out, the man was clean and as soon as ever your sin is fully manifest so that in your conscience you feel yourself to be really a sinner, there is a way of salvation for you. Then by the sprinkling of blood and the washing of water, you may be made clean. As long as a man has anything to boast of there is no Christ for him. But the moment he has nothing of his own Christ is his. While you are anything, Christ is nothing to you—but when you are nothing, Christ is everything. All the warrant that a sinner needs in coming to Christ is to know that he is a sinner.  
For “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Do I know myself to be a sinner? Then He came to save me and there I rest and there I trust. If I have any good feelings or good works which take away from me the power to call myself a sinner, or if they diminish the force and emphasis which I put upon the word when I use it, then may I fear that I have no right to come to Christ. Christ died “the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.” Am I unjust? Must I honestly declare I am? “Christ died for the ungodly. “Am I ungodly, is this my grief and sorrow that I am ungodly? Then Christ died for me.  
“I do not know,” said Martin Luther, “when men will ever believe that text in which it is written Christ died for our sins. They will think that Christ died for our righteousness, whereas He died for our sins. Christ had no eye to our goodness when He came to save us, but to our badness.” A physician, when he comes to my house, has not an eye to my present health. He does not come there because I am healthy, but because I am sick and the more sick I am, the more call for the physician’s skill and the more argument does my sickness yield why he should exercise all his craft and use his best medicines on my behalf. Your only plea with Christ is your guilt. Use it, Sinner, use it as David did when he said, “Lord have mercy upon my iniquity, for it is great!” If he had said “Have mercy upon my iniquity, for it is little,” he would have been a legalist and would have missed his mark. But when he said, “Have mercy, for it is great!” he understood the Gospel riddle—that strange paradox at which Pharisees always kick and which worldlings always hate—the glorious fact that Jesus Christ came into the world “not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”  
III. Having thus brought the man before the priest, we shall now briefly turn our attention to THE CEREMONIES WHICH THE PRIEST USED IN THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER. I will read the verses quickly and expound them briefly. “And the priest shall go forth out of the camp and the priest shall look and, behold, if the plague of leprosy is healed in the leper, then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive and clean and cedar wood and scarlet and hyssop: and the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water: as for the living bird, he shall take it and the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water: and he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times and shall pronounce him clean and shall let the dying bird loose into the open field.”  
You will perceive, first, that the priest went to the leper, not the leper to the priest. We go not up to Heaven, first, till Christ comes down from His Father’s glory to the place where we as lepers are shut out from God. Oh, glorious High Priest, methinks I see You this morning coming out from the tabernacle of the Most High where You have offered Your complete sacrifice and You come down to us loathsome and abhorred sinners. You do take upon Yourself the form of Man. You do not disdain the Virgin’s womb. You come to sinners, you eat and drink with them! But the coming of the priest was not enough, there must be a sacrifice and on this occasion, in order to set out the two ways by which a sinner is saved, there was sacrifice mingled with resurrection.  
First, there was sacrifice. One of the birds was taken and his blood was shed in a vessel which was full, as the Hebrew has it, of “living water”—of water which had not been stagnant, but which was clean. Just as when Jesus Christ was put to death, blood and water flowed from His side to be “of sin a double cure,” so in the earthen vessel there was received, first, the “living water,” and then the blood of the bird which had just been slain. If sin is put away it must be by blood. There is no way of putting sin from before the presence of God except by the streams which flow from the open veins of Christ. It was nothing that the leper did. You notice he does nothing whatever in the whole affair but stand still and humbly partake of the benefits which are given to him through the mission of the priest and through the slaughter of the bird.  
And then the second bird was dipped into the blood until all its feathers were red and dropping with gore. It was doubtless tied round the cedar stick at the end of which was the hyssop to make a kind of brush. The birds wings were tied along the stick and the whole was dipped in the blood of the bird that was slain. And when this had been done seven times, the strings were cut and the living bird allowed to fly away. This is a lively picture of Christ. As a living bird He ascends on high after being slain for us—scattering the red drops of atonement He rises above the clouds which receive Him out of our sight and there before His Father’s Throne, He pleads the full merit of the sacrifice which He offered for us once and for all.  
The leper was made clean by sacrifice and by resurrection, but he was not clean till the blood was sprinkled on him. Christians, the Cross does not save us till Christ’s blood is sprinkled on our conscience. Yet the virtual salvation was accomplished for all the elect when Christ died for them upon the Tree. It is the joy of every Christian to stand here saved by Another. He knows that he is full of leprosy, that in himself there is no reason whatever why he should be cleansed. In fact the reasons are all the other way—for there is every reason why he should continue to be shut out forever from the presence of God. But there stands the High Priest, the great Melchisedec, the Son of the Virgin and the Son of God. He has offered His own blood for us. He who offered it, applies it to the conscience and with this application—  
*“The Christian walks at large,  
His Savior’s blood, his full discharge,  
At His dear feet his soul he’ll lay,  
A sinner saved and homage pay.”*  
But the saving of your soul rests not with yourself, but with Christ Jesus, just as the cleansing of the leper was not with the leper, but with the priest. How many there are among God’s people, who say, “I know that Christ died for sinners, but I don’t get any comfort from it because I do not feel as if I were saved.” That is self-righteousness in a very deceitful shape. You will not be saved by feeling that Christ died for you, but by His dying for you. If He died for you, you were saved when He died. If He took your sins, He took them in very deed and they are not yours. If Christ was your Substitute at all, then God can never punish two for one offense— first the Substitute and then the sinner himself.  
If Christ really died for you, then your sins are pardoned, whether you feel that they are pardoned or not. “Yes,” says one, “but I want to realize that.” It is a very blessed thing to realize it. But it is not the realizing that saves. It is the death of Christ that saves—not your realizing the death. If there is a life boat and some poor man is ready to drown and some strong hand rescues him—when he comes to himself he realizes that he is in the boat but it is not the realizing that he is in the boat that saves him—it is the life boat. So it is Christ that saves the sinner, not the sinner’s feelings, or willings, or doings. And in Heaven the whole glory of salvation will be to the wounds of Jesus and nothing else.  
“But,” says one, “how am I to know that Christ died for me?” You will never know it until you are willing to stand in the leper’s place full of leprosy. If you know this day that you are full of sin. If you are conscious that in you, that is, in your flesh, there dwells no good thing, then it is written that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures—not according to our feelings, but according to the Scriptures. How do I know that I am full of sin? Because I believe I am, because God tells me so—not merely because I feel it, but because God tells me so. How do I know that Christ died for me? Not because I feel it, but because God tells me so. He says Christ came into the world to save sinners. I am a sinner, I feel it, I know it. God forbid that I should be such a liar to myself as to deny it.  
Then He came to save me. “Come now, let us reason together. Though your sin be as scarlet”—that is my case—“they shall be as wool, though they be red like crimson”—that is my case—“they shall be as snow.” It is just this—if you are willing to stand today condemned as a sinner and nothing more than a sinner, then Christ died for you. Your business is to trust your soul on the fact that Christ did hang on the Tree for sinners. For mark—faith is trusting Christ and having done with self. Put your finger on any sound place in your flesh—you are a lost man. Point to any good thing that you can trust to and there is no Heaven for you.  
Rely on anything that you have felt, or thought, or said, or done and you rely on a broken reed. But trust in Christ and Christ alone. Cast your arms around His Cross and cling to that, you are saved—yet it will not be your clinging, it will be the Cross that will save you. Do not trust your clinging. Trust the Cross. Still to the Cross flee away, you poor, lost, ruined ones. For under its shadow there is safety for the defenseless, there is hope even for the despairing.  
IV. But pardon me while I keep you a minute or two longer to observe that AFTER THE LEPER WAS CLEANSED THERE WERE CERTAIN THINGS WHICH HE HAD TO DO. Until he is cleansed he is to do nothing. The sinner can do nothing towards his own salvation. His place is the place of death. Christ must be his life. The sinner is so lost that Christ must begin and carry on and finish all—but when the sinner is saved— then he begins to work in right good earnest. When once he is no more a leper, but a leper cleansed—then for the love he bears his Master’s name, there is no trial too arduous, no service too hard—he spends his whole strength in magnifying and glorifying his Lord.  
I want to call your attention to the further cleansing of the leper. Mark, he was wholly cleansed by the priest and what was done afterwards was done by a cleansed man. “He that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes and shave off all his hair and wash himself in water.” Blood first, water afterwards. No cleansing from evil habits until there has been cleansing from sin. There is no making the nature clean till the guilt is put away. “He shall wash his clothes and shave off his hair and wash himself in water, that he may be clean and after that he shall come into the camp and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days.”  
He did not tell him to wash first. It would have been of no use to him whatever. He did not tell him to wash his clothes and shave his hair first—  
*“No outward forms could make him clean, The leprosy lay deep within.”*  
No, the Priest must do all the work first. After that, the leper must he washed. So Sinner, if you are to be saved Christ must do it all. But when once you have faith in Christ, you must be washed. Then must you cease from sin and then by the Holy Spirit’s power you shall be enabled to do so. What was ineffective before shall become mighty enough now through the life which God has put into you. The washing with water by the Word and the cleansing of yourself from dead works shall become an effectual and mighty duty.  
You shall be made holy and walk in white in the purity wherewith Christ has endowed you. The shaving off of his hair was fitly to represent how all the old things were to pass away and everything was to become new. All the white hair was to be cut off, as you read in the 9th verse—“He shall shave all the hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows.” There was not a remnant or relic left of the old state in which the hair was white—all was to be given up. So it is with the sinner. When he is once pardoned, once cleansed—then he begins to cut off the old habits, his old prides, his old joys. The beard on which the hoary Jew prided himself was to come off and the eyebrows which seem to be necessary to make the countenance look decent, were all to be taken away.  
So it is with the pardoned man. He did nothing before, he does everything now. He knew that good works were of no benefit to him in his carnal state, but now he becomes so strict that he will shave off every hair of his old state. Not one darling lust shall be left, not one iniquity shall be spared, all must be cut away. “He shall wash his clothes also, he shall wash his flesh in water and he shall be clean.” There is one thing I want you to notice in the eighth verse, namely, that he was not allowed to go into his own tent. He might go in with the people, but he might not go into his “tent.” Now though the sinner has to trust in Christ just as he is, yet that sinner will not at once be able to go into his own tent, that is, he will never be able to realize that Christ is personally his own until there has been something more than faith, namely, the cleansing purification of the Spirit’s power.  
As to full assurance I do not think that is to be attained by immediate faith in Christ—full assurance is an after-result. Faith grows by the influence of the Spirit till it comes to assurance. Yet mark that for seven days the man might not go into his own house. He was clean and so if you as a sinner full of sin trust Christ to be your all, though no joy may follow for seven days, yet you are a pardoned man. Though you may not be able to go into your house and say, “I know I am forgiven,” yet you are forgiven. The very hour when sin abounds is the hour when grace abounds. When sin has cut the throat of all your hopes, then Jesus Christ, the great Hope and Solace of His people, comes into your heart and though you may scarce be able to see Him, yet He is there and you are a saved man. What a glorious salvation is this and its after-results how pure and how heaven

ly! I will not detain you further than to notice that this man, before he

might further enjoy the privileges of his healed estate, was to bring an offering and the priest was to take him to the very door of the tabernacle. He never dare come there before but he may come now. So the pardoned man may come right up to God’s Mercy Seat and may bring the offering of holiness and good works. He is a pardoned man now. You ask me how? Not by anything he did—but by what the priest did and that alone.

Read the fourteenth verse, “The priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering and the priest shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed.” Here the Lord puts away the sins of the ear, which are very many. The sin of the ear—when you used to hear lascivious songs, malignant words and idle talk. “He shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed and upon the thumb of his right hand.” Have you read that? How many times has the right hand sinned against God! How have your actions defiled you! “He shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed and upon the thumb of his right hand and upon the great toe of his right foot.”

How have your feet run after wickedness? How greatly you need to be cleansed! But mark—when this blood had been put on, the priest did more—for he anointed him. Read the seventeenth verse: “and of the rest of the oil that is in his hand shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed and upon the thumb of his right hand and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass offering.” This was telling him again very plainly that which he might have seen already in the type of the two birds.

As soon as ever a man is pardoned, there elapses a time before he completely understands the plan of salvation. When he does, he perceives that he is first cleansed with blood—all his sins, of ear, of hand, of foot, or whatever they may be—are all put away by blood. But next, that he may become God’s servant, he is anointed by the influence of the Holy Spirit with the sanctifying oil. That oil is put on his ear, so that his ear hears his Master’s voice and listens to the Word of God.

That oil is put upon his hand that he may be a consecrated man to serve his God. That oil is put upon his foot that his feet may run in the way of God’s commands, even to the end. But, do mark, for I fear lest I should spoil that which I want to convey—all this was an after-piece, after the leper was cleansed. He could not have done any of this himself until the first part had been done for him.

To sum up the whole sermon in one or two short sentences. Sinner, if you are this day unrenewed and unregenerate, you are loathsome to yourself—you are incapable of fellowship with God. You are preparing yourself for the pit of Hell. But the way of salvation is simply this—if you are today full of sin, laden with iniquity—if you are ready to confess there is no good thing in you, if you are willing to take the place of a prisoner who has been tried, condemned and cast, then Christ has died for you. Christ has shed His blood, Christ has risen up on high and your salvation is finished.

Say not in your heart, “I do not feel this, I do not feel that.” It is not your feeling or doing. It is what Christ has done. He must do all for you and all He asks of you is simply to stand in the place of the unjust that He may come to you in the place of the Just, while He stands in your place. Is this too easy for you? Are you too proud to be saved by such a system as this? Then, what can I say to you but that you deserve to die if you neglect a plan of salvation so simple and so admirably adapted to your case?

But instead thereof if you say, “That suits me, for I have nothing to trust to, I am lost.” Why, Man, do you not see that inasmuch as it suits you, it is yours? For whom was the wedding garment made—for those who had fine robes of their own? No—for the naked. For whom was the bath open? For the clean? No—for the filthy. Step in filthy Man, your filth is your warrant. For whom is medicine provided? For the healthy? No, it were an insult. For the sick. Your sickness is your warrant—come to Mercy’s hospital and be healed.  
Whom do you think Christ came to carry on His shoulders to Heaven?

Those that can walk there themselves? No, let them trudge their weary way. If they think they can go to Heaven with their good works let them do so. One of two things—either you must be saved without deserving to be saved—saved by the works of Another—or else you must keep the whole Law and so inherit Heaven of your own right and patent. If, then, you are willing to come to Christ—just as you are without any preparation, simply as a sinner—then Christ has made atonement for you.

Your guilt is put away—God accepts you—you are a pardoned man. You may go out at yonder door and say in your heart, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we now have received the atonement.” As for holiness and good works, these shall come afterwards. Having believed in Christ, His Spirit shall be given and you shall be zealous for good works. While the legalist is talking about them, you shall do them. What you could not do before, you shall do now. When you have given up all trust in yourself you shall become holy and pure and the Spirit of God shall enter into you and shall renew you. You shall be kept by the power of God till, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing you shall be presented before your Father’s face saved—saved eternally.

God add His blessing! I have sought to preach to you the Gospel as plainly as possible. I may still have been misunderstood. If so, I trust that it is not my fault. I have repeated myself over and over again that the sinner, near despairing, may now come and put his trust in Christ and find life in Jesus’ death and healing in His wounds.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1923 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE ANNUAL ATONEMENT

NO. 1923

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 3, 1886, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord.” Leviticus 16:30.**

BEFORE Adam transgressed, he lived in communion with God, but after he had broken the Covenant and grieved God’s Spirit, he could have no more familiar fellowship with God. Under the Mosaic dispensation, in which God was pleased, in His Grace, to dwell among His people and walk with them in the wilderness, it was still under a reserve—there was a Holy Place wherein the symbol of God’s Presence was hidden away from mortal gaze. No man might come near to it except in one way, only, and then only once in the year, “The Holy Spirit this signifying, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest, while as the first Tabernacle was yet standing.” Our subject today illustrates the appointed way of access to God. This chapter shows that the way of access to God is by Atonement and by no other method. We cannot draw near unto the Most High except along the blood-besprinkled way of sacrifice. Our Lord Jesus said, “No man comes unto the Father, but by Me.” And this is true in many senses and in this, among them, that our way to God lies only through the Sacrifice of His Son.

The reason for this is that sin lies at the door. Brothers and Sisters, a pure and holy God cannot endure sin. He cannot have fellowship with it, or with those who are rendered unclean by it, for it would be inconsistent with His Nature to do so. On the other hand, sinful men cannot have fellowship with God—their evil nature could not endure the fire of His holiness! Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? What is that devouring fire and what are those everlasting burnings, but the Justice and Holiness of God? The Apostle says, “Even our God is a consuming fire.” A guilty soul would perish if it were possible for it to draw near to God apart from the Mediator and His Atonement. The fire of God’s Nature must consume the stubble of our nature so long as there is sin in us or about us. Hence the difficulty of access, a difficulty which only a Divine method can remove. God cannot commune with sinful men, for He is holy. Sinful men cannot commune with a holy God, because He must destroy them, even as He destroyed Nadab and Abihu when they intruded into His Holy Place. That terrible judgment is mentioned in the opening verses of the chapter before us as the reason why the ordinances herein contained were first of all made.

How, then, shall men come to God? Only in God’s own way! He, Himself, devised the way and He has taught it to us by a parable in this chapter. It would be very wrong to prefer any one passage of Scripture beyond another, for all Scripture is given by Inspiration. But if we might do so, we should set this chapter in a very eminent and prominent place for its fullness of instruction—and its clear, yet deep doctrinal teaching. It treats upon a matter which is of the very highest importance to all of us. We are here taught the way by which the sin that blocks the door may be taken away, so that a seeking soul may be introduced into the Presence of God— and stand in His Holy Place—and yet live. Here we learn how we may say, with the astonished Prophet, “I have seen God and my life is preserved!” Oh that we might, today, so learn the lesson that we may enter into the fullest fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, in that safe way, that only way, which God has appointed for us! Oh for the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, that we may know and use “the new and living way!”

Before I proceed to enlarge upon this chapter, I want to notice that, of course, this was only a type. This great Day of Atonement did not see an actual atonement made, nor sin really put away, but it was the figure of heavenly things—the shadow of good things to come. The substance is of Christ. If this Day of Atonement had been real and satisfactory, as touching God and the conscience of men, there would never have been another—for the worshippers once purged would have had no more conscience of sin! If they had lived 50 or a hundred years, they would never have needed another Day of Atonement—but because this was, in its nature, imperfect and shadowy, being only typical—therefore, every year, in the seventh month, on the 10th day of the month, a fast was proclaimed, sin was confessed, victims were slain and atonement was again presented.

In the Jewish year, so often as it came round, on one special day they were commanded to afflict their souls, even though it was a Sabbath of rest. In very deed a remembrance of sin was made every year, a painful remembrance for them, although sweetened by a new exhibition of the plan by which sin is cleansed. The Lord said, “This shall be an everlasting statute unto you.” It lasted as long as the Mosaic economy in the letter, but its spirit and substance last on forever. They had that day to remember that their sin was not put away once and for all and forever by all their types and ceremonies and, therefore, they had again to humble themselves and come before God with sacrifices which could never truly put away sin! Israel had to do this constantly until Jesus, the true High Priest appeared—and now they have no sacrificing priest, nor altar, nor Holy of Holies. By Jesus Christ’s one offering of Himself, sin was put away, once and for all, effectually and finally, so that Believers are really clean before God.

Now, if I should seem to run the type into the substance, you will just separate them in your own minds. It is not easy to speak as to keep shadow and substance quite clear of each other. We are apt to say, “This is so-and-so,” when we mean, “this represents so-and-so,” and we have our Lord’s example for so doing, for He said, “this is My body and My blood,” when He meant that the bread and wine represented His body and blood. We are not speaking to fools, nor to those who will wrench the letter from its obvious spiritual sense! I shall trust to your intelligence and the guidance of the Holy Spirit that you will, in this discourse, discern between the symbol and the substance! May the Divine Spirit help me and help you to a right understanding of this sacred type!

I. Now, then, let us come to the text and note, first, WHAT WAS DONE on that particular day. The text tells us what was done symbolically—“On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord.”

The persons, themselves, were cleansed . If any of them had become unclean so as to be denied communion with God and His people, they were made clean, so that they might go up to the Tabernacle and mingle with the congregation. All the host were, that morning, regarded as unclean— and all had to bow their heads in penitent sorrow because of their uncleanness. After the sacrifice and the sending away of the scapegoat, the whole congregation was clean and in a condition to rejoice. If it happened to be the Year of Jubilee, the joyful trumpets rang out as soon as the atonement was complete. Every year, within four days after the Day of Atonement, the people were so clean that they kept the joyful Feast of Tabernacles. Jewish Rabbis were known to say that no man had ever seen sorrow who had not seen the Day of Atonement and that no man had ever seen gladness who had not witnessed the hilarity and delight of the people during the Feast of Tabernacles!

The people, themselves, were made to be a clean people and I lay great stress on this, because unless you, yourself, are purged, everything that you do is defiled in the sight of God. When a man was unclean, if he went into a tent and sat upon anything, it was unclean. If a friend touched his garments, he was rendered unclean. The man, himself, needed, first, to be delivered from impurity and it is precisely the same in your case and mine! I have need to cry, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean! Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.” Your very person, by nature, is defiled and obnoxious to the justice of God. In body, soul and spirit you are, by nature, altogether as an unclean thing and all your righteousnesses are as filthy rags—you, yourself, need to be washed and renewed. It is a far simpler thing to remove outward stains than it is to purge the very substance and nature of man, yet this is what was done, typically, on the Day of Atonement—and this is what our redeeming Lord actually does for us! We are outlaws and His Atonement purges us of outlawry and makes us citizens. We are lepers and by His stripes we are so healed as to be received among the clean! By nature we are only fit to be flung into those fires which burn up corrupt and offensive things—but His Sacrifice makes us so precious in the sight of the Lord that all the forces of Heaven stand sentinel about us! Once black as night, we are so purged that we shall walk with Him in white, for we are worthy.

Their persons being made clean, they were also purged of all the sins confessed. I called attention, in the reading of the chapter, to its many, “alls.” I think there are seven or eight of them. The work which was done on that day was comprehensive—a clean sweep was made of sin. I begin with that which was confessed, for it was that for which cleansing would be most desired. It is said that, “Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel.” All sin that was confessed over the scapegoat was carried away into a land not inhabited. Sin that is confessed is evidently real sin and not a mere dream of a morbid conscience. There is a certain mythical cloud of sin which people talk about and pretend to deplore and yet they have no sense of the solid weight and heinousness of their actual iniquity. Certain grievous sins are comparable to cauldrons of foaming filth—no man will willingly acknowledge them, however clearly they may be his, but when he does admit them before God, let him remember that it is this real sin, this foul and essentially abominable transgression, which is put away by the Atonement of Christ!

Sin confessed with tears. Sin which causes the very heart to bleed— killing sin, damning sin—this is the kind of sin for which Jesus died! Sham sinners may be content with a sham Savior, but our Lord Jesus is the real Savior who did really die—and died for real sin. Oh, how this ought to comfort you, you that are sadly bearing the pressing burden of an execrable life! And you, too, who are crushed into the mire of despondency beneath the load of your guilt! Brothers and Sisters, sin which you are bound to admit to as most assuredly committed is the sort of pollution from which Jesus cleanses all Believers. Sin which you dare not confess to man, but acknowledge only as you lay your hand upon the Divine Sacrifice—such sin the Lord removes from you.

The passage is very particular to mention “all sins.” “The goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities.” This includes every form of sin of thought, of word, of deed, of pride, of falsehood, of lust, of malice, of blasphemy. This comprehends crimes against man and offenses against God of peculiar blackness. And it does not exclude sins of inadvertence, or carelessness, or of omission. Transgressions of the body, the intellect, the affections are all blotted out. The outrageous scandals which I dare not mention are yet pardonable—yes, such have been pardoned! There is not the same degree of virus in all sins, but whether or not, the Atonement is for all transgressions. The Lord Jesus Christ did not pour out His heart’s blood to remove one set of stains and leave the rest— He takes away from the soul that puts its trust in Him every spot and trace of sin. “Wash me,” said David, “and I shall be whiter than snow.” He looked for the extreme of cleanness and such the Savior brings to the soul for whom He has made effectual Atonement. I desire to be so plain and broad that the chief of sinners may gather hope from my words. I speak in very simple language, but the theme is full of sublimity—especially to you that feel your need of it. The Atonement removed all sin. I must give you the exact expression. He says, “all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins.”

It seems that the Divine Atonement puts away the sin of sin—the essence and heart of sin. Sin has its core, its kernel, its mortal spot. Within a fruit there is a central stone, or pip—this may serve as the likeness of sin. Within each iniquity there seems to lie a something more essentially evil than the act itself—this is the kernel of intent, the core of obstinacy, the inner hate of the mind. Whatever may be the sin of the soul, or the soul of the sin, Atonement has been made for it all. Most sins are a conglomerate of sins. A sin may be compared to a honeycomb—there are as many sins within one sin as there are cells within a piece of comb. Sin is a swarming, hiving, teeming thing! You can never estimate its full vileness, nor perceive all its evil bearings. All sorts of sins may hide away in one sin.

It would puzzle all the theologians in the world to tell what sin was absent from Adam’s first offense. I could take any point you choose and show that Adam sinned in that direction. All sin was within that first sin. Sin is a multitudinous evil, an aggregate of all manner of filthiness, a chain with a thousand deadly links! A sinner is like a man possessed with a devil who cries, “My name is Legion, for we are many!” It is one in evil and yet countless in forms. The Atonement is more than equal to sin—it takes away all our transgressions in all our sins. It is the fullest purgation that could be imagined. The Lord Jesus has not left upon those for whom He has made Atonement a single spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, so far as their justification is concerned. He has not left an iniquity for which they can be condemned before the bar of judgement. “You are clean every whit,” is His sure verdict and none can contradict it.

It appears from this chapter, too, that another thing was done. Not only were all the sins that they had committed put away, but also all their holy things were purged. There stood the altar upon which only holy things were offered, but because imperfect men ministered there, it needed to be sprinkled with blood before it could be clean. There was the Holy Place of the Tabernacle which was dedicated solely to God’s service, wherein the holiest rites of God’s ordaining were celebrated—but because the priests that served there were fallible and unholy thoughts might cross their minds even when they handled the holy vessels, therefore the blood was sprinkled seven times within the Holy Place! Inside, within the veil, the sanctuary was called the “Holy of Holiest.” Yes, but standing, as it did at first, in the midst of the camp of an erring people and afterwards near to it, it needed to be purged! It is written, “the priest shall make an atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel.” Even the Mercy Seat and the ground whereon it rested were sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifice seven times!

O Brothers and Sisters, I feel so glad that our Lord has atoned for the sins of our holy things! I rejoice that Jesus forgives the sins of my sermons! I have preached my very soul out among you with purity of motive, seeking to win men for Christ, but I dare not hope to have them accepted in and of themselves, for I perceive that they are defiled with sin! I feel so glad that Jesus has purified our prayers! Many saints spend much time in hearty, earnest cries to God, but even on your knees, you sin—and herein is our comfort, that the precious blood has made Atonement for the shortcomings of our supplications. Sometimes when we get together, Beloved, we sing to the praise of our Lord with heart and will. I have felt in this place as if you and I and all of us were so many burning coals, all blazing within a censer and thus letting loose the odors of the sweet incense of our Lord’s praise! How often has a pillar of fragrant smoke risen from this house to Heaven! Yes, but even then there was sin in our praises and iniquity in our doxologies. We need pardon for our Psalms and cleansing for our hymns! Blessed be God, Atonement is made for all our faults, excesses and shortcomings. Jesus puts away not only our unholy things, but also the sins of our holy things!

Once more, on that day, all the people were cleansed. All the congregation of the house of Israel were typically cleansed from all sin by the Day of Atonement—not only the priests, but all the people—not only the princes, but the poorest servants in the camp! The aged woman and the little child. The gray beard and the youth were, alike, purified. Men of business inclined to covetousness, they were cleansed. And younger men and maidens in their gaiety, too apt to descend into wantonness—they were all made clean that day! This gives great comfort to those of us who love the souls of the multitude. All who believe are justified from all things! It is written, “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” I have often heard the text quoted with the, “us,” left out. Permit me to put it in at this moment—“cleanses us from all Sin.” Now put yourself into the, “us.” Dare to believe that Grace admits you there! By an act of faith, let all of us all round the galleries and in this great area say, “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses US.” If you pull, “us,” to pieces, it is made up of a great many “me’s.” A thousand, thousand times “me” will all pack away into a single “us!” Let each one say—“The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses me, and cleanses me from all sin.” Be glad and rejoice forever because of this gracious Truth of God! This was done on the Day of Atonement in the symbol—and it has really been done by the Lord Jesus through His atoning Sacrifice.

II. Now we notice, in the second place, HOW IT WAS DONE. We have seen what was done and this is most cheering. But now we will see how it was done. I shall have to be brief in this description. The Atonement was made, first of all, by sacrifice. I see a bullock for a sin offering, a ram for a burnt offering and, again, a goat for a sin offering. Many victims were offered that day and thus the people were reminded of the instrumental cause of atonement, namely, the Blood of Sacrifice. We know that the blood of bulls and of goats could never take away sin, but very distinctly do these point to the sufferings of our dear Redeemer. The woes He bore are the Expiation for our guilt. “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.”

If you want to know by what means sin is put away, think of Messiah’s life of grief and shame and arduous service. Think of His agony and bloody sweat in the garden. Think of the betrayal and denial, the scourging and the spitting. Think of the false accusations and the reproaches and the jeers. Think of the Cross, the nailed hands and feet, the bruised soul and the broken spirit. Fierce were the fires which consumed our Sacrifice. “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” is the quintessence of agony—and this came from the heart which was crushed for our sins! Atonement was made for your sins and mine by the shedding of blood— that is to say, by our Lord’s suffering and especially by His laying down His life on our behalf. Jesus died—by that death He purged our sin, He who only has Immortality gave up the ghost—in the cold embrace of Death, the Lord of Glory slept! They wrapped Him in spices and linen cloths and laid Him in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea. In that death lay the essential deed by which sin dies and Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life.

Notice, next, that the atonement was made not only by the blood of sacrifice, but by the presentation of the blood within the veil. With the smoke of incense and a bowl filled with blood, Aaron passed into the Most Holy Place. Let us never forget that our Lord has gone into the heavenly places with better sacrifices than Aaron could present. His merits are the sweet incense which burns before the Throne of the heavenly Grace. His death supplies that Blood of Sprinkling which we find even in Heaven. “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into Heaven, itself, now to appear in the Presence of God for us.” “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” The presenting of the blood before God effects the Atonement. The material of the Atonement is in the blood and merits of Jesus, but a main part of the atoning act lies in the presentation of these in the heavenly places by Jesus Christ, Himself.

Furthermore, atonement was made effectual by its application to the thing or person cleansed. The atonement was made for the Holy Place—it was sprinkled seven times with blood. The same was done to the altar— the horns thereof were smeared seven times. So to make the Atonement effectual between you and God, the blood of Jesus must be sprinkled upon you by a lively faith. Though this does not so plainly appear in the type before us as to the people on this occasion, yet it comes out in other types—the cleansing blood was always the Blood of Sprinkling. Before the blood of the Paschal lamb could cause the avenger to pass over the house, it must be marked with the crimson sign. This is that scarlet thread in the window which delivers the Lord’s Rahabs in the day of destruction. Before any man can receive reconciliation with God, the Atonement must be applied to his own heart and conscience. Faith is that bunch of hyssop which we dip into the blood and, with it, sprinkle the lintel and two side posts of the house wherein we dwell—and so we are saved from destruction.

Further, my dear Brothers and Sisters, inasmuch as no one type was sufficient, the Lord set forth the method of the removal of sin, as far as we are concerned, by the scapegoat. One of two goats was chosen to live. It stood before the Lord and Aaron confessed all the sins of Israel upon its head. A fit man, selected for the purpose, led this goat away into a land not inhabited. What became of it? Why do you ask the question? It is not to edification. You may have seen the famous picture of the scapegoat, representing it as expiring in misery in a desert place. That is all very pretty and I do not wonder that imagination should picture the poor devoted scapegoat as a sort of cursed thing, left to perish amid accumulated horrors. But please observe that this is all fancy—mere groundless fancy! The Scripture is entirely silent as to anything of the kind and purposely so. All that the type teaches is this—in symbol the scapegoat has all the sin of the people laid upon it and when it is led away into the solitary wilderness, it has gone and the sin with it! We may not follow the scapegoat even in imagination! It is gone where it can never be found, for there is nobody to find it—it is gone into a land not inhabited—into “no man’s land” in fact.

Stop where the Scripture stops! To go beyond what is written is unwise, if not presumptuous. Sin is carried away into the silent land, the unknown wilderness. By nature, sin is everywhere, but to Believers, in the Sacrifice of Christ, sin is nowhere! The sins of God’s people have gone beyond recall. Where to? Do not ask anything about that. If they were sought for, they could not be found! They are so gone that they are blotted out. Into oblivion our sins have gone, even as the scapegoat went out of track of mortal man. The death of the scapegoat does not come into the type. In fact, it would mar the type to think of it. Of Melchizedek, we read that he was without father, without mother, without descent and so on, because these things are not mentioned in Scripture and the omission is part of the teaching. So in this case, the fate of the scapegoat is not spoken of and the silence is a part of the instruction. The scapegoat is gone, we know not where, and so our sins have vanished quite away—nobody will ever find the scapegoat—and nobody will ever find the Believer’s sins!

“Where are my sins? Oh where?” Echo answers, “Where?” Gone to the land of nobody, where Satan, himself, could not find them! Yes, where God Himself cannot find them. He says He has cast our sin behind His back where He cannot see. What part of the creation must that be which lies behind God’s back, whereas He is everywhere present, beholding all things both by night and by day? There is no such place as, “behind His back”—and there is no place for our sins. They have gone into nowhere. “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” He has cast them into the depths of the sea—and even that is not so good a figure as the scapegoat, for things that are at the bottom of the sea are still there—but the scapegoat soon passed away altogether and, as far as Israel was concerned, it ceased to be. The sins of God’s people are absolutely and irrevocably forgiven! Never, never, never can they be laid to our charge! They are extinct, buried, blotted out, forgotten. “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?”

Yet, dear Friends, the ceremony was not quite finished, for now everybody who had had a hand in it must be washed, so that everybody might be clean. There is Aaron—he takes off his garments and washes himself scrupulously clean! Yes, he does it a second time. Here is the man who took the scapegoat away and he washes himself. Here is a third person, who carried away the skin and the flesh of the sin offering and burnt them outside the camp—he also washes himself. Everybody becomes purged. The whole camp is clean right through. So, when Jesus completes His sacrifice, we sing—

*“Now both the sinner and Surety are free.”*No sin remains upon Him on whom the Lord once laid the iniquities of us all! The great Atonement is made and everything is cleansed, from beginning to end. Christ has put it all away forever by the water and the blood which flowed from His riven side. All is purified and the Lord looks down on a clean camp—and soon He will have them rejoicing before Him, each man in his home, feasting to the full! I am so glad, my joy overflows! O Lord, who is a pardoning God like You? Where can such forgiveness be found as You do freely give to sinners through Jesus, Your Son?

III. In the third place, I ask your attention, for a brief interval, to this special point—WHO DID IT? The answer is, Aaron did it all. Aaron was quite alone in the work of that day. It was heavy and even exhausting work, but he had no assistant. Aaron performed the work of priest and Levite that day and no one helped him, for it is written, “There shall be no man in the Tabernacle of the congregation when he goes in to make an atonement in the Holy Place until he comes out and has made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.” The Tabernacle seemed lonely that day. Aaron went into its courts and chambers and saw no sign of man. Of course there were lamps to be lighted, but Aaron had to light them himself—the showbread had to be changed—Aaron had to change it. All the offices of the tabernacle were left to his sole care for the day.

When it came to killing the victims, priests and Levites were there on other days, but now the High Priest must do it all. He must kill and receive the blood and sprinkle it himself. He must kindle the sacrificial fire and lay the burning coals upon the incense. He must carry both the incense and the basin of blood into the Holy Place with his own hands. I think I see him looking around in the solitude. He says, “I looked and there was no man.” Of the people there was none with him. In the Holy Place there stood no priest to minister before the Lord except Aaron. It must have been with trembling that he lifted up the curtain and passed into the secret place of the Most High with the censer smoking in his hand. There he stood in that awful Presence quite alone with the Eternal—no man was with him when he sprinkled the blood again and again till the seven-fold rite was finished.

Three times he goes in and out and never a soul is there to so much as smile upon him. The tension of mind and heart which he endured, alone, that day, must have been trying, indeed. All that day he must have been conscious of a burden of responsibility and a weight of reverence enough to bow him to the dust and yet no one was present to cheer him. Now fix your eyes on the great Antitype of Aaron. There was none with our Lord— He trod the winepress alone. He bore our sins in His body on the tree. He alone went in where the thick darkness covered the Throne of God and none stood by to comfort Him. “All the disciples forsook Him and fled.” It would have been a very natural thing, one would think, that Peter should have defended Him and even died with Him—but no one died with Jesus except thieves—and nobody could suspect that thieves aided Him in His Sacrifice! They showed the need of the Sacrifice, but they could do no more.

Worship our Lord as working salvation by His own single arm! Do not tolerate those who would share His work. Do not believe in priests of any church who pretend to offer sacrifice for the quick and the dead! They cannot help you and you do not need their help! Do not put your own merits, works, prayers, or anything else side by side with your one lone High Priest, who in His white garments of holy service performed the whole work of Expiation and then came forth in His garments of Glory and of beauty to gladden the eyes of His chosen! I say no more. Let that Truth of God abide in your hearts—our High Priest, alone, has made Reconciliation!

IV. Lastly, WHAT WERE THE PEOPLE TO DO for whom this atonement was made? There were two things they had to do that day, only I must add that one of them was doing nothing. For the first thing, they had to afflict their souls that day. Brothers and Sisters, does it seem a strange thing to you that on a day of rest they were to afflict their souls? Think of it a little and you will see that there was cause for it. We most rightly sing—

*“Here let our hearts begin to melt,  
While we, His death record  
And with our joy for pardoned guilt  
Mourn that we pierced the Lord.”*

It was a day of confession of sin. And should not confession be made with sorrowful repentance? A dry-eyed confession is a hypocritical confession! To acknowledge sin without grieving over it is to aggravate sin. We cannot think of our sin without grieving—and the more sure we are that it is forgiven—the more sorry we are that ever it was committed! Sin seems all the greater because it was committed against a sin-forgiving God. If you do wrong to a person and he grows angry, you may be wicked enough to persist in the wrong. But if, instead of growing angry, he forgives and does you good in return, then you will deeply regret that ever you had an unkind thought towards him. The Lord’s pardoning love makes us feel truly sorry to have offended Him.

Not only was it a day of confession, but it was a day of sacrifice. No tender-hearted Israelite could think of that bullock, ram and goat dying for him without saying, “That is what I deserve.” If he heard the moans of the dying creature he would say, “My own heart groans and bleeds.” When we think of our dying Lord, our emotions are mingled—we feel a pleasing grief and a mournful joy as we stand at Calvary. Thus it is we sing—

*“Alas! And did my Savior bleed?  
And did my Sovereign die?  
Could He devote that sacred head  
For such a worm as I?  
Was it for crimes that I have done  
He died upon the tree?  
Amazing pity, Grace unknown,  
And love beyond degree!  
Well might the sun in darkness hide  
And shut his glories in,  
When God the mighty Maker died  
For man, the creature’s sin!  
Well might I hide my blushing face  
When His dear Cross appears,  
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness,  
And melt my eyes to tears.”*

It was a day of sacrifice and, therefore, a day of affliction of their souls and herein we are in sympathy with them.

Once more, it was a day of perfect cleansing and, therefore, by a strange logic, a day of the affliction of the soul, for, oh, when sin is forgiven, when we know it is forgiven, when, by Divine Assurance, we know that God has blotted out our sins like a cloud, then it is we mourn over our iniquities! “They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced”—that look gives life! “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”—this bitterness is one of the truest signs of life! They were to afflict their souls. Brethren, we cannot talk of the Cross of Christ except in subdued tones. If you think you can laugh and sport yourself because your sin is forgiven, you know nothing of the matter. Sin has been pardoned at such a price that we cannot, from this day on, trifle with it. The sacrifice was so august that we must always speak of it with holy trembling.

I always feel a suspicion of those converts who get up and glibly boast that once they were drunks, thieves, blasphemers and so forth. Brothers and Sisters, if you tell the story of your sin, blush scarlet to think it should be true! I am ashamed to hear a man talk of his sins as an old Greenwich pensioner might talk of his sea-fights. I hate to hear a man exhibiting his old lusts as if they were scars of honor! Friend, these things are disgraceful to you, however much the putting of them away may be to the honor and Glory of God—and they are to be spoken of by you with shame and confusion of face. Afflict your soul when you remember what you once were!

On the day of atonement they were to afflict their souls and yet they were to rest. Can these things come together—mourning and resting? Oh yes, you and I know how they meet in one bosom. I never am so truly happy as when a sober sadness tinges my joy. When I am the fullest of joy I could weep my life away at Jesus’ feet. Nothing is more really sweet than the bitterness of repentance. Nothing is more healthful than selfabhorrence mixed with the grateful love which hides itself in the wounds of Jesus! The purified people were to rest—they were to rest from all servile work. I will never do a hand’s turn to save myself by my own merits, works, or feelings. I have done forever with all interference with my Lord’s work. Salvation as to its meritorious cause is complete—we will not think of beginning it over again, for that would be an insult to the Savior.

“It is finished,” said our Lord Jesus, as He bowed His dear triumphant head and gave up the ghost. And if it is finished, we will not dream of adding to it. It is finished! We have no work to do with the view of selfsalvation. But you say to me—“Have we not to work out our own salvation?” Certainly we have! We are to work out our own salvation because God works it in us. It is our own salvation and we show it forth in our lives—we work it out from within—we develop it from day to day and let men see what the Lord has done for us! It must first be worked for us and then in us, or we can never work it out!

They were assuredly to cease from all sinful work. How can the pardoned man continue in sin? We have done with toiling for the devil! We will no more waste our lives in his service. Many men are worn to rottenness in the service of their lusts, but the servant of God has been set free from that yoke of bondage. We are slaves no longer—we quit the hard bondage of Egypt and rest in the Lord.

We have also done with selfish work. We now seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and look that all other things shall be added unto us by the goodness of our heavenly Father. Henceforth we find rest by bearing the easy yoke of Christ. We joy to spend and be spent in His beloved service. He has made us free and, therefore, we are under bonds to His love forever. O Lord, I am Your servant, I am Your servant! You have loosed my bonds— from this day on I am bound to You. God grant that this may be a high day to you because you gladly realize the grand Truths of God which are shadowed forth in these delightful types! Amen.

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THE DAY OF ATONEMENT  
NO. 3400

A SERMON  
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**“And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year.” Leviticus 16:34.**

WE have taken these words for our text. The whole Chapter, however, will have our attention.  
I must be allowed to say at this time, though I seldom say anything in the way of an apology, that this is not the place, nor would time serve us to go into a full exposition of the very wonderful teaching of this Chapter. If we may ever set any portion of Scripture before another, this is one of the most precious Chapters in the whole compass of Revelation and, in some respects, the most remarkable of all. It is so full of wonderfully deep teaching that, instead of a sermon, it might require a volume! And then, perhaps, we would scarcely have done more than skimmed the surface. And there are difficulties, I may also add, connected with the interpretation—very great difficulties—which have puzzled the most learned of the Reformed and of the Puritan divines. I do not at all attempt to solve those difficulties, nor profess that all I say might be able to support and carry out. I desire to give, instead of any attempt at criticism or deep explanation, a simple exposition of this Chapter, bringing out of it, I hope, some Truths of God which, if they do not belong to the Chapter, are, nevertheless, exceedingly precious ones and will, I hope, be useful to us all.  
In a remarkable way God dealt with Israel in the wilderness. There were special tokens of His peculiar Presence, as in the cloudy and fiery pillars which were the emblems of His Presence, and in the bright light called the Shekinah, which shone between the wings of the cherubim which overshadowed the Ark. But God cannot dwell where there is sin. He is a holy Being. “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts,” is the song which continually rises into His ears. In order, then, that He might dwell in the midst of Israel without compromising His Character, He was pleased to appoint one day in the year which was called “the Day of Atonement,” which should be considered to purify the camp and make it fit to be the dwelling place of Jehovah.  
Now, God has promised that He will dwell among men, and He does dwell among His own people at this very time. He dwells with them in a remarkable way. “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul. God is the heritage, the Friend, the Companion of all His people, but because of their sin He cannot dwell with these believing men unless an Atonement is made. The annual atonement among the Jews was the picture of the great Atonement—but the real Atonement, the effectual Expiation which, not once a year, but once and for all, the Lord Jesus Christ has offered— now renders it possible for God to walk with men and dwell among them!  
In the ceremony of the atonement, in the Chapter before us, there are four things that struck me. The first is—  
I. THE WAY IN WHICH THAT REMARKABLE CEREMONY SET FORTH THE SACRIFICE MADE TO GOD’S HONOR.  
My Brothers and Sisters, the offense of man against God was, so to speak, a stain upon God’s honor. Man set himself up in rebellion against the Most High! He stood out, therefore, against Divine Sovereignty! He impugned the Divine Love. His offense blasphemed the Divine Wisdom. Every human sin is an attack upon the whole Character and life of God— and sin, itself, is a dishonor done to the glorious attributes of Jehovah. Before God can be reconciled to man and deal with Him at all, except by way of retribution, there must be something done to restore the Divine Honor. Now, we have it declared in this Revelation which comes to us from Heaven, that Christ has fully restored the Divine Glory and that since He suffered on the tree, the Just for the unjust, God can be gracious without a violation of His Justice and He can dwell with us—with us poor fallen creatures—without the marring of the luster of any single one of His attributes! The model man has honored God more fully than sinful man ever dishonored Him! And if God was angry with the race for our sins, He is now towards the race full of tenderness and pity because of the transcendent goodness of the new Head of the race, Christ Jesus our Lord, who has magnified God’s Law and made it honorable!  
Now, this is the Truth of God that was taught in the first part of the ceremony on the Day of Atonement. It was taught thus. Two goats were brought to the door of the Tabernacle. Lots were cast and the first goat was selected to teach this lesson. The goat was brought by the people. It was their common property. It would not have sufficed—it would not have been of any use at all if it had not been so. Read the Chapter and you will see. Learn from this that the compensation to God’s honor for man’s sin must come from men. It was a man in the Garden who dared to rebel—it must be a man, another man, who shall honor God’s Law so as to set the race in a fresh relationship towards God.  
The goat is given by all Israel—the Atonement to God’s honor must come out of our race, and hence it is that our Lord is the son of Mary, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh—qualified, being a Man, to perform the obedience required of man and to right, as a Man for men, the wrongs which man had done to God. Note that first.  
The goat which was brought was given up to the appointed priest. God will have everything done according to order. The sacrifice must not be left to the whims and fancies of men. So the man who shall offer up the sacrifice to the Divine Honor must be appointed of God, as Aaron was. And so our Lord Jesus Christ was God’s chosen One, appointed by God to stand in the gap, and for us to vindicate the Divine Glory which we had tarnished by our iniquities.  
This goat, being thus offered, must be presented to God, but there must be something with it. Sweet perfume must be cast upon the live coals and the sweet smell must go up before the Mercy Seat. So before God can ever be satisfied for the wrong done to Him by the Fall and by our common sin, there must be an offering of sweet merits unto Him which, let me say, Jesus Christ has most abundantly offered. He took His hands full of the, most blessed compound of all the graces and all the virtues beaten small, for there was an exact obedience to every jot and tittle of the Divine Law. Christ’s obedience was perfect in its kind in the most minute respects—and this merit has been brought before our God, who is a consuming fire, and burns up every evil work. And as He lays hold upon this work of Christ, He makes a sweet smell of it—which is poured out throughout Heaven and earth—“the savor of a sweet odor” in the nostrils of the Most High  
Do not let me cover up, however, what I mean, under the cloak of allegory. I mean this—that if God is to accept our race of men and all that we have done against Him and still deal with us on the footing of mercy— somebody must be found who can be so obedient, so delighting in God’s will, that there shall be a sweet offering made, as morally and spiritually acceptable to God’s Spirit as sweet perfume is to the nostril of man. And that has been done. When they talk in Heaven of man’s sin—if they ever there speak of it and wonder how God can bear with man, some bright seraph speaks of man’s perfect obedience, even unto death, and they say to one another, “What man, what man is this?” and they clap their hands with joy as they say, It’s He that sat at the right hand of the Father, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Son of David.”  
One man threw down the race, but another Man has lifted us up! One man brought ruin by the Fall—another Man restored it and made the race acceptable to God. If man dishonored God, yet man has more honored Him than he dishonored Him, now that Christ has become the great representative Man!  
All the glory of Redemption is greater than ever there could have been of dishonor to God by sin! I believe that God is more honored by the world having sinned, and having been restored by Christ, than He could have been if there had never been sin upon this planet and if a perfectly sinless race had tenanted its bounds!  
After this burning of perfume, the goat must die. Nothing could permit the Justice of God to look upon man at all until there had been something more than merit. There must be a penalty. “Die he, or Justice must.” Man must die, or God’s Justice must die. There must be blood— life poured out for sin. Now, when that goat was put to death and the blood flowed forth into the golden bowl, then, Brothers and Sisters, you saw before your eyes of faith, Jesus Christ put to death upon Calvary. He who needed not to have died, the Perfect One, voluntarily offered Himself up as the Victim to Justice, suffering in His own Person, so as to compensate the Justice of God. Do not imagine that Christ died to placate Divine Vengeance—not at all—but that it is sternly necessary if God is to govern this universe at all, that sin must be punished. The very pillars and the foundations of moral government would, not to say, be shaken, but actually be torn up if sin should be permitted to go unpunished! Now, to vindicate the Justice of God, the sword is drawn and who suffers?  
Not the human race. Behold, myriads of the race go streaming up to everlasting felicity. Who suffers, then? Why, a Man so marvelously perfect, and withal, so majestically glorious, that His sufferings are a recompense to God for all that sin had done—and so made an effectual Atonement for all the transgressions that had dishonored God! You will observe that I am speaking in very popular, comprehensive and general terms—and designedly so because I believe I am speaking the Infallible Truth of the mind of God! So far as God is concerned, the Atonement that Christ made was universal in its worth and efficacy!  
So far as the vindication of the Justice of God and all His other attributes are to be considered, that vindication was absolutely complete. And whether one man had been saved, or 50 men saved, or all saved, or none saved, it would have made no difference. The work was done! God’s honor was clear! God’s attributes were glorified—and this was perfectly done by the putting away of Christ.  
Once more. The blood was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat seven times. That was typical of Christ, who goes up into Heaven in His own proper Person and there displays before God, the holy angels and elect spirits, the tokens of His passion, the ensign of His suffering, taking the blood up to God that henceforth when the Eternal Mind thinks of sin and the dishonor done to God by sin, it might think of the sufferings of the blessed Man, Christ Jesus, and see how all dishonor is forever put away! You know, when you are reading Scripture, dear Friends, you find a great many passages which speak about Christ’s dying for all men, and about God’s having reconciled the world unto Himself. And I know you are apt to say to me, “You teach us Particular Redemption—that Christ only died as a Substitute for some men.” That I always say, and stand to—and believe to be a Biblical Doctrine! But do I, therefore, clip away other texts? No, not in any degree! I believe them as they stand. I count it treason to try and clip a text, or to make it say the contrary of what it does say! So far as God’s honor was concerned, the death of Christ for men so obliterated human sin as such that God could, without dishonor to Himself, deal with mankind. Hence it is that the wicked live! Hence it is that they enjoy innumerable mercies! Hence it is that there is a good, strong, substantial ground for offering the Gospel to every man—and a righteous reason for commanding every man to believe in Jesus Christ that he may be saved!  
This was the first teaching of the Day of Atonement and every Jew, when he saw, ought to have understood the presentation of that blood within the veil, that now God no longer looked on the race as being a race that He must curse and must destroy, but looked upon it with mercy and was prepared to treat it on the footing of tenderness. And that now there was a Gospel presented to the sons of men. Oh, I do so love this thought, that my sin, which did dishonor to God, which did as much as say that He was not a good God, that it was better for me to hate Him than to love Him, better for me to be His enemy than to be His friend, made out as though His Commandments were grievous and that it gave me pleasure to break them—all the mischief towards God that my sin could ever do is all put away by the holy life and the blessed death of Christ Jesus my Lord—and put away forever, forever, forever—so that God can now deal with me on the terms of Divine Grace!  
But my time flies and, therefore, I come to the next point—  
II. SIN IS NOW UTTERLY DRIVEN AWAY.  
There was another goat—and this goat was to live and not to die— which set forth quite another Truth of God. I do not think the common explanation of this is at all correct. And all the expositors I have met with are clear that it is not correct. Some have said that the scapegoat typifies our Lord Jesus bearing our sins away in His Resurrection and ascending into Heaven. The incongruity of the metaphor has always struck me, but there are reasons in the Hebrew text which prevent our believing that that could have been the meaning of it. The living goat was taken by a fit man right away into the wilderness and there it was left. What became of it afterwards, we do not know. Painters have depicted it as expiring in the midst of desolation, in the agonies of famine—a mere fancy picture! The scapegoat did not, very probably, die sooner than any other goat—and it is not at all necessary that it should. We never need enlarge a topic beyond what Scripture says. Indeed, there is often as much teaching in a type’s stopping short as there is in its going

on!  
These two goats had each its name. One was said to be for Jehovah— that represents Christ, I say, as making recompense to God’s honor! The other is said to be for Azazel, which, if I understand it at all, means, “for evil.” What? Then was that other goat offered to the Devil? By no means! He is not evil, but one of the ministering spirits in the service of evil. Evil made Satan what he is. He is its slave, its chief plotter and schemer, but still not evil, itself! Did you ever notice—you must have noticed—that the wrong of evil, the sinfulness of sin, even if it were forgiven, works nothing but evil, so that if God were to forgive us all, but leave the evil in us, we should be in Hell for all that because evil of itself holds Hell and works towards its being realized by us. Evil is, in itself, essentially misery—it has only to work itself out and it will be so.  
Now, how am I to get rid of this sin that is in me as to the evil consequences inherent in the evil? Suppose God to be perfectly reconciled to me so far, yet still there is an evil that mischief brings upon me in itself, apart from God—and how do I get rid of that? Why, through the scapegoat! The sin of the people was, first of all, transferred to this scapegoat— all confessed and all laid on the scapegoat. Then, by Divine appointment, the scapegoat, being chosen by lot and the lot being guided by God, it was accepted as being the substitute for the people. The scapegoat was then taken away. And what was done with it? Why, nothing was done with it but this—it was relinquished—it was given up! Now, can I get out what I mean? I am very much afraid I cannot. Our Lord Jesus Christ took upon Himself the sin of His people. And He was given up to evil, that is to say, to all the power that evil could put out against Him—first in the wilderness, tempted from all quarters, tempted by the temptations of Satan. And then in the Garden, tempted in such a way as you and I never were—the powers of evil let loose upon Him as they never were upon us! Did He not say, “This is your hour, and the power of darkness”? And so dreadful was the assault of evil upon Him, the devil going forth as the type and incarnation of evil, that He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground! And while especially on the tree, where the conflict reached its climax, was He given up.  
That cry, “My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?” is like the cry of the goat when it is given up, quite given up, and led away. Evil was permitted to work out in Him all its own dread hatefulness and havoc, to which it must bring our spirits, unless God interposes to stop evil from making the soul become unutterably wretched, even unto death.  
I do not know how to get out the thought which seems to be in my soul, but I do rejoice to think that all the evil I have ever done shall not go on to plague and vex me because it has vexed and plagued Him. That all the essential misery that lies in my past sin—which must, even if God forgave it, still come back to sting and torment me throughout all my existence—was so laid on Him and so spent all its force and venom on Him who was given up to it, that it will never touch me again!  
You know, Brothers and Sisters, there was no other man who could have borne all that power of evil but our Lord. And it all fell on Him and yet it never stained His matchless purity and perfection of Character. The misery of it came to Him, but the guilt of it could never defile Him! The misery of sin spent itself on the lonely One who was given up to its awful force, but it could do no more. The type says nothing about the scapegoat, whether it died or not, and Christ did not die because of the misery of His spirit—He died for quite another reason and in another sense— laying down His life for His people!  
There is something, I think, interesting in this if we can carry it out, but there is this to be said—by that scapegoat being thus given up, the sin of the congregation was taken away—all taken away and all gone. And so, through Jesus Christ having borne our sicknesses and carried our sorrows, the whole force and power of evil to do damning mischief against a saint has been taken away forever from everyone of us who have laid our hands, by faith, upon His dear and blessed head. It is gone! The sin is gone, gone into the wilderness, where it shall never be found against us any more forever.  
I must hasten on, however, for time flies. There was yet a third part of this expiation. Did you notice it? It is a grand thing when we can see God’s honor clear. It is a grand thing, next, when we can see ourselves clear as to the effects of evil by Christ’s taking evil quite away. The third grand thing is to see—  
III. SIN, ITSELF, MADE THE SUBJECT OF CONTEMPT.  
God cannot dwell with us if sin is petted and loved. Sin must be detested and loathed. Now, read on in the Chapter and you will find that the bullock and the goat which were there, and whose blood was taken into the Holy Place, were afterwards burned outside the camp—see the 27th verse. They were burned, and burned with ignominy, burned outside the camp in the common sewer, the kennel of the camp—and burned, too, under circumstances that imply disgust. “They shall burn in the fire, their skins and their flesh, and their dung”—put in purposely to show what a contempt was to be put upon the beasts that had been, for a while, made to take and to typify sin!  
That burning outside the camp looked to a stranger like the burning of a heap of rubbish. There was a foul smell of the burning flesh and refuse. Persons, as they passed turned their heads away to avoid the terrible odor. They would say, “What is all this?” “Why, this was a sin-offering, and when the blood, which God accepted, had gone, this was what was left—the filth of sin—and the people were just being taught how they should hate, loathe and destroy it! Every man that touched it washed himself! And no man could touch any of these things that day without bathing again and again, the thing was so detestable!  
Now, in the Person of our blessed Lord, sin is made most detestable. Did you ever really hate sin until you learned to love Christ? I will ask you when do you hate sin the most? Why, when you love Christ the most! I believe you shall always find that in proportion as you understand and see the work of Christ, you will see in that work, as in a glass, that Christ has made sin to be the most loathsome and disgusting thing that was ever heard of, for what do the angels say—“Man sinned, did he? Oh, foolish man, to sin against his God and his Maker!” “Ah,” says one of the angels, “but he did worse than that—he sinned against the God that loved him so, that He would sooner let His Only-Begotten Son die than poor man should perish!” “Oh,” they say, “what a shameful thing to sin against so dear and kind a God!” If God were a tyrant, it might not seem atrocious to rebel against Him. But when He becomes so dear and tender a Father as to give His Only-Begotten Son—away with you, Sin! Talk of the Devil! He is not black compared with you, O Sin—you are the Devil’s tempter, the Devil’s ruin! You make him black. It is sin, sin that is so foul a thing that I can liken it unto nothing! There is nothing on earth, there is nothing anywhere in Hell that can be likened unto it! Sin is made to appear exceedingly sinful and loathsome to the uttermost degree through the Expiatory Sacrifice of Jesus Christ!  
Now, these are three grand things for God to have done in this world— after man sinned to have made His name as glorious as ever. After man’s sin, to have set pardoned man straight, as straight as ever from his sin. And after that, to have made sin which came with the apple in its hand and which comes every day, now, with painted face, and with the cup in its hand, filled to the brim with sweet wine, seem hateful and to be really so! Oh, it is a grand work, that which Christ has done! Blessed be His name!  
Now, the last point—and I shall need your earnest consideration for a minute or two—is this. I must call your attention to—  
IV. THE BEHAVIOR OF THE PEOPLE DURING THE WHOLE OF THAT DAY in which this wonderful panorama was made to pass before them.  
During that day they were to afflict their souls. Do you want to have your sin forgiven? Put away your jollity and your mirth. A repenting sinner had need to be a mourner and, Brothers and Sisters, when sin is put away, how the forgiven sinner afflicts his soul! He is happy! He was never more happy! Never so happy, but how grieved he is to think he ever sinned!—  
*“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.  
My sins, my sins, my Savior!  
Their guilt I never knew,  
Till, with You, in the desert,  
I near Your passion drew.  
Till with You, in the Garden,  
I heard Your pleading prayer,  
And saw the bloody sweat drops,  
That told Your sorrow there.”*  
Oh, there is never, never such affliction of soul for sin as when you see the great Atonement! Let me invite you to hate sin, tonight, you pardoned ones. Take care to do it. And you unpardoned ones, rend your hearts, but not your garments! And turn unto God with afflicted spirits and say, “Lord, through the precious Atonement of which I have heard so much tonight, blot out my sins!”  
The next thing concerning the people that day was that they were to do no servile work on that day. There was to be no hewing of wood, no drawing of water—nothing was to be done throughout all the camp by way of labor. So, when a soul comes to the Atonement of Christ, it has done with all its works of righteousness and all its deeds of human merit! You can never have the Atonement of Christ while you are working out your own works and trying to be saved by them. And the Believer that has once come to take Christ to be his Savior will never try to get any merits of his own. Oh, he has thrown away forever the fooleries of selfrighteousness! He sees the absurdity of hoping that foul, black hands can ever present a fair, white sacrifice to God. He takes his lord and he has done with his own doings!  
Once more—it was to be to the people a Sabbath unto the Lord. That day was not the seventh day of the week, but still it was to be a kind of Sabbath. And what a glorious Sabbath the Atonement always makes! Why, I feel a Sabbath, tonight, apart from the Sabbath Day. I have a Sabbath in my soul, to think that the sin of man has not, after all, done lasting damage to the Throne of God. I feel so happy to think, next, that there is a special sacrifice made for the elect, by the scapegoat’s having taken away their sin, so that the evil of their sin will never come on them. I feel so thankful, tonight, to think that God has made sin to appear to be exceedingly sinful. These three grand things ring a peal of bells in my soul, for now I feel content—for God is satisfied to come to God—and I can see why He should let me come to Him.  
I can understand now how it is that He should let a fallen creature hold converse with His thrice holy Self after His great work is done! And it is better for me, and better for you, that we should come to God by so good and reasonable, and proper, and glorious a way—rather than that we should have been permitted, had it been possible, to come by any breach of the Law, or by any setting aside of the Divine Command.  
I do not think I would have been happy had it been possible for me to go to Heaven, and God’s honor had thereby been sullied, for God’s honor is the very happiness of a reconciled creature! And if that had suffered any loss through me, I would have been miserable. But it shall suffer no loss or stain! Christ has completely undone the mischief of the Fall! Glory be to His blessed name for this!  
And now, Beloved in the Lord, I wish that I could speak in the name of you all and accept the Man, Christ Jesus, tonight, as our representative. Remember, though He has done this much for us all, that God can dwell with us, yet He has not taken the sin of us all upon Himself, but only of so many as stand and confess their sin and trust it with Him. Come, will you do it? Poor Sinner, will you do it for the first time tonight? Backslider, will you do it again? You Believers that have lost some of your evidences, will you do it anew tonight? Oh, I wish I could now say these words and you could all say, “Amen,” from your hearts—  
*“My faith does lay her hand  
On that dear head of Thine,  
While, like a penitent I stand,  
And here confess my sin.”*  
Well, if you won’t have Christ for your Savior, I will have Him for mine! And there are thousands of you here who will say, “Yes, and He shall be mine, too!” The longer I live, the more I love to rest upon Him. I did try to rest somewhere else, once, but the dream is over and now the more I think of my Lord, the more firm I feel the conviction that He is a rock that will bear the weight of my salvation! The more I think of what that glorious Man, that blessed Son of God, who is as much God as He is Man, has done for me, the more do I feel that if I had fifty thousand times the sin I have, I would rest on Him! And if I were as wicked as all men put together, I would rest on Him, still, believing that no amount of sin could outweigh His merit and that no extent of iniquity could ever surpass the infinite bounds of His eternal Grace. He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him! Come to God by Him, poor Sinner, and may God the Holy Spirit lead you, and He shall have the glory! Amen, and Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **ROMANS 6:1-19.**

Paul finishes the last Chapter by saying, “That as sin has reigned unto death, even so might Grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” “What shall we say, then?” What inference shall we draw from the superabounding of Grace over sin?

Verse 1. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that Grace may abound? “Shall we continue in sin, that Grace may abound?” That were a very horrible inference! It is one great instance of the shocking depravity of man that the inference has sometimes been drawn! I hope not often, for surely Satan, himself, might scarcely draw an inference of licentiousness from love. Still, some have drawn it.

2. God forbid! How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Now he goes on by an argument to prove that those in whom the Grace of God has worked the wondrous change cannot possibly choose sin, nor live in it.

3. Know you not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? That is the very hinge of our religion! His death, not into His example, merely, nor primarily into His life, but, “into His death.” In this we have believed—we are linked with a dying Savior and our baptism sets this forth. We “were baptized into His death.”

4. 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 the newness of life. The operations, therefore, of the Spirit of God forbid that a saved man should live in sin. He is dead. He is raised into newness of life. At the very entrance into the Church, in the very act of Baptism, he declares that he cannot live as he once did, for he is dead! He declares that he must live after another fashion, for has he not been raised again in the type and raised again in very deed from the dead?

5, 6. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. A death has taken place in us and though there are relics of corruption still alive, yet they are crucified— they will have to die, they must die—they are nailed fast to the Cross to die in union with the death of Christ!

7. For he that is dead is freed from sin. The man is dead. The law cannot ask more of a criminal than to yield his life. If, therefore, he should live again after death, he would not be one who could suffer for his past offenses. They were committed in another life and, “he that is dead is freed from sin.”

8, 9. Now if we are dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over Him. Or death will have dominion over Him no more—He will never come a second time under death, and neither shall His people. “For in that He died, He died unto sin once.” There was an end of it in the sense of once and for all—no second death for Christ.

10-12. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He lives unto God. Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead, indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. Perhaps there were some who would say that in their spirits, truth and righteousness were supreme, but that in their bodies sin had the mastery. Yes, but that will not do. There must be left no lurking piece for sin within the complete system of our manhood—it must be hunted out and hunted down thoroughly—out of the body as well as out of the mind!

13. Neither yield you your members as instrument of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. We do not, I think, make enough of the passive part of our religion. We are often for doing and quite right, too, and the more active we can be the better! Still, before the doing there must come a yielding because we remember who it is that works in us, “both to will and to do of His own good pleasure,” and our activities, after all are not so much our own as we deem, if they are right. They are the activities of the Divine Life within us—of the Spirit of God, Himself, working in us to the Glory of the Father! One great point, therefore, is to yield ourselves up—our members to be weapons in God’s hands for the fighting of the spiritual war.

14. For sin shall not have domination over you: for you are not under the Law, but under Grace. The reigning, ruling principle, now, is not, “You must, you shall,” for reward or under fear of punishment! But God has loved you and now you love Him in return and what you do springs from no mercenary or self-serving motive! You are not under Law, but under Grace. Yet in another sense you never were so much under Law as you are now, for Grace puts about you a blessedly sweet, delightful Law which has power over us as the word of command never had. “I will write My Law in their hearts, in their inward parts will I write them.” Yes, that is the glory of the new life, the delight of him who has passed from death unto life!

15. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the Law, but under Grace? Oh, this old question keeps coming up! Somebody wants to sin. Well, if he wants to sin, why does he not leave this business alone and go and sin? What has he to do with these theological questions at all? But still, he wants, if he can, to make a coverlet for his wickedness! He wants to enjoy the sweets of the child of God and yet live like an enemy of God—and so he pops in his head over and over again—“May we not sin because of this, or that?” To which the Apostle answers again, “God forbid!” Oh, may God always forbid it to you and to me! May the question never be tolerated among us!

15, 16. God forbid! Know you not that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? If you are doing the deeds of sin, you are the servants of sin and only as you are doing the will of God can you claim to be the servant of God! “Hereby we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.” That becomes the index of our condition. The man, then, that lives in sin and loves it, need not talk about the Grace of God—he is a stranger to it, for the mark of those that come under Grace is this—that they serve God and no longer serve sin!

17, 18. But God be thanked, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of Doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness. “Bondservants,” you have got in our new translation, for so it was, and the Apostle seems to excuse himself for using such a word by saying—

19. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as you have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. As you submitted yourselves to sin most cheerfully and voluntarily, and yet were slaves under it, so now come and be slaves under Christ with most blessed cheerfulness and delight! Endeavor to lose your very wills in His will, for no man’s slavery is so complete as his who even yields his will. Now, yield everything to Christ! You shall never be so free as when you do that—never so blessedly delivered from all bondage as when you absolutely and completely yield yourselves up to the power and supremacy of your Lord!

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #95 New Park Street Pulpit 1

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT  
NO. 95

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 10, 1856, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

**“This shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year.” Leviticus 16:34.**

THE Jews had many striking ceremonies which marvelously set forth the death of Jesus Christ as the great Expiation of our guilt and the salvation of our souls. One of the chief of these was the Day of Atonement, which I believe was pre-eminently intended to typify that great day of vengeance of our God, which was also the great day of acceptance of our souls, when Jesus Christ “died, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.” That Day of Atonement happened only once a year to teach us that only once should Jesus Christ die and, that though He would come a second time, yet it would be without a sin offering unto salvation. The lambs were perpetually slaughtered—morning and evening they offered sacrifice to God—to remind the people that they always needed a sacrifice. But the Day of Atonement, being the type of the one great Propitiation, it was but once a year that the High Priest entered within the veil with blood as the atonement for the sins of the people. And this was on a certain set and appointed time. It was not left to the choice of Moses, or to the convenience of Aaron, or to any other circumstance which might affect the date—it was appointed to be on a peculiar set day—as you find at the 29th verse—“In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month.” And at no other time was the Day of Atonement to be, to show us that God’s great Day of Atonement was appointed and predestinated by Himself. Christ’s Expiation occurred but once and then not by any chance. God had settled it from before the foundation of the world and at that hour when God had predestinated, on that very day that God had decreed that Christ should die, was He led like a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers He was dumb! It was but once a year, because the sacrifice should be once. It was at an appointed time in the year, because in the fullness of time, Jesus Christ should come into the world to die for us.

Now, I shall invite your attention to the ceremonies of this solemn day, taking the different parts in detail. First, we shall consider the person who made the Atonement. Secondly, the sacrifice whereby the Atonement was typically made. Thirdly, the effects of the Atonement. And fourthly, our behavior on the recollection of the Atonement, as well set forth by the conduct prescribed to the Israelites on that day.

I. First, THE PERSON WHO WAS TO MAKE THE ATONEMENT. And at the outset, we remark that Aaron, the High Priest, did it. “Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place; with a young bullock for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.” Inferior priests slaughtered lambs. Other priests, at other times, did almost all the work of the sanctuary—but on this day, nothing was done by anyone, as a part of the business of the great Day of Atonement—except by the High Priest. Old Rabbinical traditions tell us that everything on that day was done by him, even the lighting of the candles and the fires and the incense and all the offices that were required. We are told that for a fortnight beforehand, the High Priest was obliged to go into the Tabernacle to slaughter the bullocks and assist in the work of the priests and Levites, that he might be prepared to do the work which was unusual to him. All the labor was left to him.

So, Beloved, Jesus Christ, the High Priest and He, only, works the Atonement. There are other priests, for, “He has made us priests and kings unto God.” Every Christian is a priest to offer sacrifice of prayer and praise unto God, but none save the High Priest must offer Atonement. He and He alone, must go within the veil. He must slaughter the goat and sprinkle the blood—for though thanksgiving is shared in by all of Christ’s elect body, Atonement remains alone to Jesus Christ, the High Priest.

Then it is interesting to notice that the High Priest on this day was a humbled priest. You read in the 4th verse, “He shall put on the holy linen coat and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen belt and with the linen miter shall he be attired: these are holy garments.” On other days he wore what the people were accustomed to call the golden garments. He had the miter with a plate of pure gold around his brow, tied with brilliant blue. The splendid breastplate, studded with gems, adorned with pure gold and set with precious stones. The glorious ephod, the tinkling bells and all the other ornaments wherewith he came before the people as the accepted High Priest. But on this day he had none of them! The golden miter was laid aside, the embroidered vest was put away, the breastplate was taken off and he came out simply with the holy linen coat, the linen breeches, the linen miter and girded with a linen belt. On that day he humbled himself, just as the people humbled themselves. Now that is a notable circumstance! You will see sundry other passages in the references which will bear this out— that the priest’s dress on this day was different. As Mayer tells us, he wore garments and glorious ones, on other days, but on this day he wore four humble ones. Jesus Christ, then, when He made Atonement, was a humbled Priest. He did not make Atonement arrayed in all the glories of His ancient Throne in Heaven. Upon His brow there was no diadem, save the crown of thorns. Around Him was cast no purple robe, save that which He wore for a time in mockery. On His head was no scepter, save the reed which they thrust in cruel contempt upon Him. He had no sandals of pure gold, neither was He dressed as king. He had none of those splendors about Him which would make Him mighty and distinguished among men! He came out in His simple body, yes, in His naked body, for they stripped off even the common robe from Him! And they made Him hang before God’s sun and God’s universe, naked, to His shame and to the disgrace of those who chose to do so cruel and dastardly a deed! Oh, my Soul, adore your Jesus, who when He made Atonement, humbled Himself and wrapped around Him a garb of your inferior clay! Oh, Angels, you can understand what were the glories that He laid aside! Oh, thrones, principalities and powers, you can tell what was the diadem with which He dispensed and what the robes He laid aside to wrap Himself in earthly garbs. But, Men, you can scarcely tell how glorious is your High Priest, now! You can scarcely tell how glorious He was before! But oh, adore Him, for on that day it was the simple clean linen of His own body, of His own Humanity in which He made Atonement for your sins!

In the next place, the High Priest who offered the Atonement must be a spotless High Priest. And because there were none such to be found, Aaron, being a sinner, himself, as well as the people, you will remark that Aaron had to sanctify himself and make Atonement for his own sin before he could go in to make an Atonement for the sins of the people. In the 3rd verse you read, “Thus shall Aaron come into the Holy Place: with a young bullock for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.” These were for himself. In the 6th verse it is said, “And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself and make an Atonement for himself and for his house.” Yes, more—before he went within the veil with the blood of the goat which was the Atonement for the people, he had to go within the veil to make Atonement there for himself. In the 11th, 12th and 13th verses, it is said, “And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself and shall make an Atonement for himself and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself. And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil. And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not. And he shall take of the blood of the bullock (that is, the bullock that he killed for himself) and sprinkle it with his finger upon the Mercy Seat eastward; and before the Mercy Seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.” This was before he killed the goat, for it says, “Then shall he kill the goat.” Before he took the blood which was a type of Christ within the veil, he took the blood (which was a type of Christ in another sense), wherewith he purified himself. Aaron must not go within the veil until by the bullock his sins had been typically expiated, nor even then without the burning smoking incense before his face, lest God should look on him and he should die, being an impure mortal. Moreover, the Jews tell us that Aaron had to wash himself, I think, five times in the day and it is said in this Chapter that he had to wash himself many times. We read in the 4th verse, “These are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water and so put them on.” And at the 24th verse, “He shall wash his flesh with water in the Holy Place and put on his garments.” So you see it was strictly provided for that Aaron, on that day, should be a spotless priest. He could not be so as to nature, but, ceremonially, care was taken that he should be clean. He was washed over and over again in the sacred bath. And besides that, there was the blood of the bullock and the smoke of the incense, that he might be acceptable before God. Ah, Beloved, we have a spotless High Priest! We have One who needed no washing, for He had no filth to wash away! We have One who needed no Atonement for Himself for He, forever, might have sat down at the right hand of God and never have come on earth at all! He was pure and spotless. He needed no incense to wave before the Mercy Seat to hide the angry face of Justice. He needed nothing to hide and shelter Him, He was all pure and clean! Oh, bow down and adore Him, for if He had not been a holy High Priest, He could never have taken your sins upon Himself and never have made intercession for you! Oh, reverence Him, that, spotless as He was, He should come into this world and say, “For this cause I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified through the Truth.” Adore and love Him, the spotless High Priest, who, on the Day of Atonement took away your guilt!

Again, the Atonement was made by a solitary High Priest—alone and unassisted. You read in the 17th verse, “And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goes in to make an Atonement in the Holy Place, until he comes out and has made an Atonement for himself and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.” No other man was to be present, so that the people might be quite certain that everything was done by the High Priest, alone. It is remarkable, as Matthew Henry observes, that no disciple died with Christ. When He was put to death, His disciples forsook Him and fled. They crucified none of His followers with Him, lest any should suppose that the disciple shared the honor of Atonement. Thieves were crucified with Him because none would suspect that they could assist Him—but if a disciple had died, it might have been imagined that he had shared the Atonement. God kept that holy circle of Calvary select to Christ and none of His disciples must go to die there with Him. O glorious High Priest, You have done it all alone! O, glorious antitype of Aaron, no son of Yours stood with You—no Eliezer, no Phineas burned incense—there was no priest, no Levite save, Himself. “I have trodden the winepress alone and of the people there was none with Me.” Then give all the glory unto His holy name, for alone and unassisted He made Atonement for your guilt! The bath of His blood is your only washing. The stream of water from His side is your perfect purification! None but Jesus, none but Jesus, has worked out the work of our salvation!

Again it was a laborious High Priest who did the work on that day. It is astonishing how, after comparative rest, he should be so accustomed to his work as to be able to perform all that he had to do on that day. I have endeavored to count up how many creatures he had to kill and I find that there were 15 beasts which he slaughtered at different times, besides the other offices, which were all left to him. In the first place, there were the two lambs, one offered in the morning and the other in the evening—they were never omitted, being a perpetual ordinance. On this day the High were never omitted, being a perpetual ordinance. On this day the High 11, “And you shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation; and you shall afflict your souls: you shall not do any work therein: But you shall offer a burnt offering unto the Lord for a sweet savor; one young bullock, one ram and seven lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish: And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals to a bullock and two tenth deals to one ram. A several tenth deal for one lamb throughout the seven lambs: One kid of the goats for a sin offering: besides the sin offering of Atonement and the continual burnt offering and the meat offering of it and their drink offerings.” Here, then, was one bullock, a ram, seven lambs and a kid of the goats, making ten. The two lambs made twelve. And in the Chapter we have been studying, it is said in the 3rd verse: “Thus shall Aaron come into the Holy Place: with a young bullock for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering,” which makes the number fourteen. Then after that, we find there were two goats but only one of them was killed, the other being allowed to go away. Thus, there were 15 beasts to be slaughtered, besides the burnt offerings of thanksgiving which were offered by way of showing that the people now desired to dedicate themselves to the Lord from gratitude, that the Atonement of sin offering had been accepted.

He who was ordained priest in Jeshurun, for that day, toiled like a common Levite, worked as laboriously as priest could do and far more so than on any ordinary day! Just so with our Lord Jesus Christ! Oh, what a labor the Atonement was to Him! It was a work that all the hands of the universe could not have accomplished—yet He completed it alone! It was a work more laborious than the treading of the winepress and His frame, unless sustained by the Divinity within, could scarcely have borne such stupendous labor. There was the bloody sweat in Gethsemane. There was the watching all night—just as the High Priest did—for fear that uncleanness might touch Him. There was the hooting and the scorn which He suffered every day before—something like the continual offering of the Lamb. Then there came the shame, the spitting, the cruel flagellations in Pilate’s Hall. Then there was the via dolorosa through Jerusalem’s sad streets. Then came the hanging on the Cross, with the weight of His people’s sins on His shoulders. Yes, it was a Divine labor that our great High Priest did on that day—a labor mightier than the making of the world—it was the making new of a world, the taking of its sins upon His Almighty shoulders and casting them into the depths of the sea! The Atonement was made by a toilsome laborious High Priest who worked, indeed, that day! And Jesus, though He had toiled before, yet never worked as He did on that wondrous Day of Atonement!

II. Thus have I led you to consider the Person who made the Atonement. Let us now consider for a moment or two THE MEANS WHEREBY THIS ATONEMENT WAS MADE. You read at the 5th verse, “And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel, two kids of the goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering.” And at the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th verses, “And he shall take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats, one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord’s lot fell and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an Atonement with him and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.” The first goat I considered to be the great type of Jesus Christ the Atonement—such I do not consider the scapegoat to be. The first is the type of the means whereby the Atonement was made and we shall keep to that, first.

Notice that this goat, of course, answered all the prerequisites of every other thing that was sacrificed—it must be a perfect, unblemished goat of the first year. Even so was our Lord, a perfect Man, in the prime and vigor of His Manhood. And further, this goat was an eminent type of Christ from the fact that it was taken of the congregation of the children of Israel, as we are told at the 5th verse. The public treasury furnished the goat. So, Beloved, Jesus Christ was, first of all, purchased by the public treasury of the Jewish people before He died—thirty pieces of silver they had valued Him—a goodly price. And as they had been accustomed to bring the goat, so they brought Him to be offered—not, indeed, with the intention that He should be their Sacrifice—but unwittingly they fulfilled this when they brought Him to Pilate and cried, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” Oh, Beloved! Indeed, Jesus Christ came out from the midst of the people and the people brought Him! Strange that it should be so. “He came unto His own and His own received Him not.” His own led Him forth to slaughter! His own dragged Him before the Mercy Seat!

Note, again, that though this goat, like the scapegoat, was brought by the people, God’s decision was still in it. Mark, it is said, “Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat.” I conceive this mention of lots is to teach that although the Jews brought Jesus Christ of their own will to die, yet, Christ had been appointed to die—and even the very man who sold Him was appointed to it! So says the Scripture. Christ’s death was foreordained and there was not only man’s hand in it, but God’s. “The lot is cast into the lap but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.” So it is true that man put Christ to death, but it was of the Lord’s disposal that Jesus Christ was slaughtered, “the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.”

Next, behold the goat that destiny has marked out to make the Atonement. Come and see it die. The priest stabs it. Mark it in its agonies. Behold it struggling for a moment. Observe the blood as it gushes forth. Christians, you have here your Savior! See His Father’s vengeful sword sheathed in His heart? Behold His death agonies. See the clammy sweat upon His brow? Mark His tongue cleaving to the roof of His mouth! Hear His sighs and groans upon the Cross. Listen to His shriek, “Eli, Eli, lama Sabacthani.” And you have more, now, to think of than you could have if you only stood to see the death of a goat for your Atonement. Mark the blood as from His wounded hands it flows and from His feet it finds a channel to the earth. From His open side in one great river see it gush! As the blood of the goat made the Atonement typically, so, Christian, your Savior dying for you made the great Atonement for your sins and you may go free!

But mark, this goat’s blood was not only shed for many for the remission of sins as a type of Christ, but that blood was taken within the veil and there it was sprinkled. So with Jesus’ blood, “Sprinkled now with blood, the throne.” The blood of other beasts (save only of the bullock) was offered before the Lord and was not brought into the Most Holy Place. But this goat’s blood was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat and before the Mercy Seat, to make an Atonement. So, O child of God, your Savior’s blood has made Atonement within the veil. He has taken it there, Himself, His own merits and His own agonies are now within the veil of Glory sprinkled, now, before the Throne of God! O glorious Sacrifice, as well as High Priest, we would adore You, for by Your one Offering, You have made Atonement forever, even as this one slaughtered goat made Atonement once in a year for the sins of all the people!

III. We now come to the EFFECTS.  
One of the first effects of the death of this goat was the sanctification of the holy things which had been made unholy. You read at the end of the 15th verse, “He shall sprinkle it upon the Mercy Seat: and he shall make an Atonement for the Holy Place because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness.” The Holy Place was made unholy by the people. Where God dwelt should be holy—but where man comes, there must be some degree of unholiness. This blood of the goat made the unholy place holy. It was a sweet reflection to me as I came here, this morning. I thought, “I am going to the House of God and that house is a holy place.” But when I thought how many sinners had trodden its floors, how many unholy ones had joined in its songs, I thought, “Ah, it has been made defiled, but oh, there is no fear, for the blood of Jesus has made it holy again!” “Ah,” I thought, “there is our poor prayer that we shall offer—it is a holy prayer—for God the Holy Spirit dictates it. But then it is an unholy prayer, for we have uttered it and that which comes out of unholy lips like ours, must be tainted.” “But ah,” I thought again, “it is a prayer that has been sprinkled with blood and therefore it must be a holy prayer.” And as I looked on all the harps of this sanctuary, typical of your praises and on all the censers of this tabernacle, typical of your prayers, I thought within myself, “There is blood on them all, our holy service this day has been sprinkled with the blood of the great Jesus and as such it will be accepted through Him.” Oh, Beloved, is it not sweet to reflect that our holy things are now really holy—that though sin is mixed with them all and we think them defiled—yet they are not, for the blood has washed out every stain? And the service this day is as holy in God’s sight as the service of the cherubim and is acceptable as the Psalms of the glorified. We have washed our worship in the blood of the Lamb and it is accepted through Him!  
But observe, the second great fact was that their sins were taken away. This was set forth by the scapegoat. You read at the 20th verse, “And when he has made an end of reconciling the Holy Place and the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.” When that was done, you see, the great and wonderful Atonement was finished and the effects of it were set forth to the people. Now, I do not know how many opinions there are about this scapegoat. One of the most strange opinions to me is that which is held by a very large portion of learned men and I see it is put in the margin of my Bible. Many learned men think that this word, scapegoat, Azazel, was the name of the devil who was worshipped by the heathen in the form of a goat. And they tell us that the first goat was offered to God as an Atonement for sin and the other went away to be tormented by the devil and was called Azazel, just as Jesus was tormented by Satan in the wilderness. To this opinion, it is enough to object that it is difficult to conceive when the other goat was offered to God, this should be sent among demons. Indeed, the opinion is too gross for belief! It needs only to be mentioned to be refuted! Now the first goat is the Lord Jesus Christ making Atonement by His death for the sins of the people. The second is sent away into the wilderness and nothing is heard of it any more, forever—and here a difficulty suggests itself—“Did Jesus Christ go where He was never heard of any more, forever?” That is what we have not to consider at all! The first goat was a type of the Atonement—the second is the type of the effect of the Atonement. The second goat went away, after the first was slaughtered, carrying the sins of the people on its head. And so it sets forth, as a scapegoat, how our sins are carried away into the depth of the wilderness. There was this year exhibited in the Art Union, a fine picture of the scapegoat dying in the wilderness. It was represented with a burning sky above it, its feet sticking in the mire, surrounded by hundreds of skeletons and there dying a doleful and miserable death.  
Now, that was just a piece of gratuitous nonsense, for there is nothing in the Scripture that warrants it in the least degree! The Rabbis tell us that this goat was taken by a man into the wilderness and there tumbled down a high rock to die, but, as an excellent commentator says, if the man did push it down the rock he did more than God ever told him to do! God told him to take a goat and let it go. As to what became of it. neither you nor I know anything—that is purposely left out. Our Lord Jesus Christ has taken away our sins upon His head, just as the scapegoat, and it is gone from us—that is all—the goat was not a type in its dying, or in regard to its subsequent fate. God has only told us that it should be taken by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. The most correct account seems to be that of one Rabbi Jarchi who says that they generally took the goat twelve miles out of Jerusalem and at each mile there was a booth provided where the man who took it, might refresh himself till he came to the tenth mile. Then there was no more rest for him till he had seen the goat go. When he had come to the last mile, he stood and looked at the goat till it was gone and he could see it no more. Then the people’s sins were all gone, too. Now, what a fine type that is if you do not enquire any further! But it you will get to meddling where God intended you to be in ignorance, you will get nothing by it. This scapegoat was not designed to show us the victim or the sacrifice, but simply what became of the sins. The sins of the people are confessed upon that head. The goat is going. The people lose sight of it. A fit man goes with it. The sins are going from them and now the man has arrived at his destination. The man sees the goat in the distance skipping here and there over the mountains, glad of its liberty. It is not quite gone—a little farther—and now it is lost to sight. The man returns and says he can no longer see it—then the people clap their hands, for their sins are all gone, too! Oh, Soul, can you see your sins all gone? We may have to take a long journey and carry our sins with us. But oh, how we watch and watch till they are utterly cast into the wilderness of forgetfulness where they shall never be found any more against us! But mark, this goat did not sacrificially make the Atonement—it was a type of the sins going away—and so it was a type of the Atonement. For you know, since our sins are thereby lost, it is the fruit of the Atonement—but the sacrifice is the means of making it. So we have this great and glorious thought before us—that by the death of Christ, there was full, free, perfect remission for all those whose sins are laid upon His head!  
I would have you notice that on this day all sins were laid on the scapegoat’s head—sins of presumption, sins of ignorance, sins of uncleanness, little sins and great sins, few sins and many sins, sins against the Law, sins against morality, sins against ceremonies, sins of all kinds were taken away on that great Day of Atonement. Sinner, oh, that you had a share in my Master’s Atonement! Oh, that you could see Him slaughtered on the Cross! Then might you see Him go away leading captivity, captive, and taking your sins where they might never be found! I have now an interesting fact to tell you and I am sure you will think it worth mentioning. Turn to Leviticus 25:9 and you will read—“Then shall you cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the Day of Atonement shall you make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.” So that one of the effects of the Atonement was set forth to us in the fact that when the year of jubilee came, it was not on the first day of the year that it was proclaimed, but, “on the tenth day of the seventh month.” Yes, I think that was the best part of it! The scapegoat is gone and the sins are gone—and no sooner are they gone than the silver trumpet sounds—  
*“The year of jubilee is come!  
Return, you ransomed sinners, home.”* On that day sinners go free! On that day our poor mortgaged lands are liberated and our poor estates which have been forfeited by our spiritual bankruptcy are all returned to us! So when Jesus dies, slaves win their liberty and lost ones receive spiritual life again! When He dies, Heaven, the long lost inheritance is ours! Blessed day! Atonement and jubilee ought to go together. Have you ever had a jubilee, my Friends, in your hearts? If you have not, I can tell you it is because you have not had a Day of Atonement!  
One more thought concerning the effects of this great Day of Atonement and you will observe that it runs throughout the whole of the Chapter —entrance within the veil. Only on one day in the year might the High Priest enter within the veil and then it must be for the great purposes of the Atonement. Now, Beloved, the Atonement is finished and you may enter within the veil—“Having boldness, therefore, to enter into the Holiest, let us come with boldness unto the throne of the heavenly Grace.” The veil of the Temple is rent by the Atonement of Christ and access to the Throne of God is now ours! O child of God, I know not of any privilege which you have, save fellowship with Christ, which is more valuable than access to the Throne! Access to the Mercy Seat is one of the greatest blessings mortals can enjoy. Precious Throne of Grace! I never would have had any right to come there if it had not been for the Day of Atonement! I never would have been able to come there if the Throne had not been sprinkled with the blood!  
IV. Now we come to notice, in the fourth place, what is our PROPER BEHAVIOR WHEN WE CONSIDER THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. You read at the 29th verse, “And this shall be a statute forever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls.” That is one thing that we ought to do when we remember the Atonement. Surely, Sinner, there is nothing that should move you to repentance like the thought of that great Sacrifice of Christ which is necessary to wash away your guilt. “Law and terrors do but harden,” but I think the thought that Jesus died is enough to make us melt. It is well, when we hear the name of Calvary, always to shed a tear, for there is nothing that ought to make a sinner weep like the mention of the death of Jesus. On that day “you shall afflict your souls.” And even you, you Christians, when you think that your Savior died, should afflict your souls—you should say,  
*“Alas! And did my Savior bleed?  
And did my Sovereign die?  
Would He devote that sacred head  
For such a worm as I?”*  
Drops of grief ought to flow—yes, streams of sympathy with Him—to show our grief for what we did to pierce the Savior. “Afflict your souls,” O you children of Israel, for the Day of Atonement is come! Weep over your Jesus! Weep for Him who died, weep for Him who was murdered by your sins! “Afflict your souls.”  
Then, better still, we are to “do no work at all,” as you find in the same verse, the 29th. When we consider the Atonement, we should rest and “do no work at all.” Rest from your works as God did from His on the great Sabbath of the world. Rest from your own righteousness, rest from your toilsome duties—rest in Him. “We that believe do enter into rest.” As soon as you see the Atonement finished, say, “It is done, it is done! Now will I serve my God with zeal. Now I will no longer seek to save myself—it is done, it is done forever!”  
Then there was another thing which always happened. When the priest had made the Atonement, it was usual for him, after he had washed himself, to come out, again, in his glorious garments. When the people saw him, they attended him to his house with joy and they offered burnt offerings of praise on that day—he being thankful that his life was spared, (having been allowed to go into the Holy Place and to come out of it)—and they being thankful that the Atonement was accepted. Both of them offering burnt offerings as a type that they now desired to be “a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God.” Beloved, let us go into our houses with joy, let us go into our gates with praise. The Atonement is finished! The High Priest is gone within the veil—salvation is now complete! He has laid aside the linen garments and He stands before you with His breastplate and His miter and His embroidered vest, in all His Glory! Hear how He rejoices over us, for He has redeemed His people and ransomed them out of the hands of His enemies! Come, let us go home with the High Priest—let us clap our hands with joy, for He lives, He lives! The Atonement is accepted and we are accepted, too! The scapegoat is gone, our sins are gone with it! Let us then go to our houses with thankfulness and let us come up to His gates with praise, for He has loved His people, He has blessed His children and given unto us a Day of Atonement and a day of acceptance and a year of jubilee! Praise the Lord! Praise 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 #1879 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A PLAIN MAN’S SERMON

NO. 1879

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, JANUARY 17, 1886, DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“It must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it.” Leviticus 22:21.**

THE Ceremonial Law, as ordained by the hand of Moses and Aaron, called the worshippers of God to great carefulness before Him. Before their minds that solemn Truth was always made visible, “I the Lord your God am a jealous God.” Nothing might be done thoughtlessly. Due heed was the first requisite in a man who would draw near unto the Thrice-Holy God, whose perfections demand lowly and considerate reverence from all those who are round about Him. The spirit must be awake and on the stretch if it would please the great Father of Spirits. There were little points—I may truthfully call them minute—upon which everything would depend as to right worship and its acceptance with the Lord. No Israelite could come to the tabernacle door aright without thinking of what he had to do and thinking it over with an anxious fear lest he should, by omission or error, make his offering into a vain oblation. He must draw near unto the Lord with great carefulness, or else he might miss his aim, spend his money upon a sacrifice, cause labor to the priest and go home unaccepted. He might duly perform a large portion of a ceremony and yet no good might come to him through it because he had omitted a point of detail—for the Lord would be sought according to the due order—or He would not be found by the worshipper. Of every ceremony it might be said, “It must be perfect to be accepted.” There was the rule and the rule must be followed with the most careful exactness. God must have the minds and thoughts of men, or He counts that they are no worshippers!

This is no easy lesson to learn, dear Friends for I am afraid that in our usual worship we are not always as thoughtful as we ought to be. Mark well our singing. Do we join in it with the heartiness, the solemnity and the correctness which are due to Him who hears our Psalms and hymns? I may not judge, but I have my suspicions. Look at the way we pray. Is it not to be feared that at times we rush into God’s Presence and utter the first words that come to hand? Are not liturgies repeated with minds half asleep? Are not extempore prayers uttered in the most formal manner? I refer both to public and private prayer. Moreover, look at the style in which some will even preach. With facility of language they will deliver themselves of their own thoughts, without seeking the anointing from on high and the power of the Spirit of God! I do not say that any of you ever go into your Sunday school classes without thought. I do not say that any of you ever take your tract district and go from door to door without seeking a blessing. I will not say that any of you ever come to the Communion Table without examining yourselves and discerning the Lord’s body. But if I do not say it, I may think it and possibly that thought may be true!

O, my Brothers and Sisters, let conscience sit in judgment and decide this matter! We need to think a great deal more about how we come before the Most High! And if we thought more and prayed more, we would become more certain of our inability to do anything as we ought to do it— and we Would be driven to a more entire dependence upon the Spirit of God in every act of worship! This in itself would be a great blessing.

I do not know, however, that the Ceremonial Law did make men thoughtful since, for the most part, it failed of its designed effect through the hardness of men’s hearts. Earnest heed was the design of it, but superstition and a spirit of bondage were the more usual results. Brethren, without a multitude of ceremonies which might become a yoke to us, let us, by other means, arrive at the same and even a better thoughtfulness of heart! Let love to God so influence us that, in the least and most ordinary matters, we shall behave ourselves as in the immediate Presence of the Lord and so shall strive with the utmost watchfulness of holy care to please the Lord our God.

The Ceremonial Law also engendered in men who did think, a great respect for the holiness of God. They could not help seeing that God required everything in His service to be of the very best.

The priest who stood for them before God must be, himself, in bodily presence, the perfection of manhood. When old age crept upon him, he must give place to one who showed no such sign of decay. His garments must be perfectly white and clean in his daily service. And when once a year there was a joy day, then for glory and beauty he shone in all the radiance that the purest gold and the most precious stones could put upon him!

The victims that were offered must all be without blemish. You are constantly meeting with that demand and it was carried out with rigid care. You meet with a stringent instance in the text, “It must be perfect to be accepted.”

Under the law of Moses, the guilt of sin and the need of atonement were always most vividly brought before the mind of the worshipping Israelite. If you stepped within the Holy Place, everywhere you saw the marks of blood. Our very delicate-minded friends who raise the silly objection that they cannot bear the sound of the word, “blood”—what would they have done if they had gone into the Jewish tabernacle and had seen the floor, the curtain and every article stained like a shambles? How would they have endured to worship where the blood was poured in bowlfuls upon the floor and sprinkled on almost every holy thing? How would they have borne with the continual spattering of blood—all indicating that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin?  
Truly, there can be no approach to a Thrice-Holy God without the remission of sin and that remission of sin must be obtained through the atoning blood! The Israelite, if he thought rightly, must have been deeply aware that he served a God who was terrible out of His holy places, a God who hated sin and would by no means spare the guilty, or pardon man without atonement! All the more would this be sealed home upon the mind of the Israelite by the knowledge that in every case the sacrifice must be unblemished. As he looked on the blood of the victim, he would remember the sacred rule, “It must be perfect to be accepted.” He saw in the necessity for a perfect sacrifice, a declaration of the holiness of God. He must have felt that sin was not a trifle—not a thing to be committed, winked at and blotted out—but a thing for which there must be life given and blood shed before it could be removed. And that life and blood must be the life and blood of a perfect and unblemished offering!

Under the Jewish Ceremonial Law, one of the most prominent thoughts, next to a great respect for the holiness of God, would be a deep regard for the Law of God. Everywhere that the Israelite went, he was surrounded by the Law of God. He must not do this and he must do that— the Law was continually before him. Now, Brothers and Sisters, it is a blessed thing to declare the Gospel, but I do not believe that any man can preach the Gospel who does not preach the Law. The book of Leviticus and all the other typical books are valuable as Gospel-teaching to us because there is always in them most clearly the Law of God. The Law is the needle and you cannot draw the silken thread of the Gospel through a man’s heart unless you first send the needle of the Law through the center, to make way for it. If men do not understand the Law of God, they will not feel that they are sinners! And if they are not consciously sinners, they will never value the Sin Offering. If the Ten Commandments are never read in their hearing, they will not know why they are guilty. And how shall they make confession? If they are not assured that the Law is holy, just, good and that God has never demanded of any man more than He has a right to demand, how shall they feel the filthiness of sin, or see the need of flying to Christ for cleansing? There is no healing a man till the Law of God has wounded him! No making him alive till the Law has slain him!

I do pray, dear Friends, that God, the Holy Spirit, may lay the Law of God, like an axe, at the root of all our self-righteousness, for nothing else will ever hew down that Upas tree. I pray that He may take the Law and use it as a mirror, that we may see ourselves in it and discover our spots, blots and all the foulness of our lives—for then we shall be driven to wash until we are clean in the sight of the Lord. The Law is our teacher to bring us to Christ and there is no coming to Christ unless the stern teacher shall lead us there with many a stripe and many a tear.

In this text we have Law and Gospel, too. There is the Law which tells us that the sacrifice must be perfect to be accepted. And behind it there is the blessed hint that there is such an unblemished Sacrifice which is accepted which we may, by faith, bring to God without fear of being rejected. Oh, for Grace to learn both Law and Gospel at this time!

This is the text for our present meditation, “It must be perfect to be accepted.” I want to preach this Truth of God right home into every heart by the power of the Spirit of God! If I could be an orator, I would not be. The game of eloquence, with the souls of men for the counters and eternity for the table, is the most wicked sport in the world! I have often wished that there were no such things as rhetoric and oratory left among ministers— and that we were all forced to speak in the pulpit as plainly as children do in their simplicity. Oh, that all would proclaim the Gospel with plain words! I long that all may understand what I have to say. I would be more simple if I knew how. The way of salvation is far too important a matter to be the theme of oratorical displays. The Cross is far too sacred to be made a pole on which to hoist the flags of our fine language! I want to tell you just things that will make for your peace—things which will save your souls. At least I would declare Truths which, if they do not save you, will leave you without excuse in that dread day when He, whose ambassador I am, shall come to judge both you and me!

I. First, then, THE RULE OF OUR TEXT, “IT MUST BE PERFECT TO BE ACCEPTED,” MAY BE USED TO SHUT OUT ALL THOSE FAULTY OFFERINGS ON WHICH SO MANY PLACE THEIR CONFIDENCE.

It most effectually judges and casts forth as vile, all self-righteousness, although this is the great deceit by which thousands are buoyed up with false hopes! Alas, this is the destroyer of myriads and, therefore, I must speak as with a voice of thunder and with words of lightning! Hearken unto me, you that hope to be accepted of God by your own doings! Look to what will be demanded of you if you are to be accepted on your own merits! “It must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it.” If you can come up to this rule, you shall be saved by your own righteousness! But if you cannot reach this mark. If you come short in any degree whatever, you will not be accepted! It is not said, “It must be partially good to be accepted.” Or, “It must be hopefully good.”

No! “It must be perfect to be accepted.” It is not written, “It must have no great and grievous blemish,” but, “There shall be no defect in it.” See you not the height of the standard, the absolute completeness of the model set before you? Let the plummet hang straight and see whether you can build according to it, or, whether, after all, your building is but as a bowing wall and as a tottering fence, altogether out of the perpendicular as tested by this uncompromising text—“It must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it.”

Why, look, Sirs, you that hope to be saved by your own doings, your nature, at the very first, is tainted! God’s Word assures you that it is so! There is evil in your heart from the very beginning, so that you are not perfect and are not without defect! This sad fact spoils all at the very beginning. You are blemished and imperfect! Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one! If the fountain is tainted, shall the streams be pure? Do you think it possible that you, who are a fallen man in your very parentage—in whom there is a bias towards evil—can possibly render perfect service unto God? Your hands are foul! How can your work be clean? How can it possibly be that you should produce sweet fruit when you, as a tree, are of sour stock and of bitter nature? O my Friend, it cannot be that darkness should produce light, nor death bring forth life! How can your thoughts, words and ways be perfect? And yet all must be perfect to be accepted.

Look again for I feel sure that there must have been a blemish somewhere, as matter of fact. As yet you are not conscious of a blemish, or of a fault and, possibly there is some justification for this unconsciousness. Looking upon you, I feel inclined to love you, as Jesus loved that young man who could say of the Commandments, “All these have I kept from my youth up.” But I must beg you to answer this question—Has there not been a blemish in your motives? What have you been doing all these good things for? “Why, that I might be saved!” Precisely so! Therefore, selfishness has been the motive which has ruled your life. Every self-righteous man is a selfish man! I am sure he is. At the bottom, that is the motive of the best life that is ever lived which is not actuated by faith in Jesus Christ. The Law is, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” But you have loved yourself, and lived for yourself—how, then, can you have kept the first precept of the Law? What has been done by you has been done either out of a servile fear of Hell, or else out of a proud and selfish hope that you would win Heaven by your own merits. These are not love, nor even akin to it! The absence of love is a flaw and a very serious one—it taints and spoils the whole of your life. “It must be perfect to be accepted” and, if the motive is imperfect, then the life is altogether imperfect.

Moreover, it is not only your nature and your motive which are imperfect. My dear Friend, you certainly must have erred somewhere or other, in some act of your life. If you can say that you have served God and man without fault throughout all your days, you can say much more than I would venture to do! The Scripture also is dead against you when it says, “there is none righteous; no, not one.” If you can say that in not one action of your life, select what you may, was there anything blameworthy, anything that fell short, anything that could be censured—you say very much more than the best of men have ever claimed for themselves! As for the poor faulty being who now addresses you, I dare not claim that the best deed I have ever done, or the most fervent prayer I have ever prayed could have been accepted in and of itself before God. I know that I have no perfection in my best things, much less in my worst.

Tell me, my Friend, was there not something wrong in your spirit? Was there not a shortcoming in the humility with which you worshipped? Or in the zeal with which you served? Or in the faith with which you prayed? Was there not something of omission, even if nothing of commission? Could not the work have been better done? If so, it is clear that it was not perfect, for had it been perfect it could have been no better. Might you not have lived better than you have lived? Might you not have been more pure, more generous, more upright, more loving, more gentle, more firm, more heavenly-minded than you have been? Then this confession shows that, to some extent, you must have fallen short and, remember, “It must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it.”

Ah, I am talking very smoothly now, for I am only touching the surface and dealing with guess-work. But I fear there are greater evils underneath, if all were known. I think if I could read all hearts, there is not one here, however self-righteous he may be, who would not have to confess distinct acts of sin. Still, I will keep to the smooth strain and believe that you are as good as you seem to be. Indeed, I have a high opinion of many of you! I know how some of you have lived. You were amiable girls and excellent young women and have grown up to be careful, loving wives and, therefore, you say, “I never did anybody any harm. Surely I may be accepted.” Or, perhaps you are quiet young men, blessed with excellent parents and screened from temptation—and so you have never gone into open vice, but have gained a most respectable character. I wish that there were more like you! I am not condemning you—far from it—but I know that your tendency is to think that because of all this, you must, in yourselves, be accepted of God.

Give me your hand and let me say to you, with tears—“It is not so, my Sister! It is not so, my Brother! It must be perfect to be accepted; there must be no defect in it.” This is a deathblow to your self-confidence, for there was a time, some day or other in your life, in which you did wrong. What? Have you no hasty temper? Have no quick words escaped from you which you would wish to recall? What? Have you never murmured against God, or complained of His Providence? Have you never been slothful when you ought to have been diligent? Have you never been careless when you ought to have been prayerful? Have you always spoken the truth? Has a lie never fallen from your lips? Can you say that your heart has never desired evil—never imagined impurity? Remember, the thought of evil is sin! Even a wanton desire is a blemish in the life and an unchaste imagination is a stain upon the character in the sight of God, though not in the sight of man! “It must be perfect to be accepted.”

I verily used to think concerning myself that I was a quiet, good, hopeful lad, addicted much to reading, seldom in brawls and doing nobody any harm. Oh, it was the outside of the cup and the platter I had seen! And when I was led by Grace to look inside, I was astonished to see what filthiness was there! When I heard in my heart that sentence of the Law of God, “It must be perfect to be accepted,” I gave up all hope of selfrighteousness! And now I hate myself for having doted upon such a lie that I could be acceptable with God in myself!

Have you never gone to live in an old house which looked like new? You had fresh paint, varnish and paper in superabundance—and you thought yourself dwelling in one of the sweetest of places—until, one day, it happened that a board was taken up and you saw under the floor. What a gathering of every foul thing! You could not have lived in that house at peace for a minute had you known what had been covered up! Rottenness had been hidden, decay had been doctored, death had been decorated! That is just like our humanity. We put on fresh paper, varnish and paint—and we look very respectable. But from below an abomination of the sewer gas of sin comes steaming up, enough to kill everything that is like goodness within us—while all manner of creeping lusts and venomous passions swarm in the secret corners of our nature! When lusts are quiet, they are still there. The best man in this place, who is not a believer in Christ, would go mad if he were to see himself as God sees him! No eyes could bear the horrible sight of the Hell within the human breast! Yes, I mean you good people—you very nice, amiable, lovable sort of people! You will have to be born again and you will have to give up all trust in yourselves, as much as even the worst of men must do! As surely as the chief of sinners are unaccepted, so surely are you—for a righteousness must be perfect to be accepted, there must be no defect in it—and that is not the case with your righteousness. You know it is not.

“Well,” says one, “this is very hard doctrine.” I mean it to be so, for I love you too well to deceive you! When a door has to be shut to save a life, there is no use in half-shutting it! If a person may be killed by going through it, you had better board it up, or brick it up. I want to brick up the dangerous opening of self-confidence, for it leads to deception, disappointment and despair! The way to Heaven by works is only possible to a man who is absolutely perfect—and none of you are in that condition. Do not pretend to it, or you will be arrant liars! I put no fine face upon it—you are not perfect, no, not one of you, for, “all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God.”

Thus, then, our text shuts out all self-righteousness. It also shuts out all priestly performances. There is a notion among some people that the priest is to save them, alias the minister, for men easily, in these charitable days, make even Dissenting ministers into priests! I have heard people say, “Just as I employ a lawyer to attend to my temporal business and I do not bother my head any more about it, so I employ my priest or my clergyman to attend to my spiritual business and there is the end of it.” This is evil talk and ruinous to the man who indulges in it! I will speak of this priestcraft very plainly. Remember, “It must be perfect to be accepted,” therefore all that this gentleman does for you must be perfect. I do not know what it is that he does, I am sure. I never could make out what a priest of the Roman or Anglican order can be supposed to do in his highest function of the “mass.” I have seen him walk this way and I have seen him walk that way—and I have seen him turn his back—and it has been decorated with crosses and other embellishments! And I have seen him turn his face and I have seen him bow—and I have seen him drink wine and water—and I have seen him munch wafers. I have seen him perform many genuflections and prostrations, but what the performance meant, I have not been able to gather! To me it seemed a meaningless display.

I would not like to risk my soul on it, for, suppose that during that service he should think of something that he ought not to think upon? And suppose he should have no intention whatever of performing the “mass”— what, then, becomes of those who trust in him and it? Everything, you know, depends upon the intention of the priest. If a good intention is not there, according to the dictates of his own church, it is all good for nothing, so that your souls all hang upon the intention of a poor mortal in a certain dress! Perhaps he has not, after all, been rightly anointed and is not in the Apostolic succession? Perhaps there is no Apostolic succession! Perhaps the man, himself, is living in mortal sin! Ah, me, there are many dangers about your confidence! Are you going to hang your soul on that man’s orders or disorders? Mine is too heavy to hang upon so slender a nail, driven into such rotten wood! If you have a soul big enough to think, you will feel, “No, no, there cannot be sufficient ground of dependence in the best pontiff that ever officiated at an altar. God requires of me, myself, that I bring to Him a perfect Sacrifice, and it is all a device of my folly that I should try and get a sponsor and lay this burden on him. It cannot be done. I have to stand before the judgement bar of God in my own person, to be tried for the sins that I have done in the body—and I must not deceive myself with the idea that another man’s performance of ceremonies can clear me at the Judgement Seat of Christ. This man cannot bring a perfect sacrifice for me and—“it must be perfect to be accepted.” O Sirs, do not be deluded by priestcraft and sacramentarianism, whether the priest is of the school of Rome or of Oxford—you must believe in the Lord Jesus for yourselves, or you will be lost forever!

This text makes a clean sweep of all other kinds of human confidences . Some are deceived in this way—“Well,” they say, “I do not trust in my works, but I am a religious person and I attend the sacrament. And I go to my place of worship pretty regularly. I feel that I must certainly be right. I have faith in Jesus Christ and in myself.” In various ways men thus compose an image whose feet are part of iron and part of clay. With that kind of mingle-mangle, many are unconsciously contenting themselves. But hear this Word of God—“It must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it.” If we trust Christ and nothing else, that will be perfect! But if you are trusting Christ up to 15 ounces in the pound and yourself for the last ounce of the 16, you will be a lost man, for that last ounce is an ounce of imperfection and, therefore, you cannot be accepted of God!

There are some others who say, “I have suffered a great deal and that will make amends.” There is a current idea among men that all will go well with poor people and hard-working people because they have had their bad times here on earth. When a man has had a long illness and suffered a great deal in the hospital, his friends say, “Poor soul, he has gone where he is better off!” They feel sure of it because he has suffered so much! Ah, me, but, “It must be perfect to be accepted”—and what is there perfect in a human life, even if it is checkered with suffering, poverty and need? Ah, no! Poverty does not work perfection! Sickness does not make perfection! My text stands like a cherub, waving a fiery sword before the gates of Paradise, shutting out all fancies and notions, of which I will not now speak particularly, by this dread sentence—“It must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it.”

II. This brings me to note, with great delight of heart, that as this rule shuts out all other confidences, SO THIS RULE SHUTS US UP TO THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST. O Beloved, if I had the tongues of men and of angels, I could never fitly tell you of Him who offered Himself without spot unto God, for He is absolutely perfect—there is no defect in Him!

He is perfect in His Nature as God and Man. No stain defiled His birth, no pollution touched His body or His soul. The Prince of this world, himself, with keenest eyes, came and searched the Savior, but he found nothing in Him. “In all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” There was not the possibility of sinning about the Savior—no tendency that way, no desire that way. Nothing that could be construed into evil ever came upon His Character. Our perfect Sacrifice is without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing!

As He was perfect in His Nature, so was He in His motive. What brought Him from above but love to God and man? You can find no trace of ambition in Christ Jesus. In Him there is no thought of self. No sinister or sordid motive ever lingered in His breast, or even crossed His mind. He was purity and holiness in the highest degree. Even His enemies have nothing to allege against the purity of the motive of Jesus of Nazareth!

As His Nature was perfect, so was His spirit. He was never sinfully angry, nor harsh, nor untrue, nor idle. The air of His soul was the atmosphere of Heaven rather than of earth. Look at His life of obedience and see how perfect that was. Which Commandment did He ever break? Which duty of relationship did He ever forget? He honored the Law of God and loved the souls of men. He gave the Character of God perfect reflection in His human life. You can see what God is as you see what Christ is. He is perfect, even as His Father who is in Heaven is perfect. There is no redundancy, or excess, or superfluity in His Character, even as there is no coming short in any point.

Look at the perfection of His Sacrifice. He gave His body to be tortured and His mind to be crushed and broken, even unto the agony of death. He gave Himself for us, a perfect Sacrifice. All that the Law could ask was in Him. Stretch the measure to its utmost length and still Christ goes beyond, rather than falls short of the measure of the requirements of justice. He has given to His Father double for all our sins! He has given Him suffering for sin committed and yet a perfect obedience to the Law. The Lord God is well pleased with Him. He rests in the Son of His love and, for His sake He smiles upon multitudes of sinners who are represented in Him. My heart rejoices as I think of Gethsemane, Calvary and of Him who by one offering has perfectly sanctified all who put their trust in Him! “It is finished,” He said, and finished it is forever! Our Lord has presented a perfect Sacrifice! “It must be perfect to be accepted”—and it is perfect. “There shall be no defect in it”—and there is no defect in it. Glory be to God Most High!

Now, I want you just to let me stop preaching, as it were, while every man among you brings this Sacrifice to God. By faith take it to be yours. You may. Christ belongs to every Believer. If you trust Him, He is yours! Poor guilty Soul as you are, whether you have been a Christian 50 years or 10 years, or whether you are just now converted, if you believe, you may now come with Christ in your hands and say to the Father, “O my Lord, You have provided for me what Your Law requires—a perfect Sacrifice! There is no defect in it. Behold, I bring it to You as mine!” God is satisfied. What joy! God is satisfied! The Father is well pleased! He has raised Christ from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places in token of that satisfaction!

Let us be satisfied, too! That which contents God may well content me. My Soul, when your eyes are full of tears on account of your sin and your heart is disquieted on account of your infirmities and imperfections, look right away from yourself “to the full Atonement made, to the utmost ransom paid.” The offering of Jesus is perfect and accepted! The righteousness of your Lord Jesus is without blemish and you are, “accepted in the Beloved.”

That delightful passage in Exodus came flashing up to my mind just now, where the Israelite sprinkled the blood on the lintel and the two side posts. Then he shut the door. He was inside: he did not see the blood any more. The blood was outside upon the posts and he could not see it—but was he safe? Yes, because it is written, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” It is God’s sight of the blood of His dear Son that is the everlasting safeguard of all who are in Christ! Though it is most precious and sweet to me to look at that blood once shed for many for the remission of sins—and I do look at it—yet if ever there should come a dark night to me in which I cannot see it, still, God will see it, and I am safe! I am save because it is written, not, “when you see it,” but, “when I see the blood I will pass over you.” It is the perfection of the Sacrifice, not your perfection of sight, which is your safeguard! It is the absence of all blemish from the Sacrifice—not the absence of blemish from your faith—that makes you “accepted in the Beloved.”

Well, now, as is too often the case, I have run on so much upon the first points that I have not time enough for much more! But I was going to finish up by saying that I address myself, for a minute or two, to Christians, only. Listen, you that follow after righteousness, you that know the Lord! You are saved. You have not, therefore, to bring any sacrifice by way of a sin offering, but you have to bring sacrifices of thanksgiving. It is your reasonable service that you offer your bodies a living sacrifice unto God. If you do this, you cannot bring an absolutely perfect sacrifice, but you must labor to let it be perfect in what is often the Biblical sense of perfection.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters, you must take care that what you bring is not blind, for the blind were not to be offered. You must serve God with a single eye to the Glory of God. If you attend a Prayer Meeting, or teach a class, or preach a sermon, you must not do it with a view to your own selves in any way, or it cannot be accepted! The sacrifice must see—it must be intelligent, reasonable service—having for its objective the Glory of God. It must in that sense be perfect to be accepted.

And as it must not be blind, so it must not be broken. Whenever we serve God, we must do it with the whole of our being, for if we try to serve God with a bit of our nature and leave the rest unconsecrated, we shall not be accepted. Certain professors prefer one class of Christian duties and they neglect others—this must not be. Christ gave “Himself” for you and you must give your whole self to Him. To be acceptable, the life must be entire—there must be complete consecration of every faculty. How is it with you? Have you brought to the Lord a divided sacrifice? If so, He claims the whole.

Next, they were not to bring a maimed sacrifice, that is, one without its limbs. Some people give grudgingly, that is to say they come up to the collection box with a limp. Many serve Christ with a broken arm. The holy work is done, but it is painfully and slowly done. Among the heathen, I believe, they never offered, in sacrifice to the gods, a calf that had to be carried. The reason was that they considered that the sacrifice ought to be willing to be offered and so it must be able to walk up to the altar. Notice in the Old Testament, though there were many creatures both birds and beasts, that were offered to God, they never offered any fish on the holy altar. The reason probably is that a fish could not come there alive. Its life would be spent before it came to the altar and, therefore, it could not render a life unto God. Take care that you bring your bodies a living sacrifice.

I notice that many men are all alive when they are in the shop. The way they talk, the way they call out to the men and the way they bustle everybody about are conclusive evidence that their life is abundant. But when they get into the Church of God, what a difference! There may be life, somewhere or other, but nobody knows where it is! You have to look for it with a microscope. You see no activity, no energy! Oh, that these people would remember, “It must be perfect to be accepted!” That is to say, there must be energy put into it, soul put into it, heart put into it or God will not accept it. We must not bring Him the mere chrysalis of a man, out of which the life has gone, but we must bring before Him our living, worshipping selves if we would be acceptable before Him.

It is then added, “or having a scab.” It does not look as though it would hurt the sacrifice much to have a scab, yet there must not be a scab, or spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Above all, avoid that big scab of pride. When we feel that we are doing a grand thing and are acting in a most satisfactory manner, we may know that we are not accepted! A sermon wept over is more acceptable with God than one gloried over. That which is given to God with a sigh because you cannot do more—and with the humble hope that he may accept it for Christ’s sake, is infinitely superior to that which is bestowed with the proud consciousness that you deserve well of your fellow men, if not of your God.

The sacrifice was not to be scabbed, or to have the scurvy. That is to say, it was to be without any sort of outward fault. I have heard men say, “It is true I did not do that thing well, but my heart was right.” That may be, my dear Brother, but you must try and make the whole matter as good as it can be! What a deal of scabbed service our Lord gets! Men try to be benevolent to their fellow creatures with an irritable temper. Certain people try to serve God and write stinging letters to promote brotherly love— and dogmatic epistles in favor of large-mindedness! Too many render to the Lord hurried, thoughtless worship and many more give for offerings their smallest coins and such things as they will never miss! God has many a scurvy sheep brought before Him.

Did you never bring any, my Brother? Did I never bring any? Ah, me! Ah, me! But still, let us mend our ways and, since the Lord Jesus offered Himself without spot, let us try to serve Him with our utmost care. The best of the best should be given to the Best of the best! We sometimes sing—

*“All that I am, and all I have,  
Shall be forever Yours.”*

Oh, that we practiced it as well as sang it! Would God that the best of our lives, the best hours of the morning, the best skill of our hands, the best thoughts of our minds, the very cream of our being were given to our God! But, alas, Christ’s cause is sent round to the back door to get the broken meat and, “Mind you do not leave too much meat on the bone,” is the kind of instruction that is given to her who hands it out! Christ Jesus is sent to the dung heap for the odds and ends! Cheese parings and candle ends are given to the Missionary Society. Perhaps the statement is too liberal—it would be well if they were! Three-pennies and four-pennies are gracious gifts from struggling tradesmen and poor work people, but they are hardly decent when sent in by folk who spend hundreds of pounds upon their own pleasure! To God’s altar we ought to bring the best bullock from the stall and the best sheep from the fold!

I leave you to yourselves to judge whether it is not so. If you are not over head and ears in debt to the mercy of God in Christ, then it is not so. But if you are debtors to Divine Mercy beyond all compute, you shall, each one, reckon up for himself—“How much owe you unto my Lord?” If it is a debt you can never calculate—then give the Lord, from this day forth—the fullness of your being! May God grant that you and your offerings may be accepted in Christ Jesus! Amen and amen.

LOWLY SERVICE  
NO. 2829

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MAY 3, 1903.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 12, 1886.

**“This is the service of the families, the Gershonites, to serve, and for burdens: and they shall bear the curtains of the tabernacle, and the tabernacle of the congregation, its covering, and the covering of the badgers’ skin that is above upon it, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the hangings of the door, and the hanging for the door of the gate of the court, which is by the tabernacle and by the altar round about, and their cords, and all the instruments of their service, and all that is made for them: so shall they serve.” Numbers 4:24-26.**

THIS is the gist of the whole matter—“This is the service of the families of the Gershonites, to serve, and for burdens: and they shall bear . . . so shall they serve.” The Gershonites were part of the tribe of Levi which God selected, instead of the first-born of all Israel, to serve Him in a very special manner. They were to act as the representatives and substitutes for all the first-born, who were set apart, as the Lord’s in a very peculiar sense. The Levites were, therefore, to be regarded as the first-born—a name which is applied by the Apostle Paul to all the regenerate when he speaks of “the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven.” Jesus Christ is the true First-Born and all Believers are predestinated to be conformed to the image of Him who is “the FirstBorn among many brethren.”

The chapter we read tells us how the Levites were to be consecrated to their service. They were to be sprinkled with the water of separation and both their bodies and their clothes were to be washed with water. “Be you clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord,” is an injunction that is still binding upon Believers. We need to have both the water and the blood applied to us to prepare us for our solemn life-service as the consecrated Levites of God. “You are God’s clergy,” says the Apostle, according to the original. All who believe in Jesus, all the twice-born, all who are washed in His precious blood, all who are set apart by the Holy Spirit, are God’s clerics, dedicated to His service even as the Levites were of old.

Besides this, the Levites had all the hair of their bodies shaved off, as if to show us that in the day when we are consecrated to God, even our external life becomes changed. That which appertained to our old flesh is taken away and if there is to be, in the future, any beauty or ornament to our manliness, it must be a new growth, springing out of that body which has been dedicated unto God—but all our old comeliness is turned to corruption and that wherein we once gloried is altogether removed.

Judge you, my Brothers and Sisters, how far you are true Levites unto God! This is what you should be and this is what you are, unless, indeed, you are reprobates.

It is worthy of note that these Levites, although they were all equally consecrated, had not all exactly the same work to perform. God is not the God of uniformity. There is a wondrous unity of plan and design in all that He does, but there is also an equally marvelous variety. He did not command all these sons of Levi to carry one particular vessel, or order them to bear one special curtain or board belonging to the tabernacle— He divided unto every man his own work—one had to do this and another had to do something else.

There are some of the Lord’s servants whom He raises up to teach, preach, exhort and guide. These may, for the moment, be compared, in a certain fashion, to the sons of Aaron, though the type must not be pressed too far. But the Lord has also a large number of His own dear children who do not open their mouths to speak for Him in public and who could not fulfill the duties of leaders in His Church. Shall they be left without any service? They have but one talent—they have a shoulder which is strong enough to bear burdens of the Lord—though they have not much power in their head to think, or a fluent tongue with which to speak. Is there no office for them to fill? Shall all the body be a mouth? If so, what a vacuum there will be! Surely there must be, in a well-ordered body, eyes, feet, hands, shoulders, as well as the open mouth and the speaking tongue. So God has appointed to many of His servants a position and a work like that of the Gershonites—“They shall bear: so shall they serve.” I must not, however, forget to remind you that all the servants of our King are burden-bearers! None of us may hope to go to Heaven unless we are willing to take His yoke upon us and to learn of Him. But there are some who are not called to speak or preach, but whose special function it is to patiently bear the burdens of life, the burdens of the sanctuary, the burdens of the Church of God and so to be accepted of Him as a living sacrifice in that particular way. I am now going to try to speak of such and to such burden-hearers.

I. My first remark is that MANY OF THE LORD’S OWN PEOPLE ARE SIMPLY BURDEN-BEARERS, like these Gershonites.  
Let none of them be discouraged or dissatisfied because that is all they are, for the Lord still needs burden-bearers, even as, in the days of His flesh, He sent word to the owner of the ass on which He wished to ride through Jerusalem, “The Lord has need of him.” If the tabernacle is to be moved through the wilderness, all the holy vessels and furniture must also be moved. There must be somebody to carry them—and happy and blessed is that man who willingly yields his back to hear the burdens of the House of the Lord and counts it an honor that he is allowed to do so!  
Well now, among the burden-bearers of the Lord, the burdens are very various. There are some of His servants who are called to bear the burden of a very laborious life. I am sorry for some of my Brothers and Sisters, when I get an opportunity to speak with them, because the hours of their toil are so long and the strain of their service appears to be bringing them to a state of extreme feebleness of body. And sometimes they also get to feel despondency of spirit by reason of the excessive weariness which their almost incessant toil entails. I know some beloved Brethren, to whom the Master would not say a single angry word if He even saw them asleep in the Tabernacle. I have often thought of what He said when His disciples slept, not when He was preaching, but when He was doing even more than that—when, in Gethsemane He was praying even unto a bloody sweat. He did say, “What, could you not watch with Me one hour?” Yet, in His amazing pity, He added, “The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak.” It is still so. It is a pity that our present-day society, adapting itself more and more to a killing pace, works many men far too much as a general rule and, upon some of them, the stress of labor comes so heavily as almost to amount to actual slavery.  
Yet, my Brothers and Sisters, albeit we would sympathize with you to the great degree, if, in the order of Providence, you are called to bear that burden, you will find it to be the part of wisdom to accept it as a burden from the Lord. I know it may sometimes be looked upon, and justly so, as the oppression of men—and in that light it is crushing—but if you can see at the back of that oppression, the eternal purpose of God, it will greatly tend to lighten your heavy load, or it will strengthen you to bear it. The poor Christian slave, in the olden times, although He might long to be a free man, yet often found, in his little hut at night, no small comfort by saying, “If, in the Providence of God, I am a slave, and cannot escape. I will bear even this as being permitted by my Heavenly Father and seek to glorify God even as a slave.” So, you see, there are some who have to bear the burden of labor. They might, perhaps, escape from it if they did wrong—but they dare not do wrong, they scorn to do it—and so their burden becomes a burden from the Lord.  
How many others there are who have to bear the daily burden of pain! Oh, how many daughters of pain do I know, and sons of affliction— perhaps even from their birth the subjects of some grievous infirmity which has cast a shadow over their whole lives! There lies, at Dundee, at this present moment, a man who has been confined to his bed, I think it is now 56 years. I have his photograph at home and the friend who sent it to me wrote, “I send you the likeness of the happiest man in Dundee and one of the most useful, too, for he is a great soul-winner though he cannot raise himself from a constantly prostrate position.” He talks so sweetly of Christ and of the upholding power of Divine Grace that he leads many to put their trust in Jesus Christ. All over this land there are bed-ridden men and women who are the saintliest among the saints! It is an atrocious lie that some have uttered when they have said that the sickness is a consequence of the sufferer’s sin. I could not select, out of Heaven, choicer spirits than some whom I know who have not for 20 years left their bed—they have lived nearer to God than any of us—and have brought Him more glory than any of us!  
Although we deeply sympathize with them, we might almost covet their suffering because God is so greatly glorified in them. All over the world there is a brave band of these burden-bearers. I think, sometimes, that they are like soldiers who are on night duty. The sentinels must not sleep, lest the enemy should attack the camp unawares. The altar must never lose the glow and heat of its holy fire and the lamp of the sanctuary must never be permitted to go out, so these sufferers, as they lie, night after night, watching the long and weary hours, keep the lamp of prayer brightly burning and the incense of intercession perpetually ascending to the Most High. And so the earth is never without the sweetening influence of saintly supplication. Their main business, like that of the Gershonites, is to serve God by bearing burdens.  
Need I describe all the burdens that the saints on earth have to carry? There are some who bear the burden of poverty. A very large proportion of the excellent of the earth can be found among the poor of the earth— poor in spirit as well as poor in pocket and, “theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.” It is their constant portion to struggle and to toil hard to provide things honest in the sight of all men, but it does seem, with some, as if they could never rise out of a condition of bitter, grinding poverty. Well, if it must be so, let them feel and say, “As it has happened thus unto us, we are like the families of the Gershonites whose service was to bear burdens.”  
Some children of God are called to bear the very heavy burden of reproach. They have done no wrong and yet they are the subject of the jest and jeers of the ungodly. They have been faithful to Christ and their own conscience, but they are misunderstood and misrepresented. Their little peculiarities, which are scarcely faults, are exaggerated into crimes. A word which fell from their lips, perhaps too hastily, is caught up and echoed and re-echoed against them a thousand times. Men make them offenders for a word, and eat them up, as David says, “as they eat bread.” I have known godly wives suffer thus from ungodly husbands and, oftentimes, a dear girl who is brought to the Savior finds herself as a speckled bird in the family. All that can be said against Christians and all that can be said against hypocrites who are, unhappily, too often found in Christian Churches, will be contemptuously cast at her—and she has to bear it all, patiently enduring reproach for Christ’s sake.  
If this is God’s will concerning us, we ought not to endeavor to avoid it, but say, “Well, it is so. If somebody must be struck for Christ’s sake, here is my cheek ready for the striking. If there is a handful of mud that is meant for a Christian, let it fall upon me. If the saints of God are to be scoffed at and scorned, why should I be allowed to escape the insults?” There was a king of the Crusaders, who, when they wanted to crown him in Jerusalem, spurned the golden coronet which they set upon his brow, for he said, “Why should I wear a crown of gold where my Lord and Master wore one of thorns?” Happy will you be if He shall enable you to say, as you look up to Him—  
*“If on my face for Your dear name,  
Shame and reproaches be,  
All hail reproach, and welcome shame,  
If You remember me.”*  
There are some who have to bear this burden, so they had better bear it without wincing, for this is the service of the families of the Gershonites—to serve by bearing burdens.  
I believe that some of God’s people have to bear the burdens of this wicked world. In the order of Providence, their lot is cast in the midst of the ungodly. Even in their own home they can scarcely eat a meal without hearing blasphemy. And if they go down the court or street in which they live, especially in the evening, they cannot help being vexed with the sight and sounds of sin. There are some of us who can be very glad and merry, for we have naturally great elasticity of spirit, yet we are bowed down, day after day, by the apostasy of the professing church of this present age, and by the way in which everything is followed except Christ! Every kind of false doctrine is popular nowadays, but the Gospel of Jesus Christ is derided as old-fashioned and out of date and I know not what. Sometimes, the very bread we eat seems bitter, and the air we breathe is contaminated because of the sin that is everywhere around us. Well, dear Friends, whenever you feel depressed and burdened on this account, so that you go like one who misses the light of the sun, say to yourself, “It must be so. This is what must happen to those who are of an earnest, burning spirit. They must be consumed with grief by reason of the iniquities of the times, for it is appointed unto the families of the Gershonites that they shall serve by bearing burdens—and this is our burden.”  
I might say much more upon this head, but I will not, for you all know that the burdens which God puts upon His children, or allows others to lay upon them are very many and very varied. But this is the comfort of it, their burdens are all for the Lord. If they are in a right state of heart, this burden-bearing is true service for the Lord. Remember how Peter wrote, “For what glory is it, if, when you are buffeted for your faults, you take it patiently? But if, when you do well, and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were you called.” If the buffeting comes upon you for Christ’s sake, you are, in some sense, made partakers of His sufferings and you shall also be partakers of His Glory. A true child of God lives wholly for God. He is not merely a Christian when he goes up to the place of worship and sings the praise of the Lord, but he seeks to live for God as soon as he opens his eyes in the morning and until he closes them again at night. It is for God that he eats and drinks and for God that he buys, and sells, and works, and gives, or saves, or does whatever it is right for him to do. The Levite of old had no business to do in the world but the business of God—and the true Christian is in the same condition for, though he keeps a shop, or plows the fields—he keeps shop for Jesus and plows the fields for Jesus. He is not his own master, but he is the servant of Another, even the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is his joy to labor faithfully as a steward and a servant on behalf of his Master!  
I wish all Christians realized this Truth of God. We have far too many professors who make their religion into a kind of off-hand farm. They cultivate it a little during the odds and ends of their time, but their chief business lies with the world. Brothers and Sisters, there is no good to be gained by a religion of that kind! If you give God only the apple peeling of your life, He will give you simply the parings of religion, and they are generally very sour. But he who gives the whole fruit of his life to God shall receive from God the wines on the lees well refined, the choicest juice of the richest clusters of Eshcol shall be set to his happy lips. Blessed is the man whose very heart is in the ways of the Lord, and who has God’s ways within his heart. May each one of us be such a man, for he is a happy man—a burden-bearer, but all his burdens are for his Lord.  
And notice further, under this head, that the burdens which are borne for the Lord educate the bearer. I should suppose that the man who carried the golden candlestick knew more about that candlestick than anybody else did—at least it ought to have been a hint to him to study its typical meaning. As he bore that precious burden, it should have been his desire that his brethren should know what it was that he was bearing and, also, what was its spiritual significance. And in the service of God, this I know, whatever may have been the case in the typical instance before us, it is a fact that whenever God puts a burden upon the shoulders of any of His children, it is an educational process. We always learn much more by our griefs and woes than by anything else. God has often produced in us much richer and sweeter fruit by pruning than by any other process of His Divine husbandry. Take care, you that bear the vessels of the Lord and the burdens of the Lord, that you cry unto Him, “Teach us, Lord, by this affliction! Make this pain or this poverty to be a means of instruction to us. Make this burden to be the means of our growth in Grace, part of our spiritual training for a better world.”  
II. There is much more that might be said upon this point, but I must pass on to the second head, which is that THE LORD HAS MADE APPOINTMENTS CONCERNING THESE BURDEN-BEARERS.  
First, He thought upon them, though they were but burden-bearers. Here is a whole chapter about them and there are other chapters about these Gershonites, Kohathites and Merarites. The Lord directed Moses to write all this about then. Possibly you have been thinking that the Lord only remembers Apostles and great leaders in His Church, but it is not so. He remembers the burden-bearers—the rank and file are dear to Him. “The Lord knows them that are His,” whatever position they may occupy. And though some of you may have to go from this service to a very poor home and though others of you have only crept out from your bed for a little while, and will soon have to be back there to endure new pains. And though you feel as if all that you had to do was to lie and suffer—well, the Lord knows all about it. He is thinking of you burden-bearers who are so much like His Son, the great Burden-Bearer! If He could forget all others, He would not forget you. You have to take up your cross daily, as your Lord took up His Cross, and God takes delight in you, for you are very dear to His heart. Do not think that it can be otherwise, but comfort yourself with these words. The Lord remembered them.

More than that, the Lord had appointed each of these burden bearers. You take up an odd coin and you read on it, “George IV, by the Grace of God, king of Great Britain.” Well, I really do not think that the Grace of God had much to do with that appointment, but, if any of you Christians sweep a crossing, you might say, “Thomas Jones, by the Grace of God, crossing-sweeper.” Or if the poorest Christian woman goes out washing, she might say, “Sarah Smith, by the Grace of God, washerwoman,” for, if you are in your right position and bearing the burden which God has allotted to you, then you are in your place by Divine appointment! It makes a person wonderfully happy if he knows that his occupation is according to Divine appointment. It has been well said that if there were two angels in Heaven and God had two works to be performed by them and He said to one of them, “You go down to earth and rule a kingdom,” and to the other, “You go down and sweep a crossing,” the angels would be equally pleased to do their Master’s will, for it is their delight to, “do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word.”

If any of you think that a very prominent position—a place of great usefulness and responsibility—is much to be desired, well, I would not recommend you to covet mine. I am satisfied to occupy it, for I believe the Lord has called me to this position, but sometimes when I go home with a very heavy heart through the many crushing cares of this great church, I cry unto God, “Woe is me that ever I should have been called to such a post,” yet rejoicing all the while that I can say, with the Apostle Paul, “Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel!” If you, my Brother, have a little company of about a hundred people to deal with, be perfectly satisfied. Or if, my Sister, you have a class of ten or a dozen girls to teach, be content with that number and do the best you can to glorify God in your own proper place. Depend upon it, if you exchanged your burden for mine, you would not be able to bear it—and if I had yours, I dare say it would not fit my back so well as my own does!

Not only did the Lord appoint the man who was to bear the burden, but He also appointed the burden for each man to bear. In the 27th verse, we read, “At the appointment of Aaron and his sons shall be all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their burdens, and in all their service: and you shall appoint unto their charge all their burdens.” They had not to choose for themselves what they would carry. One might have said, “I will carry the golden candlestick,” whereas it might have been his part to carry some of the curtains or hangings. At all events they had nothing to do with that matter. They had simply to do what they were told. One word that the Christian Church needs to spell, in these days, for she is very apt to forget it, is the word, “subjection.” Be you Brothers and Sisters, subject to one another and be you all subject unto Christ.

But we do like to pick our work and choose our burdens. One says, “I like to do my work in my own way. I do not intend to drop into any kind of order and regulation.” I do not know that I am speaking personally of anybody here. As far as I am concerned, I am quite satisfied with you, but I know that in many places, Mrs. So-and-So won’t do this—she would have been quite willing to do something else. And Brother So-andSo is hurt because he is not called upon to do that. Now, if Brother Soand-So would only be eager to take the lowest place, we could readily accommodate him, but his great ambition is to be over all the rest of his brethren and he is not at all qualified for such a position as that! Let us all ask the Lord to cast out that evil spirit and then to tell us what He would have us carry. “Lord, what will You have me do?” Down goes my shoulder ready to bear the God-appointed burden. “Send me to the top of the mountains, or to the bottom of the sea, only say what Your will is. It is all Your work and I will gladly do it. My cry is, “Here am I, send me, before I know where I am to go, or what I am to do! If I am but fitted for Your service, Lord, send me.” Oh, that we all had more and more of this spirit!

Beside the Divine appointment of the man and the Divine appointment of the burden for him to bear, there was also the Divine appointment of the time of each man’s service. These Gershonites were to be numbered “from thirty years old and upward until fifty years old.” I am not going to say to any of you, “Wait till you are 30 years of age before you begin to serve the Lord.” No, no, no! Let us hope you can do a great deal of good work long before you are thirty, and long after you are fifty! But this is the lesson for you—you have only to carry your burden for a certain length of time. The God who appointed you to bear it also determined when you were to begin to bear it, and when you are to leave off bearing it! When God says you are only to have 10 troubles, the devil cannot make 11 of them and you cannot reduce them to nine. Every particle of bitterness that is to go into your cup is dropped with all the care of a qualified dispenser—and there will not be one drop more of bitterness in your cup than the Lord knew was necessary to make the medicine just what it should be. I delight in this Truth of God, and I hope that you also do. It is an old-fashioned doctrine and this is an old-fashioned verse—

*“Though plagues and deaths around me fly, Till He bids, I cannot die!  
Not a single shaft can hit  
Till the God of love sees fit.”*

Everything is appointed and determined, not by blind fate, but by an allwise predestination! The wheels of Providence do not crush the Believer, for they are full of eyes so that as they revolve, they work our lasting good and never do us harm. I hope all the burden-bearers here will believe this blessed fact, that the Lord has appointed to all His burdenbearers the burdens they are to bear and the time they are to bear them.

III. Lastly, and but briefly, EACH BURDEN-BEARER MUST FEEL THE SACREDNESS OF HIS OFFICE.  
All these Gershonites, though only bearers of burdens, were ordained by God. There is a great deal of fuss made nowadays about “ordaining” a minister. I was never “ordained” by mortal men, for I did not believe in having their empty hands laid on my head. If they had, any of them, any spiritual gift to impart to me, I would have been glad to receive it, but, as they had nothing to give me, I could not accept it. I believe that every true Christian is ordained of God to his particular work and, in the strength of that Divine ordination, let him not bother his head about merely human forms and ceremonies, but just keep to his proper work and shoulder his own burden.  
But they were all to feel that this ordination by God made their service a very solemn thing. He who carried a pot, or a pair of snuffers, or a flesh-hook, was to feel that what he carried was sacred and that he was carrying it in the name of God and, therefore, that he was to do it in a solemn manner. So the first command to the burden-bearers was, “Be you clean.” They were to wash themselves and to wash their clothes. O Sirs, if you mean to be foul, go and serve the devil! If you want to behave dishonestly, or lewdly, or selfishly, or unkindly, be a servant of Satan, because you will not do him any discredit! But do not pretend to serve God with those dirty hands of yours! What have you to do with touching that which is “all of blue” when you are all black? What right have you to drink out of the holy vessels of the sanctuary when your lips are leprous with iniquity? This is the most horrible thing about the Church of God— that there should ever be in it unworthy men! I have thanked God for Judas Iscariot many and many a time. I am glad he got in among the Apostles because we would have given up all our church life if we had not seen that even with Christ for the Pastor, and with His 12 Apostles around Him, one of them was a devil! It will always be so, but, oh, I do beseech you who are burden-bearers for Christ, be you clean! Go again every day to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, and wash there, and may the great Master take the basin and the ewer, as He did for His disciples, and wash your feet, that you may be “clean every whit”!  
They were not only to be clean, but they were also to be very reverent in their service. It was not to be a kind of happy-go-lucky, hit-or-miss service—they must never lift up a corner of the covering to look curiously at anything that they carried—nor must they, even by their actions, seem to say, “We can carry these things anyway.” Oh, no, but there must be real reverence about all their service. One man must take one part and another, another, with many a prayer and a continual looking up to that God whose holy vessels they were to carry on the behalf of His people through the wilderness. God still desires to have reverent servants—may He deliver us from a flippant Christianity! Oh, that He would save us, not from holy mirth, but from the careless handling of Divine things! It is an awfully solemn thing to be a servant of the Lord of Hosts. Jacob said, “How dreadful (how awe-full) is this place! This is none other but the House of God, and this is the gate of Heaven.” He felt that the Presence of Jehovah was something that filled him with awe—and for us to stand before the God who is a consuming fire, is no subject for trifling.  
At the same time, although their service was to be reverent, they were always to be ready for it. They could never tell when they would have to take up their burdens and march. Sometimes at break of day the trumpet sounded, “Up, and away,” for the cloudy-fiery pillar was moving! At other times they may have been sitting at their noon meal and, as they looked up, they perceived that the pillar of cloud had begun to move, so, as soon as the priests had taken down the coverings, they must pick up their burdens and then, each man in his appointed place, the load was to be carried till the cloud stopped. The special thing for us to remember is that they were always to be ready. Our friends over at the Southwark fire station, some of whom are members of this Church, tell me that they are always ready to go off to any fire that may break out. I have asked them, “When are you off duty?” and they have replied, “Never. If we come to the Tabernacle, or go anywhere else, we are always to be on the watch for the signal that would tell us that a fire is raging. No matter what we are doing, at dead of night, or in the dawning of morning, eating our bread, or even if we are asleep, we must be up in a moment as soon as the call is given.”  
I have heard of a certain parson who was out hunting, one day, and someone said to him, “It does not look right for a servant of Christ to be wearing a red jacket like yours.” “Oh,” he said, “you see, I was off duty at the time.” But when is a Christian minister off duty? When is any Christian off duty? We are never off duty and we are to count it a high privilege that we are always to be ready, at the summons of our Master, to take up our burden and bear it wherever He pleases.  
Finally, they were to do it cheerfully. It is not recorded, in God’s Word that any one of these sons of Gershon ever complained that his load was too heavy. I do not even read that one of them said, “Look, Moses, I am a full-grown man, yet Ithamar has bid me carry only a tent-pin. I think I ought to be allowed, at the very least, to carry one of the boards of the tabernacle.” There is no record that any one of them ever talked like that. Their load was neither too heavy nor too light. In like manner, Brothers and Sisters, let us drop into our proper places. He who has redeemed us with His precious blood and made us to be the first-born among men, calls us to this service or to that. It is not our place to reason why, or to make reply, but to obey our Master’s orders at once—and to do for Him anything, great or small—which He may command us.  
I greatly fear that some of you are not the servants of my Master. Then you are serving another lord and his burdens, though they may seem little or nothing to you now, will grow, and grow, and grow, and grow until they sink you into the bottomless Pit forever! Have you never heard of the man who served a tyrant master? The tyrant called at the man’s smithy and said to him, “Make me a chain. Find your own iron and out of it make a chain for me.” “How long shall I make it, your majesty?” “Make it as long as you like and keep on at it till I come here again.” He worked for 12 months and forged a long, long chain. When the tyrant came, he gave him nothing for what he had done, but he said, “Make it as long again.” So the poor man had to go on hammering away at the chain. And when he had finished it, what do you think was the payment he received? The tyrant said, “Bind him, hand and foot, with this chain, and hurl him down into the abyss, bound by the very chain that he has, himself, forged.” That is what the black prince of Hell will do with you who serve him! Therefore, flee from him while you may.  
“I will think about it,” says one. You will never get away from him if you act like that. The only way to escape from the devil is to run away from him without giving him any notice. Just as you are, at this moment, escape for your lives! Look not behind you, for the only hope for you is to flee at once from the wrath to come. Do as the prodigal son did—say, “I will arise and go to my father.” And then, like he, rise up at once and go! He who deliberates about such a matter as this is lost. It is now or never with you! “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” The Lord help us all to escape, this very hour, for His dear Son’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **NUMBERS 8:5-22.**

Verses 5, 6. And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying, Take the Levites from among the children of Israel and cleanse then. These men were to be the servants of God. They are the type of God’s elect—a people set apart unto Divine service, to be zealous for good works. “Take the Levites from among the children of Israel and cleanse them.” That is just the way that God the Holy Spirit takes Christians out of the mass of mankind and cleanses them.

7, 8. And thus shall you do unto them, to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purification upon them, and let then shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean. Then let them take a young bullock with his grain offering, even fine flour mingled with oil, and another young bullock shall you take for a sin offering. There are still, typically, these three things in the cleansing of God’s people—the blood, the water and the razor. There is blood, the emblem of the putting away of sin by Christ’s atoning Sacrifice. The water, typical of the Holy Spirit, by whom the power of sin is overcome. And then that razor, cutting off that which grows of the flesh—that which was their beauty and their glory is all taken away from them. There are some of God’s people who have not felt much of that razor, but if they are to serve God perfectly, it must be used. “Let them shave all their flesh.

9-12. And you shall bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation and you shall gather the whole congregation of the children of Israel together: and you shall bring the Levites before the LORD: and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites: and Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD for an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the LORD. And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks: and you shall offer the one for a sin of offering, and the other for a burnt offering, unto the LORD, to make an atonement for the Levites. There is no true way of serving God without the Atonement. Leave that out and you have left out the vital part of the whole. What service can we render to the Most High if we begin by disloyalty to Him whom God has set forth to be the Propitiation for sin, even His dear Son?

13, 14. And you shall stand the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer them for an offering unto the LORD. Thus shall you separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine. We are to offer up to God our spirit, soul and body, which is our reasonable service. And if we are, indeed, God’s children, we are to feel that, henceforth, we are not our own, for we are bought with a price. We belong wholly to God—all that we are and all that we have is to be His through life and in death—and throughout eternity.

15. And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: and you shall cleanse them, and offer them for an offering. An offering must be presented for us before we can offer ourselves as an offering unto God.

16. For they are wholly given unto Me from among the children of Israel. Listen to this, you who trust that you are made like unto the elder Brother and the First-Born from among the creatures of God—

16-18. Instead of such as open every womb, even instead of the firstborn of all the children of Israel, have I taken them unto Me. For all the first-born of the children of Israel are Mine, both man and beast: on the day that I struck every first-born in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for Myself. And I have taken the Levites for all the first-born of the children of Israel. God’s people are the elect—they have escaped from death. In that day when the sword of the Lord was drawn, they were shielded by the blood of the lamb sprinkled on the lintel and on the two side posts and, henceforth, because they have been thus preserved, they belong to the Lord.

19-22. And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make an atonement for the children of Israel: that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come near unto the sanctuary. And Moses, and Aaron, and all the congregation of the children of Israel, did to the Levites according unto all that the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did the children of Israel unto them. And the Levites were purified, and they washed their clothes; and Aaron offered them as an offering before the LORD, and Aaron made an atonement for them to cleanse them. And after that went the Levites in to do their service in the tabernacle of the congregation before Aaron, and before his sons: as the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did they unto them. How instructive all this is to us! We are not to begin blunderingly to serve God while we are yet in our sins—before we have been sprinkled with the blood—before we have been washed in the water which flowed with the blood—before we have felt that razor that takes away from us all our own pride and glory! No, but when all that is done, then there is to be no delay—“After that went the Levites in to do their service.”

—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 #1457B Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE NUMBERED PEOPLE  
1457B

WRITTEN AT MENTONE,  
BY C. H. SPURGEON.

**“According to the commandment of the Lord they were numbered by the hand of Moses, everyone according to his service and according to his burden: thus  
were they numbered by him, as the Lord commanded Moses.” Numbers 4:49.**

ISRAEL in the wilderness is admitted, in some respects, to have been a type of the Church in its present condition. The tribe of Levi was, in a peculiar and inner sense, the type of that peculiar people who under the great High Priest are set apart for the service of the Lord and His Church. To them the transport of the holy vessels from place to place was committed, each family of the tribe being made responsible for the safe and reverent transport of a certain part of the sacred furniture. Since nothing in the service of the God of order may be left to hazard, but everything is in order, those persons who in hackneyed phrase cry out against, “system,” ought to be told that the Lord has always had a system, not only in Nature and Providence, but also in His own courts.

There is an admirable “economy” in the palace of the great King— whatever of disorder, waste and riot there may be surrounding other monarchs—nothing of the kind will be found beneath the shadow of the Divine Throne. He who counts the stars and calls them all by their names, leaves nothing unarranged in His own service. His Church, therefore, should exhibit the discipline of an army and all His warriors should know how to keep rank. Though we are not under the Law, we are not without Law to Christ, nor do we wish to be, for His commandments are not grievous. At this season, when our Church is making a most earnest effort to glorify the Lord by seeking conversions, we would muster all the servants of our Master and summon each one to take his appointed place and service.

The work of the Lord is to be done, done well and done by us all most cheerfully and heartily. Gather, therefore, together and let each redeemed one take up his burden and bear it before the Lord in due order! To this end, like Moses, we would call you out, one by one, and give you a charge as from the Lord. Our text contains authority for the muster roll, appointment for the individuals and account of the actual execution of the command. Upon each of these, an absent officer of your company will try to say a little as the Holy Spirit may enable him.

I. Here is, first, AUTHORITY FOR THE MUSTER ROLL. “According to the commandment of the Lord they were numbered.” It was not left to Moses to number the people without Divine sanction, else the deed might have been as evil in the sight of the Lord as that of David when he made a census of the nation. Neither may any man at this day number the saints of the Lord, at his own discretion, to enterprises for which they were never set apart. The armies of Israel are none of ours to lead where we will, nor even to reckon up that the number may be told to our own honor. The

counting of Apostles and disciples is lawful enough, for it was frequently done in the best days of the Church, but statistics may be taken in such a spirit as to be the occasion of sin.

In no such manner would we now number the host unto the battle, but would summon the chosen of the Lord to the Lord’s work and in the Lord’s name. Believers in Christ Jesus, you are now called forth to do suit and service, because, like the tribe of Levi, you are the Lord’s. He views you as the Church of the firstborn, as the redeemed from among men and as His peculiar portion and inheritance and, therefore above all other men you are under His special rule and governance. The Lord said unto Moses, “The Levites shall be Mine: I am the Lord,” and He has made the same declaration concerning all those that fear the Lord and that think upon His name—“They shall be Mine, says the Lord, in the day when I make up My jewels.”

Upon whom shall we call to perform the work of the Lord but upon those who are His own? To these belong a devout care for the interest of true religion and an earnest zeal for the Glory of God. Obligations as powerful as they are, are honorable upon them. “You are not your own, you are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” Do you feel a shrinking from being numbered and called out for active service? Is not this an evil and unworthy sensation? Should you not far rather account it your glory to be called out with the dedicated ones?

Brothers and Sisters, you are further called because this is a charge laid upon you of the Lord, to whom you specially belong. The Levites (Num. 4:3) were ordained “to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation.” They were not numbered with the rest of the nation, for their vocation was altogether different and their whole business was “about holy things.” You see in this, your calling, Brethren, for you are also ordained that you may live unto the Lord alone. To whom does the work of God belong but to His children? Who should serve the Lord Christ and gather in His wanderers but those whom He has called to that office? If you refuse the honorable yoke, how will the work of mercy be done? Can it be left to hirelings, or will the spiritually dead perform the service of the living God? No, it is your charge and you must do it.

Again, Brethren, the Lord may well call you to this service, seeing He has given you to His Son, even as He gave the Levites to Aaron, as it is written (Num. 3:9), “They are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel.” The Lord had also said, “Bring the tribe of Levi near and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him.” They were happy, thus, to serve the head of their own tribe and more happy, still, are we to serve the Lord Christ who is the Firstborn among many Brethren. Because you belong to Christ, therefore, hide not yourselves from His service, but come forward with joy!

Once more, the Lord has constituted you the servants of all His people, even as He said of the Levites that they were to “do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation.” We are debtors to all our Brethren and we are their servants to the full extent of our power. The greater we are in the Church, the more are we the servants of all! It is ours to fulfill this service, or else we are untrue to the position of Christians who are all called in love to serve one another. Here are a few of the claims which the Lord has upon you—will you not acknowledge the supreme authority which calls you to active service?

II. Under our second head we shall notice the APPOINTMENT OF THE INDIVIDUALS—“Everyone according to his service and according to his burden.” By our varied gifts, positions, offices and opportunities, we are as much set apart to special services as were the sons of Kohath, Gershon and Merari. One family bore the ark and the other the holy vessels; another had charge of the sacred hangings and a third carried the boards and the pillars and framework of the tabernacle. But supreme authority had set each family its own special service and burden. Even thus is it among ourselves and so let us see to it that we observe the Divine appointment.

“Having, then, gifts differing according to the Grace that is given to us, whether ministry let us wait on our ministry, or he that teaches, on teaching; or he that exhorts, on exhortation: he that gives, let him do it with simplicity. He that rules, with diligence; he that shows mercy, with cheerfulness.” Great evils arise out of persons mistaking their calling and undertaking things of which they are not capable. And, on the other hand, the success of Christian work, in a large measure, arises out of places of usefulness being filled by the right men. In the march through the wilderness the sons of Merari never interfered with the burdens of the sons of Kohath, or the arrangements would have been sadly disturbed—each one took up his allotted load and went on his way rejoicing, no one jostling his fellow.

If we could bring all our workers into the same order, how like an army with banners would the Church become and how beautiful would be her battle array! “A place for everyone and every one in his place” should be the practical slogan of our congregations and the people should be numbered, not according to worldly rank or self-estimate, but, “everyone according to his service.” It is to be noticed, here, that the Levites only rendered this service, “from thirty years old and upward, even unto fifty years old.”

We rejoice that it is not so among us under the Gospel, for there is work for the young people and also for the aged! Little children and young men and maidens may take their places among the servitors of the Prince of Peace! And he who leans upon his staff for very age shall not find himself dismissed from his Master’s beloved service. No women are mentioned as bearers of the tabernacle and its holy furniture. It was a work for which they were scarcely fitted and an economy under which they were seldom employed. Here, too, we have a great change, for there is neither male nor female in Christ Jesus—and in their own way, the Sisters are our fellow servants, even as they are our fellow heirs. Never can women be forgotten in any enumeration of the forces of the Church! What could we do without them?

Let it not be forgotten, then, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Head of the Church, calls out all His redeemed to His service and that He lays upon each one a burden which no one else can carry. It should be the joy of each Believer to know what it is that his shoulders are permitted to bear and then he or she should gladly take up the ennobling load. There

can be no exemption unless a man will dare to claim that he is his own and was never bought with a price. Each one throughout life must be “steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

III. Thirdly, our text is the summary of the chapter in which we have an ACCOUNT OF THE ACTUAL FULFILLMENT OF THE LORD’S COMMAND BY MOSES. He numbered each family and cast up the total of the tribe, at the same time mentioning in detail the peculiar service of each. We would imitate him at this important moment and take the census of those who are consecrated to the Lord’s own service. Where are you, then, who can bear the heavier service of the sanctuary, carrying its pillars and the boards and the sockets? You are now needed to speak in the meetings, to lead the people in prayer, to order the assemblies and to take the heavier work of this holy business!

The Lord Jesus should have able men to speak for Him—He deserves the best of the best. Now is the hour, where is the man? Let no diffidence or love of ease keep one back who might make known the Gospel and win a soul for Jesus! By the curse of Meroz when they came not to the help of the Lord against the mighty, we would charge all Christians of influence and ability to hasten to the field! But where are you who can only carry the pins and the cords? Your burden is lighter, but probably your strength is also less—and lighter though your load may be, the matters which you carry are quite as essential as the pillars and the boards! Where are you?

You who can say a few words to lonely enquiring ones; you who can do no more than pray, where are you? At your posts, or idling? Answer and answer quickly, for time and need are pressing! If the load which you can carry is so very small, be all the more ready to bear it. Are you a lover of the Lord Jesus and do you wish to be omitted from the roll call? If so, let it be known to yourself and stated plainly to your conscience—do not pretend to be a laborer and remain a loiterer—but openly avow to your soul that you stand all the day idle and feel fully justified in so doing! Deny your Lord His due, but do it to His face! Tell Him openly that you do not mean to spend your days in glorifying His name!

Do you shrink from this honest refusal of service? You need not do so because it is at all unusual, for as Nabal said, “there are many servants, nowadays, that break away, every man from his master.” It is plain, however, that you have no stomach for so clear a rejection of your Lord. Come, then, and take your place among those who are striving together to honor their Lord! At this time your help will be precious. Seek a new anointing and then hasten to the work. Is not the Holy Spirit in you? Does He not prompt you to seek the salvation of others? Is not the Lord Jesus the Model to which Grace conforms you? How can this be if you have little or no love for the souls of your neighbors?

Your pastor calls you, though far away! By all our mutual love he beseeches you to fulfill your ministry, every one according to his service and according to his burden. But, far above this, your God, your Savior, your Comforter call you with one voice! Can you refuse the heavenly vocation?

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THE BLESSING OF THE HIGH PRIEST  
NO. 2170

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 26, 1890, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons saying, On this wise you shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless you, and keep you: the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you: the Lord lift up His Countenance upon you, and give you peace. And they shall put My name upon the**

**children of Israel; and I will bless them.”  
Numbers 6:22-27.**

THE Lord has blessed His people and He would have them know it. He has blessed them with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus—and it is His wish that they should experience the fullness of this blessing. Are any of the Lord’s people without a sense of His blessing? It is not the will of God that you should continue in this low condition! If you are cast down, He has said to His Prophets, “Comfort you, comfort you My people. Speak you comfortably to Jerusalem.” Have you sinned and wandered into the darkness? The Lord bids you return and encourages you to pray, “Turn us again, O God, and cause Your face to shine and we shall be saved.” The happy God would have you happy in the enjoyment of His blessing.

To bring this blessing constantly to the remembrance of His chosen, the Lord appointed a representative of Himself who should publicly pronounce His blessing upon the people. He chose Aaron and He bade Moses instruct him. Aaron was not only to offer sacrifice and to make intercession, but he was to take a higher stand and bestow blessings, in the name of God, upon the assembled people. Those who are old may fitly pronounce a blessing upon their children, as Jacob did upon his 12 sons. And the minister of Christ may, in God’s name, pronounce a benediction upon the people. This was the custom in early times—the congregation was dismissed with the gracious words—“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.”

Our God has appointed One above all others to bless His people, even our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the antitype of Aaron and his sons and in the exercise of His high office continually blesses His people. He began His ministry with the Sermon on the Mount and the word, “Blessed.” His whole life was a stream of blessing, for “He went about doing good.” When He rose to Heaven, having completed His ministry, it was as “He lifted up His hands and blessed them.” He “shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven,” bringing blessings with Him, even gifts for men. In the name of the triune God, the

Lord Jesus, from the highest Glory, effectually blesses us today. Let not your hearts be troubled as though you were beneath the storm  
cloud of the curse. Know you not that the curse is altogether turned away  
from us, for He was “made a curse for us”? The blessing, alone, remains  
and Jesus Himself remains to repeat it. Remember with solemn awe and  
heart-searching that this blessing was for the children of Israel and for  
them, only. Aaron was not appointed to bless the nations who were without God, but to bless the children of Israel. The great blessing which our  
Lord Jesus Christ pronounces is for His people, even for those to whom  
He gives eternal life.  
Ask yourselves whether you are Believers, as Jacob was. Are you pleaders with God, as Jacob was? It was through his triumphant wrestling with  
God that he won the princely name of Israel—have you ever prevailed in  
prayer? If so, though you may feel very feeble and halt as you come from  
the scene of conflict, yet to you, even to you, as being spiritually of the  
seed of Israel, the Lord Christ, the “High Priest of our profession,” has  
given the blessing. But if any man loves not the Lord Jesus Christ there is  
no blessing for him since that awful text thunders at him—“Let him be  
Anathema Maranatha”—accursed at His coming. The Lord grant that such  
a curse may lie on none of us, but may we, as we hear the priestly benediction, be able by faith to receive it as our own!  
In handling my text, I shall first dwell for a few minutes upon the general character of this benediction. Much is to be gathered here. Secondly,  
we shall review the blessing itself, weighing its three clauses and gathering  
instruction from each word. Thirdly, we will hearken to the Divine amen,  
which is at the close of it—“And they shall put My name upon the children  
of Israel; and I will bless them.” May the Holy Spirit aid us in this meditation!  
I. First, then, consider THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF THIS BLESSING. It was a blessing, in the first place, given through a priest. Not every  
man might take upon himself to bless the people. It was Aaron—God’s  
high priest, who offered sacrifice for the people—who was called to bless  
the tribes. The hands which had been stained with the blood of the victim  
were outstretched in blessing. Once in the year the Lord’s high priest went  
in unto God for the people, not without blood, and when his solemn duties within the veil had been duly done, he came forth and put on those  
glorious garments which for a while he had laid aside—and he blessed the  
people as he was authorized to do.  
From which I gather that we can get no blessing from God except  
through the priesthood of Christ. There must be the Sacrifice and the  
sprinkling of the blood before the music of the blessing can sound in our  
ears. God bestows all spiritual blessings upon us in and through the Lord  
Jesus who died for us and is ordained to be the one Mediator between  
God and man. Christ, as the great High Priest who offered Himself without  
spot unto God, is the Divine channel of blessing. Do we know the Lord’s Anointed? Are we resting in the Sacrifice which He has presented, even  
His own blood? Without Christ no blessing can come to us.  
O my Hearers, do not remain without the precious blood, if that is your  
present condition, but may the good Spirit of God lead you to hear the  
voice of love which cries, “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the  
sin of the world”! Jesus says, “No man comes unto the Father, but by Me.”  
You cannot know the Father as a God of infinite blessedness except  
through the Son, who is the Priest with the one effectual Sacrifice. It is a  
priestly benediction, sealed with sacrificial blood—and it can only be bestowed by the hand of our glorious Priest.  
Next, this benediction is of the nature of intercession. There lies within  
these words a prayer. “The Lord bless you, and keep you” is the cry of the  
man of God to Jehovah that He would bless and keep His people. The  
priest’s office was to make intercession for the people and we have in our  
Lord Jesus a High Priest who pleads evermore for His chosen. We have a  
High Priest through whom all that come to God will be accepted, “seeing  
He ever lives to make intercession for them.” Never forget that “He made  
intercession for the transgressors.”  
He has, moreover, a special pleading for Believers. Concerning them  
there is a peculiar exercise of intercession, for He says, “I pray for them: I  
pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me.” The high  
priest had a peculiar office in reference to the seed of Israel and our Lord  
makes special intercession for His saints. He is exercising that office now.  
How much we owe to His intercession no tongue can tell. Try to learn a little of it from these words, “Simon, Simon, Satan has desired to have you,  
that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for you, that your faith  
fail not.” “I have prayed for you”—here is our safety!  
Believe, my Brothers and Sisters, that our Lord has prayed for us, is  
praying for us still! With His quick eye of love He has perceived our danger  
long before we have dreamed of it. And with His eloquent tongue of earnestness He has pleaded the causes of our soul at the Throne of Grace before we were aware of our peril. “Your Father knows what things you have  
need of, before you ask Him,” and even so your heavenly High Priest perceives what you have need of, and asks for it long before you think of presenting such a petition! Blessed be the name of Him who is the Advocate  
with the Father on our behalf!—  
*“He ever lives to intercede  
Before His Father’s face:  
Give Him, my Soul, your cause to plead,  
Nor doubt the Father’s Grace.”*  
But next, this benediction is yet of a higher order than intercession.  
Every man in the camp might have prayed, “The Lord bless and keep His  
people and lift up His Countenance upon them.” But no man in all the  
camp would have dared to say, in the same authoritative style as Aaron  
did—“The Lord bless you, and keep you: the Lord make His face shine  
upon you, and be gracious unto you: the Lord lift up His Countenance  
upon you, and give you peace.” Here is not only faith pleading, but faith receiving and bestowing! “Without doubt,” says Paul, “the less is blessed of the greater” and thus Aaron was greater than the people, being set apart to a high and honorable office into which none else might intrude. He was God’s representative and so he spoke with the authority of his of  
fice.  
Today our Savior’s intercession in the heavenly places rises far higher  
in power and glory than that of any ordinary intercessor. He blesses in  
fact, while the greatest saints on earth and in Heaven can only bless in  
desire—  
*“With cries and tears He offered up  
His humble suit below;  
But with authority He asks  
Enthroned in Glory now.”*  
This benediction wears the form of a fiat as well as of a prayer. The Priest  
here speaks the blessing for which He asks. Turning to the Father, our  
Lord Jesus cries, “Father, keep through Your own name those whom You  
have given Me.” Turning to us He says, “The Lord bless you, and keep  
you.” What He prays for of God He distributes among men by an authority  
vested in Him by the Father. “For it pleased the Father that in Him should  
all fullness dwell.” My heart delights to think of the Lord Jesus Christ at  
this hour, not as a Gethsemane pleader with groans, agony and bloody  
sweat—but as One who has finished His work and who now reigns in the  
Glory of the Father, having all power in Heaven and in earth! He sends  
the blessing to those to whom it comes. His prayer is so infinitely effectual  
that He practically gives the blessing Himself. Has He not said, “If you  
shall ask anything in My name, I will do it”?  
Notice, in the next place, that this blessing is sure. Aaron did not bless  
the people of his own will. He did not utter good words of his own composing—but there went forth a Divine power which made the form of blessing  
to be a blessing, indeed. There was power in the priestly benediction!  
First, because Aaron was appointed by God Himself to bless the people—  
and when he pronounced the benediction over the assembled multitude it  
was not Aaron’s blessing, but the blessing of Jehovah who had sent him!  
The God who set him apart to bless the people in the Divine name was, by  
that very act and deed, engaged to make good His servant’s words. Even so our blessed High Priest took not this office upon Himself, but  
He was called to it and His call is abundantly certified, “For Him has God  
the Father sealed.” What our Lord says must stand, for He is commissioned of the Father and anointed of the Spirit as the Ambassador of  
Peace. God is in Christ Jesus and the Godhead stands at the back of  
every word of mercy, every syllable of blessing which is uttered by the  
ever-blessed Son. I delight to think of my Lord as no amateur intercessor,  
taking up a work on His own responsibility without heavenly sanction—  
but He was appointed before all worlds to bless us and God will confirm  
every benediction which His Son pronounces upon us.  
But there is another reason for being certain that the benediction is  
sure to all the seed. Not only was the person chosen to bless the people, but the very words which he should use were put into his mouth. “On this wise you shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them.” Here we have a fixed form of benediction to which Aaron was to restrict himself. Forms of prayer are not in themselves sinful—in some instances forms are given in the Word of God, as in the Book of Psalms and elsewhere. Free prayer is most useful and it will ordinarily consort best with the movements of the free Spirit. But in the case of a benediction it is well that it  
was dictated to the man of God.  
The children of Israel might miss a blessing through the ignorance, or  
forgetfulness, or unbelief of Aaron—and therefore it was not left to him—  
he had to learn by heart each word and sentence. In this wise, and in no  
other, was he to bless the people. I like this, for if God Himself puts the  
very words into the mouth of His priest, then they are God’s Words. God  
Himself arranged the three wonderful stanzas of blessing and commanded  
Aaron to say so much and no more. Not according to his own mind, or  
wish, or tenderness, or narrowness does Aaron bless—but according to  
God’s own mind must the fixed and predetermined benediction be given  
forth. Blessed be the name of God, the benediction is thus assured to us,  
for the words are His own!  
Even so the Lord has put into the Savior’s mouth the words of blessing  
for us. Jesus said, “I speak not My own words, but the words of Him that  
sent Me.” Every glorious proclamation of Divine Grace from the mouth of  
our Lord Jesus is a word given Him by the great God Himself! How our  
souls delight in this! I have heard people talk about the limitation of  
Christ’s Nature while He was here and I fear their next step will be Socinianism. Beloved, every word that our Lord Jesus uttered was Infallible!  
He fell into no errors of any sort. If He did err and you find it out, it is  
clear that you know more than your Master—and that sounds very much  
like blasphemy. Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God—in the  
wisdom of God there can be no mistake—and in the power of God not one  
word shall fall to the ground.  
Therefore, Beloved, concerning this blessing and every other that you  
find in God’s Word, be certain that it is true. Rest in quiet assurance, for if  
God Himself has appointed the Priest to bless and has given the very  
words which He is to utter, the Lord would compromise His own honor  
and glory if He were to run back from them. God Himself in Christ Jesus  
declares that He will bless His people! Yes, and they shall be blessed!  
While dwelling upon the form of this benediction, observe that it was to be  
continued. It was not dependent upon the life of one man, for Moses was  
to speak unto Aaron “and to his sons.” Aaron could not continue forever  
by reason of death—in due time he must be stripped of his official garments and die like the rest of men. But then his son came in his place  
and the perpetual oblation and benediction were maintained. The blessing was not to cease from generation to generation. This was  
always to be one of the glorious offices of the high priest—that he should  
bless the people. Here I would dwell with pleasure upon my subject—the  
blessing of the Lord our God was upon His ancient people, but it is also upon us on whom the ends of the world are come! That blessing fell upon us in the beginning, when we were converted, and it has never ceased! The blessing of the Lord falls on us now as a refreshing dew, or as the golden rain when the corn is springing. The saints are forever the blessed  
of the Lord. He blesses us today.  
There was a day when you felt very near to the Lord your God and you  
remember the Hermons and the Hill Mizars with regretful fondness. You  
enjoyed the Divine blessing more, that day, than perhaps you do this  
morning. But, in very truth, the blessing is always the same. The sun’s  
light is always the same—only our mists and fogs come in to hide his face.  
Our great Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, shines  
evermore with fullness of favor upon His people, but our doubts and fears,  
our worldliness and sin come in like mists and hide His brightness. God  
towards His people is of one mind and who can turn Him? He blesses  
ever—He curses never. You can never say of the Lord that towards His  
chosen, “out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing.” No bitter  
waters are intermixed with the sweet streams of His Grace.  
I would add that this blessing came frequently. We do not know how often Aaron uttered this blessing upon the people. In this passage it is left  
without any determination as to times and seasons. It is something like  
our Savior’s Memorial Feast—we are nowhere told when and how often we  
are to celebrate the Supper of the Lord. Although it seems to me to have  
been the practice in Apostolic times to break bread on the first day of the  
week, there is no law laid down. It is put thus—“This do you, as oft as you  
drink it, in remembrance of Me.” So Aaron is not told that on such a day  
and at such an hour he shall bless the people—but he may do as his  
heart dictates.  
On the Day of Atonement, when the high priest came out from the secret place, he put on his robes of beauty and blessed the people. I do not  
find that he was commanded to do so every day, but the Jews say that  
Aaron always blessed the people after the offering of the morning sacrifice,  
when the lamb had been slain and consumed upon the altar. This was not  
repeated in the evening. Of this we know nothing beyond the tradition and  
I mention it mainly because the older divines were apt to say that Aaron  
gave a blessing in the morning, that is, in the first part of time, for then  
the ceremonial law stood, but that he can give no blessing in the evening,  
for now Christ Himself has come in the end of days and we have no need  
of a blessing from the Aaronic priesthood, seeing the great Melchizedek  
has come.  
There may be something in that tradition and there may be nothing—  
but this I know, that Aaron did often bless the people—and this is, to my  
mind, much comfort. The Lord Jesus is ready, still, to bless us. Have you  
few blessings? You limit them yourselves! You are not straitened in Him.  
You are straitened in yourself. There is for you a blessing every morning—  
seek it when you wake. There is for you a blessing every evening—rest not  
till you feel it. There is a blessing for you at midnight when you keep the watches wearily. And there is a blessing for you at midday when you bear  
the noontide heat of care and toil.  
“Your blessing is upon Your people.” That is to say, it is always upon  
them! Our great High Priest does not now and then, bless the people—  
from His lips Divine Grace distils as dew and drops as rain, without ceasing. Our Lord is always blessing and we are always blessed! Oh, for Grace  
to know this and to glorify the God of our blessings!  
II. We will now consider THE BLESSING ITSELF. Oh, for renewed help  
from the Holy Spirit! Notice, carefully, that this benediction passes from  
the priest to God. It is not, “I, Aaron, ordained of God, bless you and like a  
shepherd I will keep you and smile upon you and give you peace.” Oh, no!  
The blessing falls from Aaron’s lips, but it comes originally from the Lord’s  
heart and hand! It runs thus—“The Lord bless you, and keep you: the Lord  
make His face shine upon you: the Lord lift up His Countenance upon  
you, and give you peace.”  
Every blessing must come directly from God! What an honor was put  
on Aaron, to be made the mouthpiece of God! What an honor is put upon  
the preacher when he becomes the instrument, in God’s hand, for cheering His people! What an honor is put upon you, when

in talking with your  
children, or with your friends, you are privileged to be as a golden conduit  
through which the holy oil of salvation flows to them! I pray you, seek  
much of this honor! Put yourselves in God’s way, that you may be vessels  
for His use. Ask Him to give you Grace to seize upon every opportunity to  
speak what He would have you say.  
But, I pray you, never rest in the blessing of a man. No, if you were  
sure that such a man were sent of God and he should, with all earnestness, invoke the best blessing upon you, be not content with the man, but  
press on to the Master. Seek to have blessings first-hand from Heaven.  
Covet a good man’s blessing and count it a treasure—but value it only because God speaks through the man. This fact makes the blessing exceedingly precious. “THE LORD bless you.” What a blessing the Lord gives!  
Have we not heard a mother say to her little child, “Bless you”? What a  
wealth of meaning she threw into it!  
But when God says, “Bless you!” there are Infinity and Immutability in  
it! There can be no limit to the goodwill of the Infinite God. Our gifts are  
like a handful of pence. God’s gifts are so rich that I dare not liken them  
even to silver or gold. When Jehovah blesses, it is after the manner of His  
sovereign Almightiness. His benediction sheds joy and glory over our entire manhood. “The Lord bless you”—what an ocean of blessedness is in it!  
“And keep you”—what safe keeping is that! “The Lord make His face to  
shine upon you”—what a shine is that! “And be gracious unto you”—what  
Grace is that!—the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. “The Lord lift up His  
Countenance upon you”—oh, to be countenanced of God! What fellowship  
that means! “And give you peace.” What a peace is that which God gives—  
the peace of God which passes all understanding!  
It behooves us to interpret the words of our text in the largest possible  
manner and to look upon them as being not only waters up to the knees, but waters to swim in! Here we may cry, “Oh, the depth!” The Lord blesses His people “according to the riches of His glory by Christ Jesus.” Do you know what His riches are? Can you measure the estate of God? Can you imagine what the riches of His Grace must be? Here you have the riches of His Glory—yes, and the greatest riches of His Glory—by Christ Jesus! The Lord blesses you according to His riches in Glory by Christ Je  
sus—what can be more? Dwell on that—I say no more.  
I call your special attention, in looking over this benediction, to the fact  
that the name of THE LORD, or Jehovah, is mentioned three times. “Jehovah bless you, and keep you: Jehovah make His face shine upon you, and  
be gracious unto you: Jehovah lift up His Countenance upon you, and  
give you peace.” It is the remark of scholars that each one of these names  
bears a different mark in the original Hebrew. I will not say that this  
teaches the doctrine of the Trinity, but I must say that, believing the doctrine of the Trinity, I understand the passage all the better. The shadow of  
the Triune God is on the sacred benediction in the name thrice repeated. Yet is the Lord but One, for He says—“I will bless you.” Here we hear  
the voice of One, yet Three! We sang, this morning, a hymn beginning,  
“Holy, holy, holy,” for thus the heavenly worshippers salute the Divine  
Majesty. They cry, “Holy, holy, holy,” three times. Why not twice? Why not  
four times? Why not seven times? For this last there might be a reason  
since seven is the number of perfection. Threefold expressions are most  
frequent in Holy Scripture and what can this mean, but that the Lord who  
is one God forever and ever is also threefold in His existence and manifestation? We are to speak of Him as, “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty”—and we may pronounce the blessing upon the people in the  
name of Jehovah Father, Son and Holy Spirit, still knowing that there is  
but One who has solemnly said at the close of the blessing, “They shall  
put My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them.” Let the  
sacredness of that name and its being mentioned in this way confirm your  
belief of the inscrutable mystery of the Three in One.  
What is this benediction, now before us, but an early form of the benediction used universally in the Church of Jesus Christ in all ages? “The  
Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the communion  
of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.” Taking the three sentences in  
the light now cast upon them, the first sentence, “The Lord bless you and  
keep you,” may be regarded as the benediction of the Father. It is the preservation of love. It is God who has up to now kept you from falling. We are  
“kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.” “He will keep the  
feet of His saints.” “He that keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.” To the Father’s tender care I would, at this hour, commend each one of  
you—“The Lord bless you and keep you.” May He do this when you are in  
great temptation, that you yield not! May He keep you from your own evil  
heart of unbelief, that you turn not aside! Contending with a sinful world,  
may He keep you from its snares! Marching through a region full of seductions to error, may He keep you from quitting the Truth of God, even as  
He keeps His own elect! The Lord bless you with all good and keep you from all evil! They are well kept whom God keeps and none are kept be  
sides. There is no keeping like Divine keeping!  
He says, “I will be a wall of fire round about them.” And again, “He kept  
him as the apple of His eye.” And again, “I the Lord do keep it. I will water  
it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.” “The Lord is  
your keeper.” “The Lord shall preserve you from all evil: He shall preserve  
your soul.” We pray, “Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from the  
Evil One” and the prayer is directed to, “Our Father in Heaven.” I think  
you will find a depth of meaning in this first line of the holy hymn of  
blessing if you regard it as the benediction of the Father. Do not regard it  
so exclusively, for there is no clear line of demarcation—each of the three  
stanzas melts into the other two and the blessing is still one. The next clause is the benediction of the Son, or the joy of Divine  
Grace—“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.” “The Lord  
make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you”—this means the  
favor of God—may it be given to each one of you! You know where God’s  
face is. We read of “The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” He that  
has seen Jesus has seen the Father! When our Lord smiles on us, we see  
the face of God. That face is not veiled with frowns, but bright with  
smiles—a face full of love and favor, a face which was once turned away—  
but is now turned towards us in peace. “The Lord make His face shine  
upon you, and be gracious unto you.”  
Dearly Beloved, is there any Grace conceivable like the Grace of our  
Lord Jesus Christ? And is there any light conceivable like the shining of  
the love of God? A few moments ago the fog surrounded this place and we  
seemed as if we were descending into pitch darkness. But, in an instant,  
light poured in through yonder windows and there was an immediate  
change! And now the sun is shining upon us—a thing to be noted in this  
rarely sun-lit land. In this I see a symbol of the Grace of our Lord Jesus  
Christ. We come upon a period of gloom and deep depression and midnight lowers upon our day—and then a breath of the heavenly wind  
chases away the fog and the Sun of Righteousness rises and the scene is  
changed!  
Let us have the favor of God and all our troubles are less than nothing—  
*“In darkest shades if He appears  
My dawning is begun.”*  
May we always walk in the light, as God is in the light—but that must be  
through the shining of His face. Through Jesus Christ we may enjoy an  
eternal sunshine. Even in Heaven, “The Lamb is the light thereof.” There  
is no light for us except through Jesus Christ. May the Lord Jesus be gracious to you! He is full of Grace. To you that are in trouble today, may He  
be gracious with His consolations. To you that are fighting for Him, may  
He be gracious in covering your head in the day of battle. To you that labor, may He put underneath you the everlasting arms of Grace and so  
may you have Grace upon Grace and all the Graces that you need till you  
enter into Glory!  
Surely this second benediction is as full as it is brief. It is a box wherein all compacted sweets lie. Given the love of God the Father and the Grace of God the Son, our bliss runs high. The third blessing is surely that of the Holy Spirit. “The Lord lift up His Countenance upon you, and give you peace.” Here is the fellowship of peace. For God’s face to shine is one thing and a very precious thing—but for God to lift up His Countenance upon us is a still richer blessing! To feel that God is dealing graciously with me and shining upon me is very delicious—but to know that He approves me—that He supports me in my acts and is in fellowship  
with me—this is best of all.  
Oh, to think that, looking upon me, the Lord says, “Yes, My child, you  
are doing right. I support you in what you are doing.” This is joy! Every  
servant has seen her mistress’s face fall, but she is glad when the same  
face is lifted up upon her because she has done well and has given pleasure. I do pray that the Holy Spirit may approve all of you who work for the  
Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that you may say, “I have the approval of God.  
No one applauds me—I am obscure. Many criticize me and say that I am  
mistaken—others quibble and abuse. But, Lord, lift You up the light of  
Your Countenance upon me and it will more than suffice.” To be approved  
by God is better than being commended by princes!  
Then follow the words, “And give you peace”—for when a man knows  
that God approves him, then he enters into peace. Why should he fret  
when God smiles? What matters though all the world should censure if  
Jehovah approves His servant? A look of approval from God creates a  
deep, delightful calm within the soul. Brothers and Sisters, may the Holy  
Comforter work this peace in you all!  
But now, very briefly, notice that this benediction is all along in the singular. It is not, “The Lord bless you, and keep you,” but, “The Lord bless  
you, and keep you.” Why? Because the people of God are one and He  
views them as one—and so the blessing comes upon the entire Church as  
a whole. But, next, I think it is that every individual Believer may take the  
whole of this benediction home to himself. The high priest seems to say,  
not—“The Lord bless Ephraim and Manasseh, Judah and Benjamin,” but,  
as if he singled out each one of the assembly, he says, “The Lord bless  
you, and keep you.” Dear Brethren, I will not call you out by name, but I  
would say to each Brother and Sister, “The Lord bless you.” I cannot, my Sisters, name you in public though you serve the Lord so  
well, but I will speak to you individually and say, “The Lord bless you, and  
keep you; and make His face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you;  
and approve you, and give you peace.” The blessing is meant for the appropriation of each one. While it embraces the whole Church in one word,  
it yet distributes a full portion to each individual. We may each one take  
to himself the whole of this great benediction!  
III. More I might have said upon this Old Testament benediction, but  
time fails me and so I must conclude, by a word or two, in the third place,  
upon THE DIVINE AMEN. The Divine Amen is in the last verse—“And they  
shall put My name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.” Only two or three words will suffice. Here is the authority repeated, by way of confirmation of what has been said—“They shall put My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them.” The priest does his part and then the Lord makes the blessing effective. Christ is authorized of God to put the name of God upon His people. It is a delightful thing for the Lord to call us by our own name, as it is written, “I have called you by  
your name, you are Mine.”  
It is even more soul-enriching to have the Divine name put upon us so  
as to be called Sons of God, Joint Heirs with Jesus Christ. Herein is condescension on God’s part and honor and security for us! When the Lord’s  
name is named upon anything, He will guard His own dedicated things.  
The name of the Lord is a strong tower and within it we are safe. I think I  
see here a confirmation of those blessings which are pronounced by good  
men. “They shall put My name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless  
them.”  
I loved to have my grandfather’s blessing when I was preaching the  
Word in early days. He has now gone to Glory, but he blessed me and  
none can take away the name of God from me. Most of you will remember  
the blessings of good men who are now gone to Glory and God confirms  
those blessings. He allows His people, whom He has made priests and  
kings unto God, to put His name upon others and to pronounce blessings  
upon them. Their word shall stand and what they bind on earth shall be  
bound in Heaven. The blessing of your father and of your mother shall  
come upon you. The blessing of the angels of the Churches, whom the  
Lord holds as stars in His right hand, shall fall on faithful Believers and  
helpers as a dew from the Lord himself!  
And then comes, best of all, the blessing of our God most surely promised—“And I will bless them.” I will not attempt to preach from that little,  
great text—“I will bless them.” I could enlarge upon it by the month! “I will  
bless them”—they shall have their troubles—but I will bless them through  
their troubles. When they have earthly goods, I will bless them and make  
them real comforts. I will bless their basket and their store. If those  
earthly comforts are taken away, I will give them compensation a thousand-fold in Myself. I, who gave the mercies, will allow no one but Myself  
to take them away—and this shall only be done in love, that I may bless  
them still more!  
Brethren, the world may curse us, but if God blesses us, the curse will  
be as the whistling wind. Friends may become enemies, or may forget us,  
but if God blesses us, we can bear the wound. God blessed us when we  
were young. He kept us in the giddy paths of youth. He blessed us in our  
manhood and helped us when our family cares were upon us—and He will  
still sustain us now that we lean heavily on the staff and find the grasshopper to be a burden. He will bless us when sickness lays us low and  
when we come to die Jesus will bless us with dying Grace for dying moments—and hand us out our best things last.  
We shall wake up in the likeness of Christ and then we shall be satisfied with His blessing, being transformed into the image of Him by whom the blessing comes. The Judgment Day shall dawn, the earth shall pass away, but the Lord will bless us. God’s “wills” have eternal range. When God says, “I will,” all the devils in Hell cannot turn aside the blessing and all the ages of eternity cannot change the King’s word! “I will bless them.” How much He will bless them He does not say, but the great I AM who makes the promise blesses like a God! God Himself will bless His people, directly and personally. “I will bless them.” Here is absolute certainty based on the faithfulness of the Lord—here is endless mercy certified by  
the Divine Immutability.  
Do you whisper, “But the Lord sends us trials”? I answer, It is true.  
What son is he whom the Father chastens not? But in this is a Covenant  
blessing—for every twig of the rod shall bring forth to them the comfortable fruits of righteousness before many days are past. You do not need  
that I should say another word. Go home with this celestial music in your  
ears, “I will bless them.”  
But this blessed assurance does not belong to you all indiscriminately.  
We have no blessing for those who are not believers in the Lord Jesus  
Christ. O Sinners, God make you conscious that you are outside of the  
blessing and may that terrible fact create in you an aching heart and a  
longing soul which nothing can ever rest but the blessing of the Lord God! You that are resting in Jesus, hear these words which I have read you  
from the Inspired Book and may the Holy Spirit write them on your  
minds! Thus says Jehovah of His people, “I will bless them.” The Lord has  
caused His servants to bless us by the testimony of the Gospel and now  
He Himself blesses us by His Spirit. He will Himself bring His precious  
things to our door. He will Himself feast us at His table, yes, He will Himself become our food, our bread, and our water! Come, let us bless the  
Lord! Since He has so blessed us, let us heartily bless Him! We will wind  
up our meditation by singing—  
*“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow Praise Him all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, you heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost!”*

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Psalm 80; Numbers 6:22-27.**  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—152, 190, 433.

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TWO CHOICE BENEDICTIONS  
NO. 3371

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1913.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 26, 1867.

**“Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, on this wise you shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless you, and keep you: the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace. And they shall put My name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.”  
Numbers 6:23-27.**

**“The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.” 2 Corinthians 13:14.**

IT seemed to me that as this was the last of the Thursday evenings of the dying year and I should no more meet some of you who only come here on Thursday evenings during this year, it would be well for us to close the year as our Master closed His life on earth, with a benediction— and, oh, it will be a rich enjoyment in the year to come if, by God’s Grace, we shall be able to grasp and make our very own the precious things which are here presented to the whole redeemed family of the living God! I shall begin, therefore, first of all with—

I. THE AARONIC BLESSING.  
This was pronounced at the close of the public tabernacle service when the people were about to separate, the one from the others. It is said by the Rabbis to have been only spoken at the morning sacrifice, but not in the evening because, say some, the old faith of the few gave them the early blessing. But it remained for Christ to come in the eventide of the world, at the end of time, to give us the evening blessing, the blessing of the great, eternal, evening Sacrifice.  
It is worthy of notice that the word, Jehovah, which is put in capital letters in our English version, occurs three times—three blessings—and each time the word has a different accent in the original Hebrew. And the Rabbis, although they did not know the meaning of it, or pretended not to know, yet all agree that there is some significant mystery therein. The word would not be accented thus differently unless there were some different shade of meaning intended. I believe we have here the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. “The Lord bless you and keep you.” Is that the blessing of the Father? “The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you.” Is that the blessing of the Son? “The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.” Is that the blessing of the great forgiving Holy Spirit? I think it is very likely. At any rate, this threefold blessing from the Jehovah, whose name is mentioned three times, may direct our thoughts to the glorious Trinity, the Trinity in Unity, whom we cannot understand, but on whom our faith rests and in whom our love finds delight and repose!  
Let us look at these three blessings. “The Lord bless you and keep you.” When we bless God there is nothing more than well-saying and well-wishing. But when God blesses us, it is well-doing! We cannot bless God in the sense of giving to Him so as to add to His riches or to His Glory, for He is the infinitely great, the inconceivably glorious and nothing that we can do can add to Him. We can only bless Him by expressing our thanks to Him, paying to Him our reverent love. “The Lord lives, and blessed be my Rock.” “Blessed be the name of the Lord from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same.” But when God blesses us, I say, it is well-doing! He blesses us in our very creation and much more in our new creation. It is a blessed thing to be born, but a much more blessed thing to be born-again! He blesses us in our food—but much more in giving us Christ who is the Bread to keep alive and nourish our soul’s best life! We are blessed in being clothed, but infinitely more blessed in being wrapped about in the Righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ! It is a blessing to be a member of a kind, loving, happy family—but it is an unspeakable blessing to be a member of the family of Christ and adopted into the family of God!  
What a blessing it is, my Brothers and Sisters, to have sin pardoned, to have righteousness imputed, to have sanctification worked in us—in short, to enjoy all the privileges and benedictions of the New Covenant! Now, I think some of us can say, “God has blessed us, oh, how richly.” Blessed us sometimes when we did not perceive the blessing, for many of God’s mercies come, as it were, in at the back door of our house. We do not see the mercies, and when we do, we are too often ungrateful and forget them. What blessings we have received in trouble—in deliverance from trouble—in sustaining us in it! Oh, what blessings have we not had? Some of you, perhaps, have had very remarkable mercies during the year. Now, while the blessing is pronounced, “The Lord bless you,” let your reply be, “The Lord has blessed me!” This will encourage you to expect that He will continue to do the same. And what blessings, my dear Friends, may we hope will be in store for us during the coming year? Many troubles, I have no doubt, are in store for us. If we were to have a telescope here this evening and we could look through it and see the future, those would be very foolish who looked! He would be the wise man who said—  
*“This will set my heart at rest—  
What my God appoints is best.”*  
For if that telescope were here and you were trying to look through it, you would be sure to breathe on the glass with your hot breath—and in your anxiety you would see nothing but clouds and darkness—whereas, very likely, there would be nothing of the sort there. Leave that matter with your God! The future, though it may possibly have trial and trouble, will still be blessed if you are God’s servant. One thing there is of which you can be quite confident—He has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” Another thing will also be fulfilled, “As your days, so shall your strength be.” You are very poor, are you? Yet, at any rate, none can rob you of this assurance—“Your bread shall be given you: your water shall be sure.” If you are fearing many trials, this promise is your special fortifying—“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you: when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned: neither shall the flame kindle upon you.” You have God’s word for it, “Fear you not, for I am with you: be not dismayed, for I am your God.” If, during the next year, it is appointed unto you to die, you may still say, “Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.” “The Lord bless you.” As I say that to each Believer here, knowing that the Lord will so bless you, may your soul look forward, not with dread, but with hope! “The Lord bless you” was the wish of the priest under the old Law, and it is always the Nature of God to confirm what He bids His servants desire. “The Lord bless you.”  
Now, observe the blessing which is said to spring out of that, “The Lord bless you, and keep you.” And no small mercy it is to be kept by God! Where would we be if He did not keep us in a moral and spiritual point of view, yes, and in a natural point of view, too? It is God that keeps our lives from death and our bodies from perishing. Perhaps, during the past year, some of you have been kept when in storms at sea, or when you have been upon a railway, or when you have passed through places infected with disease. It is no small privilege to hear the Lord say, “He will 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.” The Lord has blessed us and kept us in that sense during the past year. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, what a privilege to be kept from falling into sin! He is ill-kept who is his own keeper! He is worse kept who has his brother for his keeper! But he is splendidly kept who has God to be his shield on his right hand, his glory and his defense.  
During the past year we have seen some high professors put out like candles and the foul odor of their fall has filled the Church with nausea and depression. We have known some who were like bright stars who have turned out to be only meteors—and their once dazzling brilliance has suddenly died out in greater gloom. Why are we still kept? We have had enough temptation to cast us down! Enough tinder here, inside our hearts, to have made a great blaze! How is it we are still unburned and walking in the paths of righteousness?  
Must we not say, “The Lord has blessed us and kept us”? Let us, then, without reserve, commit our souls to Him for the future. Let us not fancy that we shall not fall. Oh, that is a thought that is very apt to twine itself around us like a serpent! “I am not so giddy as some people! I am not at all likely to do what some young people have done and get into this sin, and that sin. I have had so much experience, I shall be able to stand!” That is the very man that is likely to fall! We are never so weak as when we think we are strong, and never so strong as when we know we are weak and look out of ourselves to our God! Distrust self, then. There would not be such a supplication as, “The Lord bless you and keep you,” if you did not need keeping. Trust in God for your help. If you fear temptation, let this be your prayer, “Lead us not into temptation,” and if you trust in God, you will pray, “Deliver us from evil.” You will be tempted during the year that is soon coming, but He will, with the temptation, make also a way of escape. He will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able to bear! You shall go through the wilderness leaning on your Beloved and you shall not slip, though the way is ever so smooth, nor trip, though the road is ever so rough. You shall be upheld, for God is able to hold up in perfect safety those who stay themselves upon Him. “The Lord bless you and keep you.” Holy Father, we breathe the prayer to You as we read this blessing! Pronounce it upon us now by the mouth of Your own dear Son, and let us now and until life’s latest hour be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation!  
Now, take the next blessing bestowed, through Aaron, upon the people. “The Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you.” I understand by the expression, “The Lord make His face to shine upon you,” His being completely reconciled to us. As they would say in the Hebrew, a man’s face frowned, his countenance fell, when he was at enmity or angry with another. But when he was his friend and genial towards him, then his face revealed it, it began to beam or shine! Now, this is the blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ! It is through Him that God’s face is made to shine upon us. The Lord would have no favorable regard towards a sinner as such while his sins still lay upon him because of impenitence and lack of faith. The Lord’s love might come to him as an elect creature, but viewing him merely as a sinner, he would be the subject of Divine disapprobation!  
But when the sinner is washed in the blood of Christ, when the sinner is justified through the righteousness of Jesus, then the Lord looks upon him with pleasure. That very man who was an heir of wrath becomes a child of love! and he who would have been driven from God’s Presence with, “Depart, you cursed,” is established in Christ’s heart with “Come, you blessed.” Now, dear Friends, I hope many of us have already received, during the past year, this great blessing, “The Lord make His face to shine upon you.” Don’t you feel that you have, tonight, to look up to God and do not feel any fear? You know that He is not frowning upon you! He is reconciled unto you—you are reconciled unto Him. You may say, “Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of Your anointed.” And you are persuaded that as God looks upon Christ, and upon you in Christ, you are well-beloved in Him. Well now, as it has been, so it shall be, for if God once makes His face to shine in the sense of His favor, He never takes that favor away! You may not see it. You may think He is angry with you and, in another sense, He may be, but legally, and so far as concerns the Law and its power of condemnation, there is not a single thought of anger in the mind, or feeling of displeasure in the heart of God towards any one of those who rest in Jesus!  
You are accepted in the Beloved. God sees no sin in Jacob, neither iniquity in Israel. As He looks upon them in His Son, He sees them without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.  
“The Lord make His face to shine upon you.” Well, and what springs out of that? Why this, “and be gracious unto you.” Because God is thus favorable towards us through His dear Son, Divine Grace comes to us. And what a great, all-comprehending word is that! Grace! It has many meanings and includes a whole universe of blessing! Grace—it is the free and undeserved favor of God! Grace—it is the mighty operation of that favor, effectually working in them that believe! Grace—it is that which enlightens us to see our lost estate—that which leads us to see the AllSufficiency of Christ! Grace—this works faith in us, gives us love to God! Grace creates our hope, carries on the work within our souls and completes it, too! Grace—it is a term so comprehensive that I would need the whole of this evening, yes, and longer, too, to enumerate the mighty catalog comprised and packed, as it were, in this golden casket of the word, Grace! “The Lord be gracious unto you.” Well, now, Beloved, He has been gracious to us in the past. Oh, the Grace of God to me!—  
*“Oh, to Grace how great a debtor,  
Daily I’m constrained to be!”*

Can you say the same? Look at what a sinner you have been and yet how favored! Look at your backslidings! Look at your ingratitude and yet His mercy does not cease—

*“Oh, to Grace how great a debtor!”*  
Let your hearts say it, if your lips do not. And now, Beloved, He will be gracious to you in the future as He has been in the past. Every mercy received is a pledge of mercies yet to come! He knew what He was doing when He began with us and, therefore, He will not leave off. If He had meant to destroy us, He would not have shown us such things as these. The great Master Worker would not have built the house so far if He did not mean to finish it. All His previous Grace and glory will be wasted and evaporate if He should not complete His redeeming work. Therefore, I am sure that after advancing so far with His glorious purpose, He will finish it and, if necessary, in the teeth of men and devils! He has begun and His right arm, which always goes with His Grace, will surely carry it through to the end. “The Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you.”

But now, thirdly, “The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.” Is this the voice of the Holy Spirit? Whether it is so or not, does not greatly matter to us tonight. “The Lord lift up His countenance upon you.” Does not this mean, “The Lord give you a conscious, a delightful sense of His favor”? Wishing to see a difference—I will not insist upon it—wishing to see a difference, I put the second blessing as meaning God’s being reconciled. But the third blessing as meaning God manifesting that reconciliation and giving His children the enjoyment of His favor. Now, God’s people do not always have this—it is not always sunshine. “The evening and the morning were the first day,” and there is evening as well as morning in the day of God’s people. God always loves His people, but His people do not always know it. Because of their sins, they do not always enjoy it. Oh, what a blessing it is when the Holy Spirit sheds abroad the love of God in the soul—when we can say, “Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” When we get out of these mists and fogs and can see the sun once more shining clear and bright, Beloved, it is Heaven on earth! It is the true ante-past of Heaven above, when the Lord lifts up His countenance upon you! I have no doubt the original allusion is to a father whose child has done wrong and he says, “Now, Sir, get out of my sight, you have grieved and vexed me. You shall not see my face.” The child goes upstairs to bed—anywhere out of his father’s sight. And after a while, when the father hears he has been penitent and sees his tears, he smiles again upon him, gives him a kiss and presses him to his heart. May God the Holy Spirit give us just that! May everyone of us have it!

We have, some of us, had it during the past year. We grieve to confess that we did backslide, but when we returned again, we found Him just as willing to receive us as at the first and He lifted up His countenance upon us once again! We said, “Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation,” and He did so! We asked Him to take away His wrath from us, and we found that “His anger is but for a moment.” When weeping came to us for a night, joy appeared in the morning. It will be just the same with us during the next year. If we transgress and repent, and return to Him, we have an actual promise that He will forgive us. Now, what says the text? “The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.” There is no peace like the peace which we have with God, and no peace with God like that which comes from a sense of His assured love! And belief in Christ for the pardon of sin gives us the blessing of non-condemnation. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” But this sense of non-condemnation may sometimes be destroyed through weakness of faith. We may be brought very low and our peace may be disturbed, but when we come back to the Cross, and look once more to Him who died there, He is our peace and we see in Him that our peace is made with God—and then our peace becomes like a river, and our righteousness like the waves of the sea! I think it would be impossible for me to describe peace. You must feel it to know it. Peace with God is like that clear shining we sometimes see after a heavy shower of rain. With the thunder and lightning it seemed as if Heaven would be torn in pieces and all the earth shaken, and then, suddenly, it is all over and the sun shines forth! There is a rainbow with its many colors on the clouds, and all the flowers lift up their drooping heads, each one loaded with a gleaming benediction—and all the earth fragrant and smiling and seeming to steam forth the incense of gratitude! Now, after the storm of the conviction of sin, when the Spirit of God comes, it is as quiet and peaceful as that. And after a storm of trouble— and I know what that means—after a hurricane of trial, we can take all our distresses and cares and lay them down at God’s feet and feel that we need not care about them anymore!

But if my Father did not undertake them, I would not, for I cannot. He has promised He will, if I cast my cares upon Him. You sometimes walk out of this place when God has blessed your soul and feel, “Now, I do not know what may happen, and really I do not care what does. My heart is resting on my God—I have left it all to Him and I am sure it will be right, whatever may come.” Like Jonah, you may lose your gourd, but you cannot lose your God! You may see dark weather before you, but still you can go to Him who cannot fail you—and there shall your soul have repose. Now, that is the peace of God which passes all understanding and, therefore, it must surpass all expression. The peace of God which can only be known by the man who enjoys it—a peace which the world does not give and cannot destroy, but which Heaven, itself, can work in the soul! Now, may we have this blessing, “The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.”

If we stopped here tonight and went no further, provided we got these blessings and fed upon them, it would be quite enough. Let me just read that text again clearly. “The Lord bless”—now the next word is the very pith of it, and let it be read now to each one of you, my good Sisters and Brothers, you who are young in years and young in Divine Grace, never mind who it is, so long as you are resting upon Christ—Jesus, the great High Priest, speaks from the eternal Glory and He says, “The Lord bless you.” “Oh, but I do not deserve it!” Just so, but, “the Lord Bless you.” “I am so unworthy, I am so backsliding!” Yes, but the Lord Jesus Christ knows all, covers all. We will read it, then, “The Lord Bless you—you, and keep you: the Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you: the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.” Oh, have you got that worked into your very hearts? It will be like a bundle of myrrh that you may keep in your bosom and it will sweeten your soul the whole year round, making you to know that you are blessed in and of the Lord who made Heaven and earth!

Now, I shall ask your attention for a little while to the second blessing, that spoken in God’s name by the Apostle Paul, in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. “The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.” Here we have—

II. THE NEW TESTAMENT BENEDICTION.  
This second blessing is precisely like the first as to its essence and substance. But there is some little difference as to the expression and circumstance. The first thing that strikes me in reading it through, as it almost always does when I pronounce it, is this—you notice it begins with the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus is the Second Person of the blessed Divine Unity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—but this benediction begins with the Son of God. Why is that? In the order of Doctrine and fact, all infinite blessings begin with the Father. He is the Fountainhead of Creation. He is the Fountain, Christ the channel and the Holy Spirit produces the grand results. Father first, Son next, Spirit third. But in the order of experience—the order in which the blessing comes—it is always the Son first. “No man comes unto the Father but by Me.” Not the Father first, but the Son first! What a sinner learns to comfort him first is not that the Father loves Him. No. He learns first of all that Jesus Christ died for sinners because God loves Him—and so he puts his trust in Him. The first thing a poor Believer gets, then, is Grace through Jesus Christ. After that, perhaps, he may sometimes think that God the Father has no love towards him, but as he begins to read his Bible and to experience more of Divine Grace in his heart, he finds that God the Father is full of love. So, then, he goes on and gets the love of God the Father. And when he knows this, perhaps he often wonders what communion may be of, and fellowship. And when he hears some of those delightful hymns which we sing at the Lord’s Supper, he thinks he shall never get to them—to talk with God, to have communion with Christ—but, by-and-by, as the Lord leads him on, from being a babe, he grows to be a man and he gets into communion with the Holy Spirit. Babes in Grace know “the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.” But as they grow they discover “the love of God our Father.” And as they grow still more, they come to “the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.” The three things are put in the order of experience, not in the order of fact, nor the order of Doctrine.  
Having noticed that, just observe the three blessings as they come. “The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.” You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, “though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might be made rich.” You know His great poverty—you know His great Grace which brought Him from yonder starry heavens to lie in a manger, to live in obscurity for 30 years and to die upon the Cross in pains that cannot be told. Now, Grace comes to us through Christ and, therefore, it is said, “by His Grace.” He is the golden pipe through which it all flows. Believing in Him, we receive the mercy of God! Coming through Him to the Mercy Seat, we obtain unnumbered favors by virtue of our union with Him. As the branch derives sap and then fruit from the vine, we derive Grace from Him. He is to us the channel of all the good gifts of our heavenly Father. “May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.” Be with you all—it is not in the singular—it is not to each one. It is, “with you all,” because the genius of the Gospel is expansive. You notice the Redeemer’s prayer. It is not My Father. No, but “our Father which are in Heaven ” And the Gospel’s benediction, though it is personal—blessed be God for that—yet it is also expansive—“be with you all.” We are to think of all our Brothers and Sisters. When we get a blessing, we are to look upon ourselves as part of the Divine family. When we come together to break bread, we do not come, each one alone—though it would be the Lord’s Supper if only one man were there—but we come there in humble fellowship, one with the other! “Eat, drink you all, of this,” said Christ. “Take, eat, this is My body.” He would have all His disciples come there and partake. And so with this blessing of the Grace of Jesus Christ—may it be with you all!  
Has it been with us all during the past year? There are not so many here tonight as usual. May I, therefore, put the question to each one personally? Has it been with you—and you—and you? Have you, my Hearers, known daily the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ? Have you stood by faith at the foot of the Cross and felt that you rested your all on Him? If so, I know you possess His Grace. He it is who has given you power to trust Him wholly and absolutely. All the Grace there is in His great heart and mind belongs to you!—  
*“Plenteous Grace with Him is found,  
Grace to cover all our sins.  
May the healing streams abound,  
Make and keep us pure within.”*  
May it be with you all!  
Next comes “the love of the Father.” It is from the love of God that everything blessed and blessing springs. We must not imagine that Jesus Christ died to induce His Father to love us—a very foolish and pernicious idea that! God the Eternal Father always loved His people and Christ has removed the sin which restrained the shinings of the most glorious manifestations of that love—but He loved before Christ died. You know you can boast—  
“**‘Twas not to make the Father’s love  
Towards His people sure,  
That Jesus came from realms above!  
‘Twas not the pangs He bore  
That God’s eternal love procured,  
For God was Love before.”**  
That fountain sprung up eternally! It was a well that needed no digging. Oh, dear Friends, I trust we know what the love of God means. Has it not been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which is given unto us? We shall know it in years to come, for where it once takes possession it never departs. Once in Christ, in Christ forever! In Christ’s love you have begun a banquet which will never end. “May the love of God be with you all,” is meant for all God’s people. But is that love present with all? If you have not tasted God’s love, you do not know what life, true life, means. The richest, the most celestial, the most transporting joy that mortal mind can know is a full assurance of the love of God! Dear Hearer, do you love Christ? Can you answer the question, “Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?” Then, if you have love for Christ, pure and true love and trust, if it is the fruit of God’s love to you, then be of good cheer! May the love of the Father be with you all your days!  
Then comes “the communion of the Holy Ghost.” A very ugly word that—“Ghost.” A better translation of the original Greek word would be, “Spirit.” “Holy Spirit,” and I sometimes wish that we always called Him by that name. It is far more expressive. The word, “ghost,” bears such a strange and weird meaning, now, that it were better in this connection entirely to abandon it! The word, “communion,” means not only the Holy Spirit coming to us and having converse with us, but communion means copartnership. When the Churches in Macedonia made a collection for the poor Church in Judea, Paul called the collection, “communion,” because by means of giving money to the Church in Judea they had a fellowship, something like having all things common—that is the perfection of fellowship!  
Now, the Holy Spirit, if I may use the expression, has all things common with God’s people. He gives to them all things. “He shall lead you into truth.” What the Spirit knows and teaches us, we are able to bear. He knows the mind of God. He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. He gives us to participate in all that He possesses. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of peace. He gives us peace. He is the Spirit of holiness and sanctification—rather, He is the Spirit of light—He kindles light in our souls. He is a sacred fire. He baptized the Church in fire. Everything that the Holy Spirit is and has, He is and has for the Church of God and in common with the Church of God! Now, what an unspeakable blessing this is, to enter into a sacred copartnership with God the Holy Spirit! To talk with Him, to live with Him, to feast with Him, to have Him to be ours and for us to be His! Now, may such a communion as this be with us! I question whether we have ever got up to the fullness of this.  
I think I told you the other evening the story of a good woman who was a little distressed in her mind and who, in reading the passage, “Your Maker is your Husband,” said, “Now, I won’t be distressed any longer. When my husband was alive, I took care to live up to my income and now I will take care to live up to my heavenly Husband’s income.” Oh, I wish to get hold of living up to God’s income, for all He has is given to His people! What rich lives we would have if we were to participate in all that He has! We would be continually feeling His power in our souls. Have we done this? May each one of you say, “Lord, give me to know the communion of the Holy Spirit all my days, until I shall be taken up to dwell where You reveal Yourself without a veil between!”  
Now, in closing, you see the difference between the two benedictions is this—the second blessing is really exhibited, the first a little veiled— something like Moses, when his face was too bright for the people to look upon, he put a veil upon his face. So the blessing Aaron pronounced is not so distinct or clear as the Apostolic blessing. Note, again, that the blessings in the second benediction are deeper—they are traced up to their source in the Triune Godhead, “Grace, love and communion.” The one is a deep, the other a great deep. Note, yet again, that they are wider. The blessings of the Old Testament are individual and personal—to “you.” The blessings in the New Testament are to the Corinthian Church and to all the Churches—“with you all.”  
In the first case there was a confirmation and in the second case there is one also—“Amen,” which is the Divine confirmation of this benediction.  
But I notice in the Apostolic benediction there is one thing which there is not in the first, namely, the communion, that is, the privilege—the privilege which comes to a child of God in this age of bliss when Christ is fully revealed. Did you ever notice that when John was born, an angel appeared to his father, Zacharias, to announce that Christ was come? No sooner did that bell begin to ring to tell that Christ was coming, than what happened? The greatest blessing was about to be pronounced and, therefore, the smaller blessing had to be silenced. When Zacharias came out, he was expected to bless the people, but what did he do? He could not speak a word—he was speechless and he beckoned with his hand— and that morning the assembly went home without the benediction! The priest could not pronounce it. Now, I dare say they said one to another, “What a strange thing it was. We always had that benediction before, ‘The Lord bless you, and keep you,’ but this morning the priest could not speak a word.” You and I know what that means. We must stop that one because there is a better coming! God seemed, as it were, to give notice to His people, “I am about to hush the voice of Aaron because Melchisedec is coming. I am about to stop the sound of the symbolic, because the real Priest is coming. I am about to hush the voice of Zacharias because the Son of God is now to appear and declare that the fullest blessing of Jehovah will rest upon His people.”  
Now, let us go our separate ways tonight, guided home, I trust, safely and rightly. And let us feed upon and make our soul’s bread the two precious texts that have been before us. And I am not afraid but that you will be like those who went out to gather the manna—you shall each have enough! He who needs much shall have in abundance and he who requires little shall have no lack. Let us close by singing the blessing and go our way to turn all life into a song of gratitude for God’s rich benedictions! Amen.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2407 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FEEDING ON A WHOLE CHRIST  
NO. 2407

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY APRIL 7, 1895. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S DAY, EVENING, APRIL 3, 1887.

**“The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the Passover they shall keep it.” Numbers 9:11, 12.**

IN great tenderness God permitted the Passover to be kept a second time, that those who had unavoidably been defiled at the first observance might not be shut out from the memorable and symbolical rite. But, although He altered the date of the Passover, He never changed the form of it—the Paschal feast was to be the same whenever it was celebrated and by whomever it was observed. Whether one family, or an Israelite who happened to be a stranger and visitor in the house, whoever it might be— kept the Passover—the same regulations were to be carefully followed. From this I gather, learning a lesson from the type, that, whatever may be the experiences through which we come to salvation, Christ is always the same and we must partake of Him in the same way. You who have been so defiled that you have, as it were, to eat of the second Passover, even at the 11th hour, long after others have been feeding on Christ—still there is the same Christ for you as there is for those who come at the right time—who seek the Lord early, and find Him while yet the dew of their youth is upon them.

There is none but Jesus for each one of us! There is no way for this man, peculiar to himself because of his righteous life, and no way for that person, peculiar to himself because of his ungodliness—but for the most moral and the most immoral there is the same Savior to be received by the same precious faith! Only by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus are we delivered from wrath and only by feeding upon Christ can our spiritual life be sustained. There are not two gospels, but only one Gospel. There are not two Christ’s, but only one Christ! There are not two roads to Heaven but only one road to Heaven. Let us go together to the Cross, view the one great Sacrifice for sin and, by faith, find salvation in Him!

The subject for us to consider at this time will be just this—if we do receive Christ, that reception is beautifully expressed and represented by feeding upon Him. So, first, we are to feed upon Jesus Christ. The Paschal lamb was to be eaten. Secondly, we are to receive Christ and feed upon Him as a whole Christ—“They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it.” Then, thirdly, we are to receive Christ in union with others. It is a very blessed thing when our personal reception of Christ, our personal feeding upon Christ, is not a solitary act, but is done in company, as when, of old, a whole household drew near to feed upon the Paschal lamb.

I. First, then, WE ARE TO FEED UPON JESUS CHRIST. The true reception of Christ is very beautifully expressed by our feeding upon Him. The point a sinner longs to know, when he is really awakened and his conscience is thoroughly awakened, is first, this—“How can I be saved? I know that Christ is a Savior, but how can I make Him my Savior? I understand that He has provided an Atonement by which sin can be put away—how can that Atonement put my sin away?”  
When the Paschal lamb was killed in the household of the Israelite, first the blood was sprinkled on the lintel and two side posts by the man who was the head of the household. And as soon as it was sprinkled, its virtue operated at once—that house was secure. Next, they must bring in this lamb which had been roasted with fire, they must gather around the table and all they had to do with it was to eat it. Now, eating is such a simple operation that I cannot explain it. I suppose that the best way of explaining how to eat would be by eating—and the best way of explaining how Christ is to be received is to receive Him! Yet, since I am seeking to help some poor troubled one, I must try, if I can, to explain what it was to eat the Paschal lamb and what it is to receive Christ. I say again, eating the Paschal lamb was a very simple process. Moses might have said to a Jew, “That lamb, roast with fire, is yours if you will eat it. There is no ceremony to be gone through, no incantation to be repeated, no genuflection to be performed. You stand at the table, you eat the lamb, and it is yours.”  
Now, concerning feeding upon the Lord Jesus Christ, the first thing to be done is to receive Him by faith. Receiving is the first part of eating. You are hungry, bread is set before you. You put the bread into your mouth, you receive it and it becomes yours. So receive the Lord Jesus Christ— faith is the mouth by which He is to be received. Believe Him—believe what is testified concerning Him in the Word of God. Say to yourself, “This record is true, Jesus is the Son of God. He came into the world as Man, He lived a holy life. He died a sacrificial death—‘the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.’ I believe all this. I accept it as true, as true to me, and I take it, not into my ears only as hearing it, but into my heart as believing it to be assuredly the Truth of God whereby, alone, souls can be saved.”  
“But suppose I take Him and have no right to Him.” Ah, if you once take Him, you have Him, right or no right! Have I not often told you that if you have eaten a piece of bread, though you had no right to it, it will puzzle all the lawyers in the world to get it away from you? Possession, in such a case as that, is more than the proverbial nine points of the law! Yes, it is all the points of the law, and if you take Christ as yours, then you have Christ as yours! Oh, that you would grasp Him right now! “Well, but suppose it is not right for me to have Christ?” It was never wrong for a poor sinner to take Christ, so have Him now! If He is near you, seize Him now! “Lay hold on eternal life,” says the Apostle, and if you lay hold on Christ, God will never cry, “Hands off!” Be boldly daring for once and you shall not find yourself repulsed. The door of mercy is open, enter—and if you are repulsed—you will be the first that was ever rejected by Christ, whoever you may be! “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.”  
“I have done that,” says one. I am very glad if you have, but have you really done it? There is a way of believing and yet not truly believing. A man believes that such and such a thing is true—at least, he says that he does—and yet he may act in such a way as shall prove that he does not believe it. You are in your house, in bed and asleep. Someone wakes you up by crying out that your house is on fire—and you calmly turn over and go to sleep, again. I know, by your action, that you could not have believed the report that was brought to you! One looks you in the face and tells you that he can see, there, traces of a deadly disease, and that, within a short time, you will be dead unless you take a certain medicine. Do you tell me you believe that disease to be upon you and believe that medicine would heal you if you took it—and after telling me that—do you go home and think no more of it? Then I know that you have not spoken truly in saying that you believe, for true believing would move you to action—you would be seriously affected by these things if you believed them to be true.  
Come, then, let me ask you a question. Is sin a reality to you? Do you accept the sinner’s position and confess that you need a Savior? Do you believe that the Son of God has appeared in human form on purpose that He might save such as you are? Can you advance one step further and say, “I believe in Christ as my Savior”? So far so good—the bread is in your mouth!  
In eating, the next thing is that the food should undergo a process of digestion. It must lie in the body and be dissolved. So, in order to a full reception of Christ, there must be somewhat of digestion by meditation. The great Truths of God I have mentioned enter the soul—they are turned over in the heart and mind by meditation. We think of them, ponder them, consider them—they begin to influence us and our mind sets to work upon those Truths, pressing the very juice and essence out of them—making us to know their secret virtues and powers. O Sirs, there are some of you who will never be saved by Christ because you will not think! Unless the Lord Jesus should graciously meet with you and, all of a sudden, you should be caused to believe on Him—which I pray may be the case—I am afraid that you will certainly be lost!  
Some of you are not in a condition to get any good out of hearing the Gospel because you do not think of what you hear. You do not lay up in your hearts and turn over in your minds what is taught you on the Sabbath. Many let the Gospel have a clear thoroughfare, for they allow it to go in one ear and out the other and so, Sunday after Sunday, week after week, month after month, year after year, with them it is only hearing the Gospel and that is all! The Truth of God has no opportunity to become food to their spirits, for what they seem to take in, one minute, they cast out the next—and this is not feeding at all—it is but folly and mockery!  
Well now, after food has entered the body and has been digested, there is a further process. I am not going into any physiological discussions, but there is, as you know, the process that is called assimilation. Certain vessels within the body perform their various functions and so, gradually, the food which has been taken is made to nourish the body and build it up. Thus the bread, which, a little while ago, was separate from me, becomes inseparable from me—it has been taken up into my system and has become part and parcel of myself. This is the best form of feeding upon Christ when, having believed the Truth about Him, and having thought it over till we have digested it, certain secret faculties within our nature take Him up and assimilate Him into our spiritual life.  
Look, Sirs, I believe that Christ was the Incarnate Son of God. I do not merely believe that as a mere matter of fact, as I might believe that there is such a person as the Czar of Russia, but I look to be saved by Him who became Man in order that He might save me! Look further. I believe that this God Incarnate did bear my sins in His own body on the Cross. I look to be forgiven—no, I know that I am forgiven—because He took my sin away and ended it so far as I am concerned. That is assimilating the great Truth of God of the Atonement in the inmost part of my spirit. I do not need to explain the process any longer—I want you to put it into practice. Now, Beloved, you who have often fed upon Christ, feed on Him, again, at this moment! Think of Him as you know Him and try to know more of Him! But what you do know of Him, grasp it. Press out of these clusters their sacred juice. Draw out of these Truths the Divine support which they are intended to give to your spirit. Say, “These Truths of God are mine. I live on them, I could die on them, I need nothing better.”  
If you really thus feed upon Christ, it will come to this—that Christ and you will be one—and none shall be able to separate you from Him, or to take Him from you. As the bread or the meat that you may eat becomes one with yourself, so will Christ, absorbed into your inmost heart by a childlike trust, become vitally and everlastingly part and parcel of your own self! And, because He lives, you must also live, for He has made you to live and He lives in you!  
I am sure that if you have once learned to feed upon Christ in the way I have been describing, you will not object to the “bitter herbs” that were to be eaten with the Passover. Oh, no! Those bitter herbs seem to give a zest to the feast. I thought to myself, when I was trying to get into the soul of this text, “I have my dish of bitter herbs every day.” They come to me in this form—Christian ministers, whom I have educated, forsaking the faith. Christian people, who I thought were converted, behaving in an unseemly and ungodly manner. And anxieties about many who do not seem to have so much care about their own souls as I have concerning them. O Christ, my blessed Master, Your service is very sweet because of You, but, in itself, woe is me that ever I was born to it! But the regulation is, “With bitter herbs shall you eat it,” therefore, let us go on with our work and take whatever of bitterness accompanies our service. Perhaps some of you get sneered at for your religion—that is your dish of bitter herbs. Or it may be that you are very poor, or, possibly, the more you know of Christ, the more you also know of your own unworthiness, and that knowledge is like eating bitter herbs. Very well, thank God that you have Christ, and say nothing about the hitter herbs—for if the Israelite who is hungry gets a Paschal lamb to feed upon, he may well be content to take the bitter herbs with it.  
The Israelites were also to eat the Passover “with unleavened bread.” Leavened bread is usually considered by our poor fallen nature to be more agreeable to our taste, and there is a measure of self-denial implied in the putting away of the leaven. Well, we are called to deny ourselves for Christ’s sake and we would put away all forms of sin—everything that is leavened—that we may have our all in Him and find everything that delights the palate and charms the spirit in Christ alone! Yes, take away your leavened bread with all its sweetness, and bring in the bitter herbs and the unleavened bread, instead—we will be perfectly satisfied so long as the true Paschal Lamb is upon the table and our souls may feed upon Him!  
I will say no more on this first part of my subject, but I pray you, in the silence of your spirits, to feed upon Christ Jesus.  
II. This brings me to my second point, which is that WE ARE TO RECEIVE CHRIST AS A WHOLE. The Lord said, concerning the Passover, “They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it.” If we receive Christ, we must receive Him as a whole.  
We must receive Christ in the entirety of His Person. There was Arias— he would receive Christ as a good man, but not as God. But you cannot have Christ at all unless you have Him as a whole. There were some who took the opposite side and were willing to receive Christ as God, but not as a bleeding, suffering Man. But you cannot receive Christ at all if you will not have Him altogether—you must have Him in the entirety of His Person—as God and Man, or else you cannot have Him at all, and cannot enjoy Him as the food of your soul.  
We must also receive Christ in the entirety of His offices. He has come to be a Prophet, Priest and King. Be willing to be instructed by Him, to be cleansed by Him, to be ruled by Him—and mark you, you cannot have the Priest unless you will also have the Prophet, nor can He be your Prophet unless He also becomes your King! A whole Christ

in undivided honor, accepted as being all that He professes to be—you must have Him so or not at all! And you must have a whole Christ as to His work. He comes to put away your sin by the shedding of His blood and you say, “I will have Him.” But listen, He comes to take away your sinfulness, and make you holy by the water which flowed with the blood from His side. You cannot take justification and omit sanctification—you must have both or neither! The Law concerning the Passover was, “They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it.” You must have Christ as He is set forth in His Word in all parts of His saving work.  
And we must have Christ in all His teachings. It will not do for us to say, “I shall believe Christ when He speaks in His Sermon on the Mount and teaches us the ethics of ordinary life. But I will not believe Him when He opens up the mysteries of His love as He addresses His disciples on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane.” You cannot have Him at all unless you are willing to believe all that He taught as far as you know it, and to believe that what He spoke must be true, even though, as yet, you do not know it. You must take the Lord Jesus Christ to be absolutely Infallible to you—otherwise you cannot receive Him at all.  
You must also take Christ in all His warnings. You must not turn your back when He says, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment,” and think His language too severe. They who object to one word of Christ have really objected to Christ, Himself! As one leak will sink a boat, so will one objection to Christ destroy your loyal confidence in Him. No, take every Word He says and believe it! Hang your soul upon it, knowing that it must be true since the Christ has said it. You must leave nothing of this blessed Paschal Lamb—you must break no bone of Him!  
So must it be as to Christ in all His commands. It is ours not to reason why, but ours to do what He bids us! And we must not say, “This is essential and that is non-essential.” We must not say, “I will do this which He bids me, but I will not do that which He bids me.” You are not disciples, but rebels, if you act so! You are not His friends, but His enemies, if you thus pick and choose which of His commands you will obey! How can he be a good soldier who will sometimes obey his captain, but will sometimes disobey? Such discipline as that, or rather, such lack of discipline, could be tolerated in no host, and it will not be endured in the armies of the living God! No, you must take a whole Christ in all His commands.  
And it must be just the same as to Christ and His spirit. One says, “Christ is very loving and I will be loving, too.” You are right in saying so, my Brother, but the Christ was very outspoken and very uncompromising—will you also be outspoken and uncompromising? If not, your loving spirit will go for little, for it will only be a kind of pandering to worldliness. The spirit of Christ is a perfect spirit and he that has it not is none of His! It is not for us to select one quality of His spirit and say, “I will imitate that.” No, but as the Christ acted at all times, so do you act. As far as you are capable of following Him, put your feet down where He puts His feet down. Do what He did according to your measure and degree. A whole Christ fully and faithfully imitated can alone produce a perfect character!  
Well now, beloved Friends, you see what our orders are, here. We are, first, to feed upon Christ and then, next, we are to receive Him as a whole. But I regret that there are some persons who do not feed upon a whole Christ. Some, alas, will not do so through sheer willfulness. They will pick and choose and thus show their self-conceit and their rebellion. Do not do so! Do not do so, I beseech you, but feed on the whole Christ as the Israelites ate the whole of the Paschal lamb. Some are unable through ignorance to feed on a whole Christ. They do not know Him, or they would gladly receive Him. Let not ignorance hinder any of you from partaking of the sweetest things on the table of God’s Grace—but say to yourself, “Little as I know, I feel that, if I knew more, I would only wish to know what Jesus would teach me. And I yield myself up to Him implicitly, even as a blind man yields himself up to his guide, and I say to Jesus, “What I know not, teach me.’” In that way you will at least be willing to eat the whole Paschal Lamb, even though, through ignorance, you do not fully understand what it is to receive Him.  
There are some who, through timidity, fail to feed upon a whole Christ. They are afraid to take in some of the glorious doctrines which He teaches, some of the sweet things of His Everlasting Covenant, some of the strong meat of His eternal purposes, some of the fat things full of marrow, and the wine upon the lees, well refined. I pray you, shrink not back, but, since Christ gives Himself wholly to all His people, if there is a precious Covenant Word, feed upon it! If there is a rich promise, believe it and enjoy it! Christ denies nothing to His beloved. If you really come to His table and desire to have all that there is in Him, then take it, and be not afraid! He will never chide you. Therefore, come freely to Christ, Beloved. He, Himself, has given the invitation—“Eat, O friends; drink, yes, drink abundantly, O beloved.” Take all of Christ into your soul according to your capacity, till you are filled with Him—come joyfully and partake cheerfully of all that He freely gives to you—and be not afraid.  
I think that I need not say more than that upon this second point. Only I would to God that many here were willing to say, “I will have a whole Christ.” If you are willing to have Him, He is yours! If you will but trust Him, He is yours! There is nothing for you to do but to take Him as your hope, to take your supper tonight. Receive Him into yourself to be the food of your spirit and He is yours forever!  
III. I must say only just a few sentences on the last point. WE ARE TO RECEIVE CHRIST IN UNION WITH OTHERS.  
The Passover was not a solitary meal. A man did not shut himself up and have the lamb roasted and set on the table, and try to eat it all himself. No, it was a family meal—all who were in the house, of the seed of Israel, master and servants, husband and wife and children—all came to that table and fed together. Oh, I like to enjoy Christ for myself, but if I may not speak for others, I will speak for myself, and I must say that I always enjoy the things of God better with you than I do alone. There is so much zest about having friends to enjoy Christ with us. We can feast upon Him alone, blessed be His name—we know the sweetness of solitary fellowship with Christ—but we love, still more, to share the blessing with other Christians. I have no wish to go all the way to the Celestial City alone! I would much rather go with Christiana and Mercy, and all those little ones—the whole family of pilgrims—and Mr. Greatheart, and all the rest of them! They had such cheery talks together and when they met the giants, if one was a little cast down, another brightened him up and encouraged him to play the man.  
What a fine thing it was for such a poor creature as Mr. Ready-to-Halt, who always went on his crutches, and for poor Little-Faith, and Mr. Despondency, and Miss Much Afraid, to get into such good company! It would have been a dreary journey to them if they had gone all the way to the Celestial City, each one, alone! But when they traveled in such good society, you know, they grew merry. You remember that they were so jubilant when Giant Despair’s head was cut off that Mr. Ready-to-Halt, though he had never done such a thing before, danced without his crutches! It is wonderful what joy comes out of Christian communion and holy fellowship! So it is good that you eat the Passover together, and not alone. It is well that you rejoice in Christ in the company of others who are rejoicing in Him.  
The first with whom we should receive Christ is our own family. Well, then, my Brother, what about the members of your family? Are they all converted yet? Are they all saved? If not, breathe a prayer that the Lord would bring the rest of them to the Paschal feast. Some of you will have to go away, directly, when we remain for the communion. Some of you husbands must leave your wives, here, and you will have to go home, or go sit up in the gallery among the spectators. Remember that there will be no spectators in Heaven! And in that last dividing day, it will be an awful thing to be separated eternally from those we love. Happiest will it be in Heaven, itself, if we shall all meet there—an unbroken family!  
Still, when the Jew met with his family and ate the Paschal supper, that was not the greatest joy of it, for he recollected that everywhere else, wherever there was an Israelite family, they were all doing the same, and that the whole of the chosen people of God were one in keeping this commemorative feast! So are all the people of God one in Christ Jesus. I like to think that I have fellowship with all the saints. I do not object to have fellowship with those who differ from me in many respects. I think that there is a communion of saints that cannot be limited. If there is the Life of God in you, and there is the Life of God in me, you may be mistaken and I may be mistaken upon some points, but the one Life in us will make us have communion with Jesus!  
Perhaps you do not obey all Christ’s commands and I say to you, “Well, then, I will not commune with you.” But I cannot help having communion with you if you are in the body of Christ! Communion is the pulse of the body and unless I cut my finger off, I cannot help having fellowship with my finger! It may be very dirty. I may tie a bit of red tape round it and say, “There, I will cut you off from fellowship with the rest of my body,” but it is no use. As long as the body lives, and the finger lives, the fellowship must be there—the life-blood must continue to flow through it! So, dear Brothers and Sisters, we see many saints of God, many whom we believe to be the children of God, who, no doubt, are mistaken, and have many faults—and who is there who is not mistaken and is without fault?—but if the life of God is in them, there is a fellowship beyond all rules and regulations! That is the fellowship of the life which is in the Head of the Church! It pulses through all the members and must do so evermore.  
I hope to come to the Communion Table, tonight, then, enjoying fellowship with all the redeemed of the Lord, both on earth and in Heaven! Yes, and with those that have gone from earth hundreds of years ago and, by faith, also to enjoy something of fellowship even with generations yet unborn that, in the fullness of time, shall come to know the Lord.  
Thank God, many of us do know what it is to commune with Christ as well as to commune with His people! Both as individuals and as a worshipping assembly, we have often proved the sweetness of fellowship with our Lord. Sometimes, at that Communion Table, He has been set forth manifestly crucified among us. Sometimes, on our bed at night, He has spoken with us. I have known what it is to sit up and try not to go to sleep lest I should lose the overflowing joy of His Divine Presence. I have been afraid, sometimes, to rise from my bed in the morning lest, in going downstairs, I should break the spell of conscious fellowship with Him! Our Lord Jesus is so near His people and there are times when we have such rapt communion with Him that we can truly say that it is eternal life! Then do we sing—  
*“I stand upon the mount of God,  
With sunlight in my soul.  
I hear the storms in vales beneath,  
I hear the thunders roll!  
But I am calm with You, my God,  
Beneath these glorious skies  
And to the heights on which I stand,  
Nor storms nor clouds can rise.  
Oh, this is life! Oh, this is joy,  
My God, to find You so!  
Your face to see, Your voice to hear,  
And all Your love to know.”*  
God grant us more of that blessed fellowship, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **NUMBERS 9.**

Verses 1, 2. And the LORD spoke unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, Let the children of Israel also keep the Passover at his appointed season. I should almost fear that they had omitted the keeping of the Passover for a year. There was a first celebration of it when they came out of Egypt, but then it was not so much a type as a matter of fact—it was the thing itself—not the remembrance of the coming out of Egypt, but the actual coming out, the exodus. One would gather from this command of the Lord that, on the first anniversary of that memorable season, the children of Israel had omitted its observance and, therefore, Jehovah said to Moses, “Let the children of Israel also keep the Passover at his appointed season.” If this conjecture is correct, it is very significant that a rite which belonged to the Law of God and was, therefore, to pass away, was so soon neglected—and certainly it was afterwards neglected for many, many years. Whereas, the great memorial ordinance of the Christian dispensation—the Lord’s Supper—was not neglected even when Christians were under fierce persecution from the Jews or other nations. When the observance of that rite among the heathen was pretty sure to bring death, yet Christians met together on the first day of the week and continually broke bread in remembrance of their Lord’s death, even as we do to this day. I suppose that the Supper, which is the memorial of Christ our Passover, has never been altogether neglected throughout the world, but has been a matter of constant observation in the Church of Christ and shall be “till He come.”

3-7. in the fourteenth day of this month, at even, you shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall you keep it. And Moses spoke unto the children of Israel, that they should keep the Passover. And they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even in the wilderness of Sinai: according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel. And there were certain seen, who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the Passover on that day: and they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day: and those men said unto him, We are defiled by the dead body of a man: therefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an offering of the LORD in his appointed season among the children of Israel? They were in a great difficulty. They were commanded to come to the Passover—they sinned if they did not come— but they had defiled themselves, either through accident or of necessity. And if they came, thus, to the Passover, they would be committing sin, so that either way they were in an ill case. There must be somebody to bury the dead. I suppose that these persons had fulfilled that necessary office, and there had not been time for them to purge themselves from the ceremonial defilement involved in the touching of the dead—so what were they to do?

8. And Moses said unto them, Stand still, and I will hear what the

LORD will command concerning you. Oh, how wisely we would give advice if we would never decide till we had prayed about the matter! Possibly we think ourselves so experienced and so well acquainted with the mind of God, that we can answer off-hand. Or, perhaps, we think that we need not consult the Lord at all, but that our own opinion will be a sufficient guide. Moses was greater and wiser than we are—he said to these men— “Stand still, and I will hear what Jehovah will command concerning you.”

9-12. And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the Passover unto the LORD. The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the Passover they shall keep it. So that provision was made for the holding of a second Passover, that persons who were defiled at the first observance might have the opportunity to keep the feast a month afterwards.

13. But the man that is clean, and is not in a journey, and does not keep the Passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people: because he brought not the offering of the LORD in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin. What a solemn sentence that is! Let me read it apart from its context—“Because he brought not the offering of the Lord in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin.” You see, the great offering of the Lord, the atoning Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the only way by which sin can be put away! And if any man will not bring that—in other words, if he will not believe in Jesus—then here is his certain doom, “that man shall bear his sin.” No more terrible judgment can be pronounced upon any one of us than this, “that man shall bear his sin.” “If you believe not that I am He,” said Christ, “you shall die in your sins.”

14. And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the Passover unto the LORD; according to the ordinance of the Passover, and adoring to the manner thereof, so shall he do. You shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land. Now comes another subject—

15, 16. And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony and at even there was upon the tabernacle, as it were, the appearance of fire, until the morning. So it was always: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night. This was the sign of the Presence of God in the midst of that vast canvas city! I suppose that the great cloud rose up from the most holy place and probably covered the whole camp of the tribes, so that it shielded them from the fierceness of the sun, while at night the entire region was lit up by this marvelous illumination! The chosen nation had the pillar of cloud by day for a shelter, and the pillar of fire by night for a light. God’s Presence acts upon us in much the same way as the cloudy fiery pillar acted upon Israel—

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

We get shelter from the fierce heat of the world’s day and deliverance, also, from the darkness of the world’s night through our Lord’s gracious Presence!

17-20. And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. At the commandment of the LORD, the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the LORD they pitched. As long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents. And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD, and journeyed not. And so it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the LORD, they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the LORD they journeyed. Happy people to be thus Divinely guided! They could never tell when they would have to be on the move. They had no abiding city. When their tents were pitched and they were just getting comfortably settled, perhaps that very morning the pillar of cloud moved and, at other times, when they desired to be marching, it stood still. They could never be certain of staying long in any one place. It is just so with you and with me—our Lord intends to keep us with a loose hold on all things here below. We cannot tell what changes may come to any one of us and, therefore, reckon on nothing that God has not plainly promised. Be certain of nothing but uncertainty and always expect the unexpected! You cannot tell between here and Heaven where your Guide may take you—happy will you be if you can truly say that you desire to always follow where the Lord leads.

21-23. And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed. Whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed. Or whether it were two days or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents and journeyed not but when it was taken up, they journeyed. At the commandment of the LORD they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the LORD they journeyed: they kept the charge of the LORD, at the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses. So may each one of us ever be Divinely guided!—

*“Let the fiery cloudy pillar  
Lead me all my journey through.”*  
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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #916 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A GENEROUS PROPOSAL  
NO. 916

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
“Come you with us, and we will do you good.”  
Numbers 10:29.

THESE ancient words, so simple, yet so sweet, fascinate us with a potent hallowed charm. They ring out their melody like a familiar air. The language of a heart full of kindness, inspired with faith, and inspirited with the enthusiasm of a hope so much Divine that the lapse of ages impairs not their force, or diminishes anything from their natural spontaneous freshness. This story of Hobab one can hardly read without remembering the Apostolic declaration that the Law was a “shadow of good things to come.” A truly instructive shadow it was. In this instance the shadow is so like the image, the type so like the antitype, that we can almost see the Christian Church, and the convert as he is invited to unite with it. And we may behold in metaphor the blessings of which he may expect to be a partaker in so doing.

“Come you with us, and we will do you good,” seems to be quite as suitable an address from the lips of a Christian pastor as from those of the Prophet of Horeb, who was king in Jeshurun. We do not feel in the least degree hesitant as if we were wrenching the words from their natural association, or even exercising the slightest ingenuity in accommodating them to our own circumstances, so suitable do they seem for our use. The people of Israel in the wilderness were a type of the Church of Christ. The invitation here given was such as may be given to those who are proper subjects for communion with the Christian Church.

We shall proceed accordingly, this evening, to talk to you upon four things. First, the nature of a true Church as it is depicted by Israel in the wilderness. Secondly, the obligation of such a Church to invite suitable persons to join it. Thirdly, the argument that the Church may use, and the inducements it will always have to offer in setting forth the benefits to be conferred on those who heartily respond. And fourthly, the scrupulous fidelity it behooves us, as members of the Church, to observe in keeping our pledge ever afterwards to seek the welfare of such as unite with our fellowship.

I. First, then, WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRUE CHURCH AS IT IS PICTURED BY ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS? We might prolong the answer to this question with many minute features, but it will be unnecessary, at present, to do more than give you a simple broad outline. The people in the wilderness were a redeemed people. They had been redeemed by blood and redeemed by power. The sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb over their lintels and their doorposts had

secured their safety when the first-born of Egypt was slain.

Thus they were redeemed by blood, while wonderful miracles were worked throughout the whole land. And at the last, when threatened and pursued by their oppressors, the whole of the pride and pomp of Egypt was destroyed in the Red Sea. They were, indeed, redeemed by power. So, all the true members of God’s Church understand what the blood of sprinkling means. They have enjoyed a Passover through it. God has passed over them—passed over them in mercy. Justice has executed its warrant upon the Person of the Lamb, and they have escaped—they have been redeemed by blood.

And the Holy Spirit has entered into their hearts and made them hate their former sins. He has delivered them from the dominant power of their inward corruptions, has set them free and brought them out of the bondage of sin. Thus they have also been redeemed by power, and no one has any right to think himself a member of Christ’s Church unless by faith he has seen himself redeemed by blood—and in his experience has also been redeemed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

But, according to our text and the context, the Israelites were a people who were passing through a land where they found no rest, neither did they desire any, for they were journeying to another country, the promised land, the Canaan. Now, here is another description of the true Church of God. They are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world. This is not their rest. Here they have no continuing city. Objects which may suit men who have no outlook beyond death would not be suitable to them. That which rejoices the heart of the mere worldling gives them but very slender solace. Their hope and their consolation lie beyond the river. They look for a city that has foundations whose Builder and Maker is God.

Judge then, my dear Hearer, whether you are a member of God’s Church, of the Church of Jesus Christ. If you are, you are a stranger and a foreigner this night here below, however pleasant the tent of your pilgrimage may be. Your Father’s house on High is your destination. You are an exile from your home, albeit to your faith’s foreseeing eye its golden gates may never so clearly appear. You have not yet come to your rest, but there remains to you a rest, a rest to which you shall come in due time, though you have not yet reached it. May I entreat you to put these questions to your own hearts as they arise, and judge yourselves.

Israel in the wilderness, according to the text, again, was a people walking by faith as to the future. Remember, the words are, “They were going to the place of which the Lord said, I will give it to you.” They had never seen it—no one had come from it to tell them of it. True, in after days some spies had returned—but they brought up an ill report of the land, so that the people required even more faith, then, than they did before. If anyone had said to them, “But, if there is a land that flows with milk and honey, how will you gain it? The inhabitants thereof are strong and mighty—how are you sure that you will ever obtain this goodly land?” the only reply would have been, “The Lord has spoken to us concerning it.”

Every true Israelite had been instructed as to the Covenant God had made with Abraham when He said, “To you and to your seed will I give this land to possess it,” and every true Israelite was expecting that His people should find a lodgment and a portion in that land evermore because of the Covenant which God had made with his fathers. They were walking, then, in that respect, by faith—looking for a country which they had not seen—traversing a desert in search of a land which as yet they had not known. And with only God’s Word for their title deed and nothing more.

And such are God’s people now. As for joys to come, they have not tasted them—but they are looking for them because God has promised them. “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him. But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit,” and the Spirit reveals them only to our faith. If you ask me, “How do you know that there is a Heaven?” I must answer you, I believe it on God’s testimony. I have no other warrant for it. No man has returned from that fair land to testify that he has heard the everlasting song, or seen the blessed citizens as they stand in their bright array before the Everlasting Throne.

Nor want I that any such should return. God’s Word is enough. Let that stand instead of the testimony of ten thousand angels, or of myriads of the white-robed host of spirits who might have returned to tell the tale. We walk by faith as Israel did of old. Are you walking by such a faith? Do you believe in the unseen future, and does the hope of an unseen reward make you despise the present rewards of sin? Are you willing to bear the reproach of Christ because you count it greater treasure than all the riches of Egypt? Are you willing, now, to take up with Christ’s Cross because you believe in Christ’s crown? Though you have not seen it, do you believe in it, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory?

These people, also, as to their present circumstances were walking by faith. It was not merely faith which sang to them of Canaan, but it was faith that told them of the manna which fell day by day, and the water which flowed from the rock—which stream followed them in their journey. Why, they could not live in any other way in the wilderness but by faith in God, for from that arid strand there sprang nothing for their nourishment! Here and there a palm tree—now and then a cooling well. But for the most part, had it not been for the goodness of God, their way had been over a desert, cheerless, waste, and terrible. But He gladdened it for them, and made the place of His feet, and of their feet, too, right glorious, for His mercy and His loving kindness endure forever!

Now, in this world the Christian man has to live by faith upon God as to present things. As to temporal necessities he must cast all his care on Him who cares for us, but especially as to all spiritual supplies the Christian has no stock of Grace. He has no inner spring within himself in his old nature. He has to look for everything that can sustain his new life from God, even the Father, who has promised not to forsake him. Now surely, my dear Hearer, you know whether you are living by present faith or not. If all your comfort is derived from that which you can handle, and

hear, and see. And if your joys of life are only the outward things of the present—then you are no member of the Church of God.

Whether you may have been baptized, or confirmed—whatever profession you may have made, or whatever sign you may have received—you do not belong to Christ’s people—nor can you belong to them. But if you live by faith, I care not of what Church you are a member. If you are exhibiting day by day a living faith upon a living but unseen God. If your trust is in His Providence. If you daily resort to Christ for help and succor. If you have that faith which is the mark of God’s elect, you may depend upon it that you are one of His.

One other mark let us give among many more which might be mentioned. These people found, wherever they went, that they were surrounded by foes. In the wilderness the Amalekites were against them. When they crossed into the promised land all the inhabitants of Canaan were up in arms against them. So I think you will find it if you are a child of God. All places are full of snares. Events, prosperous or adverse, expose you to temptations. All things that happen to you, though God makes them work for good, in themselves would work for evil. Here on this earth the world is no friend to Divine Grace to help you on to God.

The bias of the current is not towards Heaven. Alas, it is the other way! “Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.” “The whole world lies in the Wicked One, and you are of God, little children.” Darkness prevails. It cannot minister to your safety or to your happiness. Neither can the sinful world minister light to the understanding, peace to the conscience, joy to the heart, or holiness to the life of the Believer. You will have to fight continually. The last step you take will be a conflict, and you will never be able to sheathe your sword until you are in the bosom of Christ. Thus must you maintain the godly warfare—

*“‘Till with yonder blood-bought crowd  
You shall sing on Canaan’s shore  
Songs oft triumph, sweet and loud  
War with Amalek no more.”*

Here, then, are some of the marks of the Church of Christ. I hope that a part of that Church worships in this House of Prayer. A part of that Church will be found to worship in every House of Prayer where the disciples of our common Lord assemble, and the mystery of God and of the Father and of Christ is acknowledged.

II. Let us pass on to the second word, which is this, that IT IS THE DUTY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH TO INVITE SUITABLE PERSONS TO JOIN WITH IT. As you read—“Come you with us, and we will do you good”—are not these the terms in which any Church should invite a suitable pastor to unite with it? I have always felt that they have a better application to a pastor than they have to the people. For it is said of Hobab, “You know how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and you shall be unto us instead of eyes.”

It was inviting a really efficient helper, who would be of great service to the Israelites, to come and cast in his lot with them. So should a Church expect to find in its pastor one who may guide them, because he knows how they are to encamp in the wilderness. One who may be to them, in some respects, instead of eyes. Their invitation should come in this way, not only, “Come you with us, that we may get good out of you”—that is one design—but it should also be, “Come you with us, that we may do you good. That we may hold up your hands, that we may sustain you by our prayers, that we may back you up by our efforts. That being led onward by you from one work of Christian activity to another, we may never fail you, never betray you, but may stand with you even to the last.”

I believe you will seldom get much good unless you are willing also to confer good. Those who are the nearest to the heart of the preacher, in all Christian service, will in all probability be most spiritually enriched under his ministry. I speak not of myself nor for myself, but I specially address myself now to those of you, my Hearers, who are members of other Churches. Do, I exhort you, love your ministers! Stand up for their character in all companies! Rally at their side in all their efforts—never let them have to regret your absence at the weeknight service, or at any other time, if you can help it.

Let them see that you appreciate the men whom you have chosen to be over you in the Lord, and that you have said in inviting them to come among you, “Come you with us, and we will do you good.” Not to linger on that view, however pertinent and seasonable, let us take the words as significant of the manner in which Churches should invite suitable persons to come among them as private members. Are there not those who go in and out merely as visitors worshipping with you, who have never joined hands with you in Covenant?

They meet with you as mere hearers, under the same ministry, but they have not identified themselves with the brotherhood to sit down and feast with you at the Table of the Lord. To such as these the proposal may be made, and the welcome proffered. The conditions, of course, need to be thoroughly understood on our part as well as on theirs. We dare not invite anyone to join the visible Church who has not first joined the invisible Church. We do not believe that a man has any right to be baptized in water unless he has first been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Nor that anyone has a right to eat of the Lord’s Supper, the outward signs of bread and wine, until he has eaten of the flesh and drank of the blood of the Son of Man, in a spiritual sense.

He must have the essence of the symbol before we dare give the symbol. So a man must be vitally united to the living Church of Christ before he has any right to be professionally united there. Therefore it would be a sin on the part of any child of God to say to anyone whom he knew to be an unconverted person, “Come and unite yourself with the Church.” No, that cannot be. First, dear Hearer, you must be one with Christ, reconciled to God, a Believer in the precious blood—and then afterwards you may come to the Church of God. But until then you have no part nor lot in this matter, for you are still in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of

iniquity.

Moses did not thus invite any strangers or neighbors indiscriminately, saying, “Come you with us,” but he invited Hobab as one whom he well knew, and of whose fitness he could no doubt feel. Was not Raguel his father, the priest of Midian, a servant of the Most High God? And was not Hobab also a worshipper of Jehovah, the God of Israel? “Come you with us,” says he, “you are our kith and kin. Birds of a feather flock together. Come you with us and we will do you good. You are one of our Brethren, come and welcome, nothing shall stand in the way. Come you with us, and we will do you good.”

Now, I have heard persons speak on this wise, “I believe that my child has been converted, but you must not think that I have pressed him, for I never spoke to my child about religion.” I am heartily ashamed of a father who can say that! And I hope that he will be equally ashamed of himself. I quite agree, however, that no parent and no friend should press another to make a public profession of faith until he is as assured as he possibly can be that the fruits of the Spirit are put forth in that child, or that friend. But, once assured of that, there can be no credit in holding your tongue about a Christian duty. It is the duty of every child of God to be associated with the Christian Church, and surely it is part of our duty to instruct others to do what the Lord would approve of! Do not, therefore, hesitate to say to such as serve and fear the Lord, “How is it that you remain outside the pale of the visible Church? Come you with us, and we will do you good.” So Moses did to Hobab.

As it is a very kind and tender word, “Come you with us,” let it be spoken persuasively. Use such reasoning as you can to prove that it is at once their duty and their privilege. Observe, Moses does not command, but he persuades. Nor does he merely make a suggestion or give a formal invitation, but he uses an argument. He puts it attractively, “And we will do you good.” So, look the matter up—study it—get your arguments ready. Seek out inducements from your own experience. Draw a reason, and there and then try to persuade your Christian friends.

Do it heartily. Observe how Moses puts it as from a very warm heart. “Come you with us. Give me your hand, my Brother. Come you with us, and we will do you good.” There are no “ifs,” “ands,” or “buts.” It is not, “Well, you may perhaps be welcome,” but “Come you with us.” Give a hearty, loving, warm invitation to those whom you believe to be your Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

Do it repeatedly if once will not suffice. Observe in this case, Hobab said he thought he would depart to his own land and his kindred. But Moses returned to the charge, and says, “Leave us not, I pray you.” How earnestly he puts it! He will have no put off. If at first it was a request, now it is a beseeching almost to entreaty—“Leave us not, I pray you.” And how he repeats the old argument, but puts it in a better light—“If you go with us, yes, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto you.”

I would, therefore, earnestly say to Christian Brothers and Sisters here, look for some among our congregation, such as you believe to be godly people, and put to them this matter. I am sure they are losing much benefit, and quite certain that they are standing in an irregular position. If it is right for any one Christian not to be a member of a Church it is right for all Christians not to be members of Churches—consequently it would be right for there to be no visible Church, and ordinances might be dispensed with—for all these things must either exist through the maintenance of sacred order or else collapse with the breach of godly discipline.

What is not the duty of one is not the duty of any—and what is the duty of one is the duty of all—for we all stand alike before God. If I may be innocent in abstaining from union with the people of God, so may all of you. Or if you may, so may I. There is no more obligation upon me to preach the Gospel than there is upon any one of you to make a profession of his faith. If you are a Christian, the same rule of love that prompts me to speak for my Lord should prompt you in your way to speak for your Lord. And if I should not be excusable if I remained silent, and refused to bear my testimony, neither will you be excusable, being a Christian, if you refuse to unite yourself with the people of God.

Remember our Master’s word, “Whoever therefore, shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in Heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men,” (which has the force there of not confessing), “him will I also deny before My Father which is in Heaven.”

Before I leave this point let me call your attention to a certain sense in which Christian men may address this invitation to all that they meet with. “Come you with us, and we will do you good.” Not, “come and join our Church,” not, “come and be members,” not, “come and put on a profession of faith.” You cannot say that to any but to those in whom you see the fruits of the Spirit. But you may say, and you ought to say, to ALL persons of all classes on all sides, “Come away from the seed of evildoers. Cast in your lot with the people of God. Leave the world, come on pilgrimage to the better country. Forsake the pursuit of vanities—lay hold on eternal life. Waste not all your thoughts upon the bootless cares of time— think about the momentous matters of eternity.

“Why will you be companions of those who are upon the wrong side, and whose cause is the cause of evil? Why will you remain an enemy to God? Why will you be in an unreconciled state? We, by God’s Grace, have cast in our lot with Christ and with His cause. We desire to live to His glory. Our ambition is to serve Him. If we could, we would live without sin, for we hate it and loathe it. If we could, we would be as the angels are, without a single fault. Come and cast in your lot with us—that is, believe. That is, trust a Savior slain. That is, put your soul into the custody of Christ the Intercessor. That is, press forward through a life of holiness on earth to a home of happiness in Heaven.” “Come you with us, and we will do you good.”

So, then, the exhortation of our text which, strictly speaking, seems most applicable to the minister, becomes next suitable to the child of God who has not up to now cast in his lot with the company of our Lord’s dis

ciples. And after that, in a certain sense, it may be appropriately addressed to all who come under the sound of the Gospel. “Come you with us, and we will do you good.”

III. But now, our third observation is that THE MAIN ARGUMENT— THE MOST POWERFUL INCENTIVE WE CAN EVER USE IS THAT ASSOCIATION WITH THE CHURCH OF CHRIST WILL DO THOSE WHO ENTER INTO IT GOOD.

I am sure it will, for I speak from experience. And if I were to call upon many scores, and even hundreds, in this House of Prayer, they would all bear the same testimony—that union with the people of God has done them good. The Church of God may say this, first, because she can offer to those who join with her good company. In the Church of God are those who are called “the excellent of the earth,” in Whom David said was all his delight. In the Church of God are the humble, meek, and lowly.

And, though in that Church there will come a traitorous Judas, yet there are not wanting the warm-spirited and loving John, the bold and daring Peter, the practical James, the well-instructed Paul in labors more abundant, and many of the precious sons of Zion and daughters of Jerusalem in like manner. Of whom, I might affirm, as the Apostle did of Priscilla and Aquila, they are my helpers in Christ Jesus, unto whom I not only give thanks, but also all the Churches of the Gentiles. Truly we can sing with heart-felt sincerity, Dr. Watts’ paraphrase of David’s Psalm —

*“Here my best friends, my kindred dwell,  
Here God my Savior reigns.”*

Good company is ever a good thing, and the children of God may say to their Brethren who have not yet joined with them, “Come you with us, and we will do you good,” for we will introduce you to the goodly fellowship of the saints. Come join a section of the general assembly and Church of the First-Born whose names are written in Heaven, and whose work of faith, patience of hope, and labors of love are spread abroad throughout the world.

“Come with us,” the Church of God may say, “and you shall have good instruction,” for it is in the true Church of God that the doctrines of Grace are preached, that the Covenant of Grace is unfolded, that the Person of Christ is extolled, that the work of the Spirit is magnified. All the precious things, indeed, which make up the spiritual meat of God’s servants are brought forth and put upon the table every Sunday. There the good stewards bring forth things both new and old. In the midst of the Church the Good Shepherd makes us to lie down in the green pastures, and leads us beside the still waters. Come you with us, and the teaching of the Church shall do you good—you shall hear those glorious doctrines which shall build you up in your most holy faith.

“Come you with us, and we will do you good,” in the best sense, for you shall feel in our midst the good Presence of God. Where two or three are gathered together in Christ’s name, there is He in the midst of them. And in the greater assemblies of His people, when the solemn hymn swells up to Heaven and the fervent prayer rises like a cloud of sweet perfume, and the ministry of the Gospel is diffused like a sweet smelling savor of Christ unto God—there is God. There the Father is, receiving returning prodigals, accepting His dear children who feel the spirit of adoption.

There the Son is, manifesting Himself unto them as He does not unto the world. There the Spirit is, working in them to will and to do of His own good pleasure, and helping their infirmities as a Comforter and an Advocate. Have you not often felt the Presence of God, my dear Brothers and Sisters, in your assemblies as the people of God? Can you not, therefore, say with the recollections in your glowing hearts of the consolations you have received in association with each other, “Come you with us, and we will do you good”?

“Come with us again, for you shall participate in all the good offices of the Church.” That is to say, my Christian Brothers and Sisters, if you will cast in your lot with us, if there is prayer, you shall have your share in it. We will pray for you in your trouble, and trial, and anguish. If a Brother’s voice can intercede for you when your tongue is dumb with grief, you shall certainly have such help as they that can minister to you. Come you with us, for in the true Church of God there is sympathy. Genuine Believers are taught to “weep with those that weep,” and to “rejoice with those that rejoice.” They feel that they are members, one of another, and partakers of the same life with Jesus Christ.

If there is anything to be found in ordinances you shall have a share of that good thing. If the Lord reveals Himself in the breaking of bread, you shall not be shut out from the Table. Come you with us, and when we behold Him you shall see Him, too. Come you with us, and if our fellowship is with Christ, you shall have a share in it. And if our conversation of the things of God is sweet and pleasant, you, too, shall have your say and your good word, and we will rejoice to hear you. We invite you to a pure brotherly fellowship, not to one of name only, but in deed and in heart. “Come you with us, and we will do you good.”

But the good that Hobab was to get was not only on the road. He must have got a deal of good on the road, for he saw in the sacrifice what he had never seen before. While he walked among those tents of Judah he must have felt that God was remarkably present there as he had never felt it among the tents of Midian. He saw there every morning the pillar of cloud, and every night the pillar of fire. He heard the sound of the silver trumpets. He saw the uplifting of the sacred banners, and the marching of the chosen host of God, and he must have felt, “This is a place more marvelous than any I have ever trod before in that falling manna, in that miraculous stream. I see everywhere the marks of Omnipotence, love, and wisdom as I never have seen them in all my solitary musings or my long wanderings aforetime.”

So, in the Church of God there are the footprints of Deity, there are marks of the sublime Presence of the Christ of God who abides in the furnace with His afflicted people. Signs of God’s Presence such as all the world besides cannot exhibit. You shall get good on the road. But still, the main good that Hobab got was this—he went into the promised land with

God’s people. We read of his people, the Kenites dwelling in the land in aftertime. He seems to have become a partaker of the same Covenant with Israel, to have become part and parcel with them. So, the main blessing that you get from being united with the invisible Church of Christ through being part and parcel of the Body of Christ is reserved for the hereafter—

*“When God makes up His last account  
Of natives in the Holy Mount;  
‘Twill be an honor to appear  
As one new born and nourished there.”*

Woe unto those who shall have no part with Israel in the day when the lots shall be divided and the portions shall be given! Woe unto such as shall be found among the Amalekites or Canaanites—strangers to the chosen seed! But happy shall all they be who have God to be their God, for their portion shall be bliss forever. Come you, therefore, with us, for whatever good the Lord shall do unto us you shall be a partaker in it.

IV. And now, lastly. All this being seriously pondered and clearly understood, the last point is a matter of very serious importance. Lest we should be found mere pretenders, LET ALL OF US WHO BELONG TO CHRIST’S CHURCH TAKE CARE TO MAKE THIS ARGUMENT TRUE.

I speak to many Brothers and Sisters here who have long been joined to the visible Church of God, and I put these questions to them—How have you carried out this silent compact which has been made with the friends of Christ? You have promised to do them good—have you fulfilled your pledges? I am afraid few of us have done good to our fellow Christians up to the measure that we might have done, or that we ought to have done. Some professors, I fear, have forgotten the compact altogether. They joined the Church, but the idea of doing good to the rest of the community has scarcely entered into their mind.

“Come you with us, and we will do you good.” You say this, then, to the poor members of the Church. Has God prospered you? Do them good. Say not to them, “Be you warmed and be you filled,” but as far as ever your ability can reach, minister to them that Christ may not have to say to you, “I was an hungered and you gave me no meat. I was thirsty and you gave me no drink.” Let your charity be wide as the world, for God makes it to rain on the just and the unjust—but remember—He has a peculiar people, and He would have us to be a peculiar people unto Himself. Let us do good unto all men, but specially to those who are of the household of faith. If you know a Brother in Christ whose need is pressing, own him as a Brother—open your hands wide unto him—do him good in this respect.

You that are old members of the Church, well established and instructed, you have virtually promised to do good to the young members— will you not try to do so? Some of them, perhaps, are not all you would like them to be. Mind you, you are not to condemn, but to reform them. Can you not gently prune the luxuriance of their branches that are a little too wild? Would it not be possible for you, in a loving and an affectionate manner, to assist them in the points in which they are weak? To lead them in the matters in which they err? Do them good—do not clamor against them with reproach, censure, sneer, and jibe. Nor wish to bind them down to conformity with your rules, judging them by the somberness of your own disposition.

What if they are lively and cheerful—try to make them merry and wise. Let them be happy and rejoice—seek that their happiness may be in Christ, and their rejoicing in the Lord. Do them good. There are some of your fellow Christians who are faint-hearted—not pleasant people to talk to. They will never cheer you much. They always look on the black side. They have always some trouble. They are terribly dull company—do not shun them, do them good. Strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of feeble heart, “Be strong. Fear not.” Do not forsake them, but you that are spiritual bear their burdens, and help to make them rejoice.

Some among your number will be backsliders—alas, that it should be so. Let not your coldness ever accelerate the pace at which they step aside—rather let your persevering care watch over them, that their first wandering may be soon checked. Little, alas, can be done to remedy backsliding when it goes far, but much may be done by nipping it in the bud. In the Church of God, prevention is infinitely better than cure. Watch over them, then. “If any man be overtaken in a fault, you that are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, remembering yourself lest you also be tempted.”

Some in the Church may be ignorant. There always were such. No standard of height is set up in the Word of God for all the recruits to be up to that level. No bylaw prescribes that none be received unless they are of a certain stature. If, therefore, some you meet with are very ignorant, do them good. Do not set about a report of any absurd remark that they may make, or any misapprehension they may have upon a point of Divinity. You were not always so wise as you are now—probably you are not so wise now as you think you are. But anyhow, I shall argue from the wisdom you possess your duty to impart. You have said, “Come you with us, and we will do you good.” It is not doing any man good to smile at him, to find fault with him for not knowing. But it is doing him good to hide his shortcomings and help his progress.

Once again—there may be some in your midst who are in a good deal of trouble. Have they no friends to sympathize and console them? Alas, friends in this world are often too much like swallows that are gone as soon as the first frost appears. Let it not be so with you—if you never owned him your friend before—be his friend now. Come to his aid if you possibly can. Let him have your countenance. Do not pass him because his black coat has a rusty hue. Do not get out of his way because you are afraid that he is short of cash. As far as ever you can, let him see, now he is in his trouble, that you did not value him for what he had, but for himself, for his character, for his attachment to Christ.

If anybody has spoken ill of him, do not be ready to jot down as true the slander that every fool or villain may please to hold forth against a

Christian man. Search for yourselves, and if you are obliged to believe it, yet say little about it. Carry it before God, as though it were your own sin, and sorrow over it. Talk to your Brother, if it is your lot to know him well, and get him to leave the evil into which he has fallen, and lead him back again. But do not forsake him. Or if he is the victim of slander and scandal, be you among the first to defend him. I do hope that there will always be among us a spirit of true Christian brotherhood so that those who love Christ and have thrown in their lot with us may find that we really desire to do them good.

I have thus spoken more particularly because I know that the number of Christians among us who are not making a profession is unusually large just now. I had far rather it should be so than that it should be the reverse—than that many should be making a profession without knowing or feeling the private virtue and public faith it demands. Better that you were outside the visible Church all your lives, and be in Christ, than make a profession and yet have no part nor lot with Him. All these outward things are nothing compared with the inward. “You must be born again.” There must be a living faith in Christ, a real change of heart—an indwelling of the Spirit of God to attest the verity of your godliness. Where these are, the rest ought not to be neglected.

These things ought you to have done, and not to have left the other undone, but still, even if they are left undone, it shall not amount to a total shipwreck. But if there is no faith, you may build the vessel as you will, and you may think that you have loaded her with precious treasures—but sink she must—because that alone which would have kept her afloat has been neglected.

God grant us to be one with Christ, and to be one with His people in time and in eternity. There now—there now—there is Christ’s Church. And if I saw that she were in the stocks, and all were hooting her—if she stood in the pillory, and all were pelting her—yet it would be my desire to throw in my lot with her! Whatever she endured I would endure, because the day comes when those who were not on the side of Christ and His Church would give their eyes if they had been!

Yes, would wish themselves that they had never been born to think that they did not take up with the reproached people, and did not side with the reproached Savior. O be with Christ in His sorrows, that you may be with Him in His joy! Be with Him in His reproach, that you may be with Him in His glory! Amen.

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THE MARCH!  
NO. 368

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 31, 1861, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

**“And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let Your enemies be scattered and let them that hate You flee before You.”  
Numbers 10:35.**

THE people of God in the wilderness were led instrumentally by the wisdom of Moses and his father-in-law Hobab. But really their guiding star was the visible Presence of God in the pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. I suppose that the possession of this pillar as a guide did not remove from them the duty and the necessity of using the judgment of Moses and Hobab as to the place where they should encamp. You will remember that Moses expressly said to his relative, “You know how to encamp in the wilderness and you shall be unto us instead of eyes.”

They had the guidance of God, yet they were not to neglect the wisdom which God had given to His servants and the judgment with which He had endowed them. We ought to learn from this, I think, that while we ever seek the guidance of God in Providence, yet we may frequently find direction and guidance in the use of our own common sense, our own discretion with which the Lord has endowed us. As long as the pillar of cloud tarried, the people always waited. However inconvenient the spot might be, if it rested one day, or twenty days, or a month, or a whole year, they stood still.

But the moment that the cloud moved, whether the fiery column marched through the darkness of the night or the cloudy pillar mellowed the brightness of the sun and screened them from its torrid heat, they removed at once. However excellent might be their quarters, they never dared to delay when once the Presence of God moved from above them. It was His to lead—it was theirs to follow. Yet, before they began the march, before the standard of Judah was uplifted and that tribe began to take up its tents to lead the van, the silver trumpet was always blown in the front.

It was heard through the entire encampment—the silver trumpet, which seemed to say, “Arise! Depart!—This is not your rest. Your God has removed and you must follow.” Then Moses himself came forward and stretching out his hands, he cried, “Arise, O God and let Your enemies be scattered and let them that hate You flee before You.” When this was done, on marched the mighty host and when they came to their halting place again and the trumpet sounded for the rest of eventide, up came the king in Jeshurun, the Prophet of Horeb and lifting up his hands, again he

cried, “Return unto Your rest and unto the many thousands of Israel,” and the pillar rested over the top of the great encampment and gave them a bright and flaming light by night, even as it gave them a glorious covering and protection by day.

To what use are we to put this prayer of Moses for no passage of Scripture is of private interpretation? No single text in the Word relates simply to the occasion on which it is spoken—but whatever things were written aforetime were written for our learning. The Word of God is a living Word—not a Word that had life in it in the day of Moses and is now dead—but a Word which is as living to us at this hour as when it first came from the Prophetic lips of the great Lawgiver. I think I shall be warranted in using the text, “Rise up, Lord and let Your enemies be scattered and let them that hate You flee before You” in three ways this morning

We shall use it, first, as the watchword of God’s Israel in every age. Secondly, we are warranted by the sixty-eighth Psalm in referring this text, typically and mystically, to the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. And I think, also, the guidance of God’s Spirit will warrant us, in the third place, in using this text personally, for ourselves as individuals and as a Church. And we would offer this prayer now that the ark of God in our midst is about to be removed, “Rise up, Lord and let Your enemies be scattered. And let them that hate You flee before You.”

I. First, then, THIS HAS BEEN THE WATCHWORD OF THE CHURCH OF GOD IN ALL AGES.  
The people of God in the wilderness were the picture of God’s Church upon earth. We are strangers and foreigners upon the earth. We are pilgrims and sojourners as all our fathers were. I was struck last evening, on reading for my own instruction the 33rd chapter of the book of Numbers, with the constant occurrence of verses concerning the removal of the people. “And they removed from Ethan and turned again unto Pihahiroth.” “And they journeyed in the wilderness of Ethan and pitched in Marah. And they removed from Marah and came unto Elim.”  
They went from the place of bitterness to the place of feasting. “And in Elim were twelve fountains of water and threescore and ten palm trees. And they pitched there. And they removed from Elim and encamped by the Red Sea. And they removed from the Red Sea and encamped in the wilderness of Sin. And they took their journey out of the wilderness of Sin and encamped in Dophkah. And they departed from Dophkah and encamped in Alush. And they removed from Alush and encamped at Rephidim.”  
And so the whole chapter is a succession of removing and encamping till at last they ceased to dwell in tents and came to live in their own walled cities in the land of Canaan. Just such has been the history of the Church—it has always been removing its place and such has been the condition of each individual. Here we have no abiding city. “We seek a city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God.” Here we have but an earthly house of our tabernacle which is soon to be dissolved and we are continually men of the weary foot who rest not but journey onward to the place of rest.  
Albeit that they had no habitation except their tents yet it is true of Israel in the wilderness that they always had an habitation. Do you not remember the song of Moses—“Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.” Whatever they were, God was their dwelling place. As I have said before, by day they were covered with His cloud and they dwelt under the vast canopy like princes in a pavilion. By night they were covered with its fiery luster and they rested under it with a light that never made glad the earth by night save only to their eyes.  
God’s wings were always over them. He carried them all the days of old and they did really rest and dwell in Him. Today, in our Father’s house there are many mansions and it was true of them yesterday that in their Father’s house were many tents, in those tents they dwelt. But all of them dwelt in their Father’s house. This, too, is true of the entire Church— always wandering, yet never far from home—unhoused yet always in palaces. Sometimes destitute, afflicted, tormented and yet always clothed, always rich, always feasting to the full. Deserted, yet not alone, forsaken, yet multiplied. Left, yet still abiding with Him that fills all in all.  
We might carry the parallel out still further. But it is enough for us to remark this morning that in another point the people of God in the wilderness were the picture of the Church of Christ. Wherever they marched, when God went before them, they marched to victory. Lo, the Red Sea rolls in their way. The pillar of cloud moves. They follow. The frightened sea divides and the Red Sea itself is astonished. What ails you, O Sea, that you were driven back and your waters stood upright as a heap? It was before the Lord, before the presence of the mighty God of Jacob.  
They march onward. The Amalekites attack them—they fall upon the Israelites on a sudden when they are unaware. But God fights for them. Moses’ hands are upheld until the going down of the sun and Joshua smites the Amalekites and Jehovah Nissi is all glorious. Then Sihon, king of the Amorites, came out against them and Og, king of Bashan and the Moabites attack them. But the Lord is in the front of them and they suffer no ill. Their enemies melt before them as the fat of rams. Into smoke they are consumed.  
Even so has it been with the Church of God in all ages. Her march has been that of one who is fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners. Let but her silvery trumpet sound and the echo shakes the vaults of Hell. Let but her warriors unsheathe their sword and their enemies fly before them like thin clouds before a Biscay gale. Her path is the pathway of a conqueror—her march has been a procession of triumph. Wherever she has put her foot the Lord has given her that land to be her heritage forever and ever and as it was in the beginning it is now and ever shall be till this world shall end. Amen.  
Now, having just touched upon the parallel, let me show how this war cry has really been heard of God and has been fulfilled to all His people. Turn to this Bible, this Book of the wars of the Lord. Wherever His Church has gone and He has risen up, have not His enemies been scattered? Though they were the hundred Kings of Canaan, were they not hanged upon trees, or speedily put to death with the edge of the sword? Though it were Agag, king of the Amalekites, was he not hewn in pieces?  
Though it should be the mighty princes of the Philistines—did not their champions lose their heads and their princes fly apace? Though it should be the embattled ranks of Syria—did not God smite them in the valleys and chase them on the hills? Though it were Sennacherib—did not God rise up and did not His enemies at once die before His presence? Did they not fall like the leaves of the forest “when autumn has blown”? Though it were the hosts of Egypt in later times, or the mighty ranks of Babylon, or Media, or Persia—can we not say concerning them all—“Your right hand, O Lord, Your right hand, O Lord, has dashed in pieces the enemy. Your right hand, O Lord, has done wonderful things, this is known of all the earth”?  
But when we have read the Bible story through, the Book of God’s triumph has only begun. Look to the later battles of the Church. You remember the story of Oliver Cromwell and his men at the battle of Dunbar—when before the battle they all of them knelt on the heather and asked the Lord their God to be with them and then springing up they chanted this old Psalm—  
*“Let God arise and scattered let all His enemies be,  
And let all those that do Him hate before His presence flee. As the smoke is driven, so drive You them. As fire melts wax away, Before God’s face let wicked men, so perish and decay.”*And then, home went their swords and their enemies fled down the hill and a speedy victory was given.  
I quote not this except as a picture and illustration of the history of the entire Church. Methinks, in a spiritual sense, when Luther first bowed his knee the Church began to chant, “Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered.” When Knox in Scotland upheld the glory of Jesus’ name, was it not once again, “O God arise, let them that hate You flee before You”? When Whitefield and Wesley, seraphic Evangelists of Jesus Christ, went through this land, was not this the very song of Israel, “O God, arise and let Your enemies be scattered”? And shall it not be ours today? Let but God go forth with our arms. Let Him but speak through our ministers. Let Him but dwell in our elders. Let Him but make the bodies of our Church members His temples and His enemies must be scattered and they must consume away.  
I can well conceive, my Brethren, that such a prayer as this would well befit the tongue of a minister who lands as the first herald of the Cross in some barbarian land. My Brother, a solitary missionary in some populous city in China might bow his knee when first he attempts to preach and say, “O Lord, arise and let Your enemies be scattered and let them that hate You flee before You.” A Williams landing upon Erromanga might say, even though his blood stained the wave, “Rise up, Lord and let Your enemies be scattered.”  
Livingstone and Moffat, toiling in the midst of the thick dense ignorance of central Africa might frequently say from their innermost souls, “Rise up, Lord and let Your enemies be scattered.” Those brave men who risk all for Christ, not counting their lives dear unto them that they might finish their course with joy—methinks when they as pioneers for Christ bear the ark in the midst of the wilderness, they could not breath a better prayer for themselves and you and I cannot do better than put it up for them now, “Rise up, Lord and let Your enemies be scattered. Let them that hate You flee before You.”  
Brethren, this ought to be our prayer today, in anticipation of the Millennial splendor. When it is to come, I do not know. Dr. Cumming may. But I am not so wise as he. This I know, Scripture says He is to come. But I think it says, “He shall come in such an hour as you think not”—He comes as a thief in the night. Whether He shall come in the year 1866, I do not know. I hope He may, but I had rather that He should come in the year 1861. I should not like to postpone my watchfulness till 1866, but be always looking for Him. Whether He shall come in the morning or at cockcrow, in mid-day or midnight, blessed is that servant who when his Lord comes shall be found watching.  
Cast your eyes mentally over the world and look today in what a state it is. What wonderful changes have taken place and yet how firm are the roots of evil! How tightly bound around the very granite of earth’s nature are the roots of the great upas tree of iniquity. Who can hope to tear it up by the roots, or cut down this towering cedar? See in one land where liberty was blustered, the lash still dripping with gouts of gore. See you in another land where there is much advancement in many things, the people priest-ridden and borne down beneath the yoke. Look at the myriads that have never seen the great light—that sit in darkness and in the valley of the shadow of death.  
Where is the arm, where is the arm that can put back the world upon its proper pivot? Where is the almighty power that can turn once again the pole so that earth shall stand no more oblique, but in uprightness roll before the Throne of God? Where is the arm that can roll up the clouds as a mantle and the mists as rags? There is but one. And our business is to cry today, “Rise up, Lord and let Your enemies be scattered. Let them that hate You flee before You.” Come quickly, come quickly—come, Lord Jesus. Then shall the world be rid of her tyrants. Then shall slavery cease to be. Then shall your unsuffering kingdom come. The Great Shepherd shall reign and everywhere shall He be extolled—to Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba. Prayer also shall be made for Him continually and daily shall He be praised.  
Before I pass from this head, quietly, for the edification of each individual Christian, let me remark that this prayer will suit your personal difficulties. Have you been in conflict lately? Has old Apollyon put you to your wits end? Has he thrown his fiery darts at you thick as hailstones when they fell on Egypt? Have you been crushed beneath his foot? Can you not deliver yourself? Pray “Rise up, Lord and let Your enemies be scattered.” Do your doubts prevail? Has your faith suffered an eclipse? Has a darkness that might be felt brooded over you? Say, “Rise up, Lord.”  
All that is wanted in the darkest night to clear it away is for the sun to rise. Battle not with your doubts yourself. Wrestle not with your own fears. Pray, “Rise up, Lord. These doubts of mine are enemies to Your honor—enemies to Your promise—enemies to Your Truth. Rise up, Lord and let them flee before You.” You shall soon find peace and quietness and in assurance and confidence your souls shall rest. Are you beset today by men who hate you? As a child of God have you acted with such simplicity and integrity that men not understanding you have imputed to you wrong motives?  
Have you been slandered and abused? “Avenge not yourself, but rather give place unto wrath. Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” Let your prayer be, “Rise up, Lord and let Your enemies be scattered.” Are you serving God in some particular work where many are seeking to undo all that you can accomplish? Are you a City Missionary and do you labor in the midst of a den of iniquity? Does it seem that what you do in one day is undone in one hour by others? Take it to the Throne of Grace. Say, “Rise up, Lord and let Your enemies be scattered.” Have you a great purpose conceived within your soul and does Providence seem to stand in the way of its accomplishment? Has the Lord commanded you to some special work and do friends discourage and enemies abuse? This prayer may suit you: “Rise up, Lord.”  
It needs but that God should make bare His arm—His uprising is enough. As Luther said when opposing the Church of Rome—“They are not strong. God can overthrow them with His little finger.” And so say you. All the foes of the Church with all their battlements behind which they are entrenched are nothing. They but seem to be. They are shadows, emptiness, nothing. Do you in confidence cry to your God—“Lord, do but rise. Do but stand up. Do but manifest Your power in any way whatever and Your enemies are scattered at once and those that hate You must flee before You for evermore”—  
**“When He makes bare His arm, what shall withstand His work? When He his people’s cause defends, who, who shall stay His hand? Let us, in life and death, boldly Your Truth declare  
And publish, with our last breath, Your love and guardian care.”**II. We shall now take the text IN ITS REFERENCE—TO CHRIST.  
Scripture is the best defender of Scripture. The diamond is not to be cut except with a diamond. We shall not understand one passage in the Word without another to explain it. That Book has keys in its own self for all its own locks. The 68th Psalm informs us that the moving of the ark from the lower place of the city of David was typical of the ascending of Christ into Heaven. Ah, methinks, my dear Brethren, the sorrowing Church when they beheld their Lord dragged by cruel men to judgment, when they heard Him accused and slandered, when they saw Him mocked and spit upon must have considered the battle to be a defeat.  
The tears must have stood in their eyes when they saw that He who was to be the Deliverer of Israel could not deliver Himself. How dense must have been the gloom over the fearing hearts of the Church when they saw their King, their Head,

dragged away and nailed ignominiously to the tree. And how dead must all their hopes have been when at last He bowed His head and gave up the ghost and the sword pierced Him to the heart and out there came the blood and water!  
Was it not the day of Hell’s triumph, the hour of earth’s despair, the moment of Heaven’s defeat? No. It was the reverse of all this. That moment when Christ died He gave the deathblow to all His enemies. That hour when they thought they were treading on Him He was crushing them and bruising the serpent’s head. Even when the Master was laid in the tomb and had to sleep there His three days as Jonah in the whale’s belly—if the Church had had faith they might have come early on the dawn of the first day of the week. And standing outside the tomb they might have begun to sing, “Rise up, Lord and let Your enemies be scattered and let them that hate You flee before You.”  
I think it will be no fantastic imagination if we conceive that the angels did in that hallowed day come down from Heaven before the sun had risen, knowing the appointed time and while one of them rolled away the stone the rest stood waiting on the wing and chanted, “Rise up, Lord and let Your enemies be scattered, let them that hate You flee before You.”  
Methinks I see the Champion awake. He unbinds the napkin from His head, He sees again the light—He rolls off the cerements of the tomb, rolls them up and places them by themselves. He has risen! The stone has been rolled away. He comes forth into mid air. O Hell, how did you shake! O Death, how were you plagued! O Earth, your Sun had risen indeed that day! Heaven, surely you did rejoice and the song rolled mightily along your streets! He rises and in that moment sin dies. The resurrection of Christ was God’s acceptance of Christ’s sacrifices. It was all that was wanted.  
The handwriting of ordinances had once been nailed to the Cross— they are now forever blotted out. Once had He borne the burden but now the burden is removed from His neck. God accepts Christ as being justified and therefore He rises from the dead and by that act all His people are justified. “He rose again for our justification.” The last hope of sin was crushed—its last pretense to any claim upon the people of God was hushed forever—its last arrogant claim to any right to their souls, or to their bodies, was quashed in Heaven’s High Court when Christ the Risen came forth in pure white robes to demand the spotlessness of His people in Him because of His resurrection for them.  
Nor was sin alone that day scattered. Did not all the hosts of Hell fall before Him? How glad they had been! All the demons had exalted themselves with the hope that their reign would now begin. Loosed should be the iron chain, broken should be the bolts at the pit’s mouth. Now might they come forth and revel, for the king who was to destroy them had been destroyed Himself. But when He rose, blank despair sat on the face of every fiend. How could they hope to kill His people? “Because He lives, they shall live also.” How could they hope to condemn His people? “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is Christ that died, yes rather, that is risen again.”  
Their hopes were gone, they were scattered indeed. As the wax melts before the fire so did their hopes melt away. Where was that day the boast of death? Had Christ remained in the jaws of death—had the Holy One seen corruption?—then had the redeemed remained the bond slaves of death, too. But He lives, He has broken the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron in sunder. Blessed are they that sleep, for they shall rise, too. He has led the way, the Breaker has gone up before them, the King at the head of them. He has cleared the gap. They have but to follow and enter into the resurrection and the life.  
That day methinks all the gods of the heathen fell down. It is a tradition that at that hour when the veil of the temple was rent in two, all the gods tottered on their thrones—they did so spiritually—if they did not literally. That day slavery began to relax its grasp of its whip. That day the tyrant’s throne began to shake. That day Heaven shone with greater splendor and Hell was more murky and dull than it had been before. That day Evil heard its own death knell sound in the air, while Good heard the marriage-peal of rejoicing saints, while angels shouted over a rising Savior.  
Nor was that all. After Christ had thus risen you will remember that He rose again. He rose from the grave to earth—He next rose from earth to Heaven. I think we may again conjecture that the angelic spirits came to meet the Master and they said, “Rise up, Lord and let Your enemies be scattered and let them that hate You flee before You.” Up He went, dragging sin, death and Hell at His chariot wheels, scattering, as He rode along, those gifts which He had received for men. He went up with sound of trumpet and with shouts of archangels. They near the gates—they sing, “Lift up your heads, O you gates and be you lift up you everlasting door, that the King of Glory may come in.”  
The angelic spirits on the other side chant, “Who is the King of Glory?” and once again, in waves of melody, they dash open the pearly gate singing again, “Lift up your heads, O you gates and be you lift up you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in.” On, on He rides. Scattered forever are all His enemies—having put all things under His feet and being crowned King of kings and Lord of lords. The Wonderful, the Counsellor. The Mighty God. The Everlasting Father. The Prince of Peace. Glory be unto Your name, Jesus, my soul warms with Your fire! Glory be unto You! These hands would put the crown upon Your head—this voice would sing instead of preach Your praise. Blessed be You, God over all, blessed forever!  
You have ascended up on high. You have led captivity captive. You have received gifts for men. Rise up, Lord—rise up from the Throne of Your majesty. Come and take the purchased possession. Come to claim Your own and these hands shall welcome You with joyful applause and this tongue shall welcome You with joyous songs. Yes, even these very feet shall dance like David before the ark if You will but arise, for Your enemies shall be scattered and they that hate You shall flee before You.  
III. But thirdly, WHAT MESSAGE HAS THIS TEXT FOR US AND HOW MAY WE USE IT?  
In the Providence of God we, as a Church and people, have had to wander often. This is our third sojourn within these walls. It is now about to close. We have had at all times and seasons a compulsion for moving. Sometimes a compulsion of conscience. At other times a compulsion of pleasure as on this occasion. I am sure that when we first went to the Surrey Music Hall, God went with us. Satan went too. That frightful calamity, the impression of which can never be erased from my mind, turned out in the Providence of God to be one of the most wonderful means of turning public attention to special services.  
And I do not doubt that it—fearful catastrophe though it was—has been the mother of multitudes of blessings. The Christian world noted the example. They saw its after-success. They followed it and to this day, in the theater and in the cathedral, the Word of God is preached where it was never preached before. Never could it be more manifestly seen than in that place, that the Word of God when preached simply and earnestly is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes.  
In each of our relocations we have had reason to see the hand of God and here particularly, for there are very many residents in the West-end who have in this place come to listen to the Word, who probably might not have taken a journey beyond the river and here God’s grace has broken the hard heart, here have souls been renewed and wanderers been reclaimed. 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.  
And now we journey to the house which God has in so special a manner given to us. I stand before you now as Moses stood before the people of Israel and with faith like his though not with such power and might as belonged to that honored servant of God I would pray, “Rise up, Lord and let Your enemies be scattered and let them that hate You flee before You.”  
“But what enemies do we have?” you say. We have multitudes. We shall have to do battle in our new Tabernacle more nearly with that old enemy of the church the Scarlet Beast—Rome has built one of its batteries hard by our place and there is one who styles himself “Archbishop of Southwark.” Well, we shall have to do battle against him and woe to you, Babylon! Woe to you, Babylon! Let but Christ be preached and where is AntiChrist? Let the Cross be lifted up and away with your crucifixes. Let the Truth be declared and where are your lies? This one Book, as the old reformers used to say—this Book against all the popes and cardinals and priests and all the devils in Hell.  
You have seen the picture, I dare say, of a pair of scales in one of which there is a Bible, very heavy, touching the very ground. And in the other there is a pope with his tiara on and a cardinal with his scarlet cap and a whole host of priests and Virgin Marys and idols all piled up. There is another learned doctor just hooking on to the chains and trying to pull down if he can—but all their combined weight cannot reach anything like the weight of this one blessed Book.  
Why, a farthing candle of Divine Truth can set on fire a whole prairie of popish error. It needs no great power in the preacher—he needs but to preach Christ’s Truth as he finds it in the Word of God and he shall find it to be a blast from the nostrils of God to wither up the beauty of this towering cedar. What matters it to me whether it is a cedar or a fir? In the name of God I feel my axe this morning. It is sharp and keen and shall be laid to the roots of this tree and if we cannot avail, yet other hands and other arms should wield that self-same axe so sharp and keen and you, towering cedar, whose top is in the stars, but whose roots are in Hell—you shall yet come down and the nations of the earth shall rejoice because of your fall.  
Then we shall have another enemy. We have hard by us, almost as a next-door neighbor, Infidelity. There has been one of its special places for display. Well, well, Infidelity is but a very puny adversary comparatively. It is not half so cunning as Popery and has nothing like its might. There is something in Romanism that can seize the human mind. But Infidelity is bare, bald, naked, filthy. There are very few who will be overturned by that in an age when men are compelled to come more and more closely to God in the discoveries of nature and the wondrous findings out of science. We are not afraid of you, O Infidelity. Come forth Goliath—it is but David who meets you—the ministers of Christ are but little compared with your stalking greatness and gigantic might. But the sling and stone of Christ, preached simply and preached affectionately, shall reach the forehead of your wisdom and find you out and bring you down.  
But worse enemies than this we have. We shall have to deal with the indifference of the masses round about us and with their carelessness concerning Gospel Truth. We shall have to deal with prevailing sin and corruption—sin which at night-fall from the very steps of that edifice may be seen in all the colors of its harlotry. And how will we deal with it? Will we bring in some Socialist system? Shall we preach up some new method of political economy?  
No! The Cross, the old Cross is enough. This is the true Jerusalem blade, like that razor of old, with which the Tarquin cut the whetstone. We will but preach Christ as the sinner’s Savior. The Spirit of God as applying Christ’s Truth to the soul. And God the Father in His infinite sovereignty saving whom He will and in the bounty of His mercy willing to receive the vilest of the vile. And there is no indifference so callous, no ignorance so blind, no iniquity so base—there is no conscience so seared as not to be made to yield when God wills it before the might of His strength. “Rise up, Lord. Rise up, Lord and let these Your enemies be scattered and let them that hate You flee before You.”  
But what is to be our prayer? Does it say, “Rise up, preacher—occupy your pulpit”? True we may say, “Awake, Barak, awake and lead your captivity captive, you son of Abinoam.” But that is after the battle is fought, not before. “Rise up, Lord! O God the Father, rise up! Pluck Your right hand out of Your bosom and let Your purposes be accomplished! O God the Son, rise up. Show Your wounds and plead before Your Father’s face and let Your blood-bought ones be saved! Rise up, O God the Holy Spirit, with solemn awe, we do invoke You! Let those that have resisted You give way! Come, melt the ice. Dissolve the granite. Let the hardest heart give way. Rise up, Lord, Father, Son and Spirit, we can do nothing without You. But if You arise, Your enemies shall be scattered and they that hate You shall flee before You.”  
Will you and I go home and pray this prayer by ourselves, fervently laying hold upon the horns of God’s altar? I charge you, my Brethren in Christ, do not neglect this private duty. Go, each one of you, to your chambers. Shut your doors and cry to Him who hears in secret and let this be the burden of your cry—“Rise up, Lord and let Your enemies be scattered.” And at your altars tonight, when your families are gathered together, still let the same cry ring up to Heaven. And then tomorrow and all the days of the week and as often as we shall meet together to hear His Word and to break bread, cry, “Rise up, Lord and let Your enemies be scattered. And let them that hate You flee before You.”  
Pray for your children, your neighbors, your families and your friends and let your prayer be—“Rise up, Lord. Rise up, Lord.” Pray for this neighborhood. Pray for the dense darkness of Southwark and Walworth and Lambeth. And oh, if you cannot pray for others because your own needs come so strongly before your mind, remember, Sinner, all you need is but faith to look to Christ and then you may say, “Rise up, Lord. Scatter my doubts—kill my unbelief. Drown my sins in Your blood. Let these Your enemies be scattered. Let them that hate You flee before You.” Amen. Amen!

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THE GLORIOUS RIGHT HAND OF THE LORD  
NO. 363

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 24, 1861, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

**“And the Lord said unto Moses, Is the Lord’s hand waxed short? You shall see now whether My Word shall come to pass unto you or not.” Numbers 11:23.**

GOD had made a positive promise to Moses that for the space of a whole month he would feed the vast host in the wilderness with flesh. Moses, being overtaken by a fit of unbelief, looks to the outward means— calculates his commissariat—and is at a loss to know how the promise can be fulfilled. Shall the flocks and the herds be slain? How, then, should they have cattle wherewith to stock the land upon which they hoped soon to enter? And if they should slaughter all their beasts there would not be food enough for ravenous people for a month.

Shall all the fish of the sea leave their watery element and come to the tables of these glamorous hungry men? Even then, Moses thought there would be scarcely food enough to feed so vast a host for a month. You will see, my Brethren, right readily the mistake which Moses made. He looked to the creature instead of the Creator. Does the Creator expect the creature to fulfill his promise? No. He that makes fulfils. If He speaks, it is done—done by Himself. His promises do not depend for their fulfillment upon the cooperation of the puny strength of man.

God as a sovereign gives an absolute promise. And He can do it without fear of mistake, because He has Omnipotence wherewith to fulfill His greatest word. It was an error, indeed, to look to the sea for fish, instead of waiting upon Heaven for the promise. To look to the flocks for food, instead of believing on Him to whom belongs the cattle on a thousand hills. Suppose, my Friends, this country should be threatened by an invasion of some foreign power and you, in your wisdom and full of trembling should say to those whose province it is to guard our happy island—“I fear this land can never be protected, for the Emperor of China has but very little power. The Presidents of the Republics of South America have but little influence.” You would be stared at. Men would say, what has that to do with the question? The troops of Britain are to defend the land, not the troops of China, or Bolivia. What matters the weakness of those republics

or kingdoms? They are not expected to defend our land!

You would be absurd in looking for help where help was neither expected nor promised. And yet how commonly we do the same. God has promised to supply our needs and we look to the creature to do what God has promised to do. And then because we perceive the creature to be weak and feeble we indulge in unbelief. Why do we look to that quarter at all? Will you look to the top of the Alps for summer heat? Will you journey to the north pole to gather fruits ripened in the sun? Or will you take your journey towards the equator that your body may be braced by cool invigorating breezes?

Verily you would act no more foolishly if you did this than when you look to the weak for strength, or the creature to do the Creator’s work. The great folly of Moses is the folly of most believers. Let us, then, put the question aright. The ground of faith is not the sufficiency of the visible means for the performance of the promise, but the all-sufficiency of the invisible God most surely to do as He has said. And, then, if after that we dare to indulge in mistrusts, the question of God comes home mightily to us: “Has the Lord’s hand waxed short?” And may it happen, too, in His mercy, that with the question, there may come also that blessed promise, “You shall see now whether My Word shall come to pass unto you or not.”

It is a singular thing that such a question as this should ever be asked at all: “Has the Lord’s hand waxed short?” If we look anywhere and everywhere, apart from the conduct of man, there is nothing to suggest the suspicion. Look to God’s creation! Is there anything there which would make you say, “Is the Lord’s hand waxed short?” What pillar of the heavens has begun to reel? What curtain of the sky has been rent or motheaten? Have the foundations of the earth begun to start? Do they not abide as the Lord has settled them? Has the sun grown dim with age? Have the starry lamps flickered or gone out in darkness?

Are there signs of decay today upon the face of God’s creation? Have not howling tempests, the yawning ocean and death-bearing hurricanes asserted but yesterday their undiminished might? Say, is not the green earth as full of vitality, as ready to yield us harvests now as it ever has been? Do the showers fall less frequently? Has the sun ceased to warm? Are there any signs and tokens that God’s creation is tottering to its decay? No, journey where you will, you will see God as potent upon the face of the earth and in the very bowels of the globe as He was when He first said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.”

There is nothing which would tempt us to surmise or suspect that the Lord’s hand has waxed short. And look you, too, in Providence—is there anything there that would suggest the question? Are not His prophecies still fulfilled? Does He not cause all things to work together for good? Do the cattle on a thousand hills low out to Him for hunger? Do you meet with the skeletons of birds that have fallen to the ground from famine? Does He neglect to give to the fish their food, or do the sea-monsters die? Does not God still open His hand and supply the want of every living thing?

Is He less bounteous today than He was in the time of Adam? Is not the cornucopia still as full? Does He not still scatter mercies with both His hands right lavishly? Are there any tokens in Providence any more than in nature that God’s arm has waxed short? And look, too, in the matter of grace—is there any token in the work of grace that God’s power is failing? Are not sinners still saved? Are not profligates still reclaimed? Are not drunkards still uplifted from their sties to sit upon the Throne with princes? Are not harlots as truly reclaimed as were those in the days of Christ?

Is not the Word of God still quick and powerful, sharper than any twoedged sword? Which of His arrows has been blunted? Where have you seen the sword of the Lord snapped in two? When has God assayed to melt a heart and failed in the attempt? Which of His people has found the riches of His grace drained dry? Which of His children has had to mourn that the unsearchable riches of Christ had failed to supply his need?

In grace, as well as in Providence and nature, the unanimous verdict is that God is still Almighty, that He does as He wills and fulfills all His promises and His counsels. How is it, then, that such a question as this ever came from the lips of God Himself? Who suggested it? What suggested it? What could there have been that should lead Him or any of His creatures to say, “Is the Lord’s hand waxed short?” We answer there is but one creature that God has made that ever doubts Him. The little sparrows doubt not—though they have no barn nor field, yet they sweetly sing at night as they go to their roosts, though they know not where tomorrow’s meal shall be found.

The very cattle trust Him. And even in days of drought, you have seen them when they pant for thirst, how they expect the water—how the very first token of it makes them show in their very animal frame, by some dumb language, that they felt that God would not leave them to perish. The angels never doubt Him, nor the devils either—devils believe and tremble. But it was left for man—the most favored of all creatures—to mistrust his God. This high, this black, this infamous sin of doubting the power and faithfulness of Jehovah was reserved for the fallen race of rebellions Adam.

And we alone, out of all the beings that God has ever fashioned, dishonor Him by unbelief and tarnish His honor by mistrust. I shall try now, as

God shall help me, to mention some four or five cases in which men act as if they really believed that God’s hand had waxed short and I pray that in the most of these cases, this malady may be at once healed by the fact that God has said, “You shall see now whether My Word shall come to pass unto you or not.”

I. First of all, with regard to THE CHURCH AS A WHOLE. How often is it true that she so behaves herself as if she had a question in her mind as to whether the Lord’s hand had waxed short? She believes that the Divine hand was once mighty enough to bring in three thousand in one day by the simple preaching of Peter. She believes that her God was with her in olden times so mightily that her poor illiterate preachers were more than a match for the scholars of Socrates and Solon and were able to overturn the gods of the heathen, though they had both poetry and philosophy to be their bulwarks.

She believes still this and yet how often does she act as though the Gospel had become effete and outworn and the Spirit of God had been utterly withdrawn from her? In those early days she sent her missionaries to the ends of the earth. They were unprovided for, but they went forth without purse or script, believing that He who called them to go would find them sustenance. They landed on islands that were unknown to man and ventured among barbarous tribes who knew nothing of civilization. They ventured their lives even to the death—but they won for Christ the empire of the whole earth till there was not a spot known to men at that time where the name of Jesus had not been preached and where the Gospel had not been proclaimed.

But, now, we—the degenerate sons of glorious fathers—are afraid to trust God. There are some who would shut out the Gospel from India, because, forsooth, it might disturb our pitiful empire over that people. There are others who think the Gospel ill-adapted to some minds and that civilization must go before the Cross and not the Gospel in the vanguard of all true civilization among barbarous tribes. The mass of us—it is common to us all—the mass of us would be afraid to go out trusting in God to supply our needs. We should need first that everything should be prepared for us and that the way should be paved. We are not ready to leap as champions upon the wall of the citadel, leading the forlorn hope and planting the standard where it never stood before.

No, we can only follow in the track of others. We have few Careys and few Knibbs, few men who can go first and foremost saying, “this is God’s cause. Jehovah is the only God and in the name of the Eternal, let the idols be abolished.” O for more anointed ones to preach the Gospel, believing in its intrinsic might, assured that where it is preached faithfully, the Spirit of God is never absent! The doubts, the fears, the calculations, the policies, the judicious advisors of too many Christians prove my point that often the Church acts as if she thought the Lord’s hand were waxed short.

O Zion! Get up! Get up! Count no more your hosts for their strength is your weakness. Measure no longer your wealth for your wealth has often been your poverty and your poverty your wealth. Think not of the learning or the eloquence of your ministers and missionaries for full often these things do but stand in the way of the Eternal God. Come forth in simple confidence in His promise and you shall see whether He will not do according to His Word. You shall see a nation born at once. You shall behold the reign of Christ hastening on when you know how to deal with the world in the power of faith, believing in Christ, knowing that He shall have the beastly for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession.

I ought to say here that while this is a common sin of the Church, there are very many missionaries who have gone out from England during the last few years unconnected with any Society. And that there are now hundreds throughout the whole earth who have no visible means of support but who, by faith and prayer, depending simply upon God, find themselves as well provided for as those who have a Society at their back. I happen to be acquainted with some few of these men who have been foolish enough to trust God, who have been silly enough to believe His promise, who have been weak enough to rely only upon Him.

And I can say their testimony is that in all things God has been as good to them as His Word and I know they have been more useful as missionaries and more successful in evangelization because they believed God. They have proved their faith by their acts and God has honored their faith by giving them great success. I speak thus not of all—there are a few exceptions—but still it is the general rule that as a Church, the Church does not believe God. She believes her subscribers, she does not believe the Lord. She believes the committee, she does not trust in the Eternal. She trusts in the means, she does not rest on the bare arm of God. She wants to have her arm sleeved, girded about and robed with the weavings of man.

II. But I now pass on to a second point. WHEN BELIEVERS DOUBT THEIR GOD WITH REGARD TO PROVIDENCE, the question might well be asked of them, “Is the Lord’s hand waxed short?”

I do not doubt that I am speaking to some here this morning who have had many hisses and crosses in their business. Instead of getting forward they are going back and perhaps even bankruptcy stares them in the face. Or possibly, being hard working men, they may have been long out of employment and nothing seems now to be before their eyes but the starvation of themselves and their little ones. It is hard to bear this. This is an

iron that enters into the very soul. The pangs of hunger are not very easily appeased and to have want and destitution constantly before our eyes is enough to bring down the strong man and make the mighty tremble.

Little do some of us know how sharp and how acute must be these trials of famine and nakedness. But do you doubt, O Believer, do you doubt as to whether God will fulfill His promises wherein He said, “His place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure”? Would you question the advice of your Master: “Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek”? “Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them”? “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these” ?

And so you think that your heavenly Father, though He knows that you have need of these things, will yet forget you? When not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father and the very hairs of your head are all numbered, yet you must mistrust and doubt Him? Perhaps your affliction will continue upon you till you dare to trust your God and then it shall end. Full many there are who have been tried and sore vexed till at last they have been driven in sheer desperation to exercise faith in God and the moment of their faith has been the instant of their deliverance. They have seen whether God would keep His promise or not.

And now, O true Believer, what say you to this picture? In the cold, cold winter, when the snows have fallen thick on every tree and the ground is hard and crisp you have sometimes seen the charitable man open wide the window of his house and scatter crumbs along the white snow and you have seen the birds come from all the trees around and there they eat and were satisfied. A slanderer who lives next door tells you that that man starves his children. Do you believe him? Feed the sparrows and neglect the offspring of his loins? Give crumbs to birds and not feed his sons and daughters?

You feel instinctively that the kind heart which remembers the fowls of Heaven must yet more remember his own offspring. But what say you to this picture concerning yourself? Your God hears the young ravens when they cry and gives liberally to all the creatures that His hands has made and will He forget His sons and His daughters? His people bought with blood, His own peculiar heritage? No. Dare to believe Him now. His hand has not waxed short. Dare to trust Him now. Please not Satan and vex not yourself by indulging any more those hard thoughts of Him. Say, “My Father, You will hear my cry. You will supply all my needs.” And according to your faith, so shall it be done unto you.

Look back, Sir, look back upon the peat! How many deliverances have you had? You have been in as bad a plight as this before—did He leave you then? He has been with you in six troubles and are there not six arguments why He should not leave you in the seventh? You are growing gray-headed and you have found Him faithful for sixty years. Ah, how few more you have to live! Suppose you live till seventy—there are but ten! He has been faithful to you in sixty and can you not trust Him with ten?

Surely you ought to say and you must say, I think, if you are actuated by a right spirit, “O God, I leave all things in Your hand. I will have done with these cares. I will leave everything to You. I know that You love me and will not forsake Your own but will surely deliver them out of all their temptations.” You shall have my text fulfilled to you, I trust—“You shall see now whether My Word shall come to pass unto you or not.

III. But to proceed—there is a third way by which this question might be very naturally suggested and that is WHEN A MAN WHO HAS FAITH IN CHRIST IS EXERCISED WITH DOUBTS AND FEARS WITH REGARD TO HIS OWN FINAL PERSEVERANCE OR HIS OWN PRESENT ACCEPTANCE IN CHRIST.

I must confess here, with sorrow, that I have seasons of despondency and depression of spirit which I trust none of you are called to suffer. And at such times I have doubted my interest in Christ, my calling my election, my perseverance, my Savior’s blood and my Father’s love. I am sorry I ever told you that, but having done so on one occasion, I make now my humble apology as before God for it.

I met with a sharp rebuke this last week. A Brother who lives very near to God—I believe one of the honest men living—told me he never had a doubt of his acceptance once he believed in Christ and another Christian confirmed his testimony. I do not question the Truth of my Brethren, but I do envy them. ‘Tis a wondrous position to stand in!

I know how it is. They both of them live by simple faith upon the Son of God and one of them said to me, “When I speak to some of the friends and tell them they should not doubt and fear, they say, ‘Yes, but our minister has doubts and fears.’ ” When he said that, I felt how wrong I had been, because the pastor should be an example to the flock and if I have sinned in this respect, as I must sorrowfully confess I have, at least there was no necessity that I should have said so, for now it gives cause to some of the weak of the flock to excuse themselves.

My Brethren, if I should stand here and say I occasionally steal my neighbor’s goods, you would be shocked at me. But when I said that I sometimes doubt my God, you were not shocked. There is as much guilt in the one as in the other. There is the highest degree of criminality in

connection with doubting God and I feel it so. I do not see that we ought to offer any excuse whatever for our doubting our God. He does not deserve it of us—He is a true and faithful God and with so many instances of His love and of His kindness as I have received and daily receive at His hands, I feel I have no excuse to offer either to Him or to you for having dared to doubt Him.

‘Twas a wicked rein. ‘Twas a great and grievous offense. But I pray you, do not use that sin on my part as a cloak for yourselves. I pray that I may be delivered from it entirely and with an unstaggering faith, like Abraham, know that what He has promised He is able also to perform. And then I trust I shall not have under my pastoral care a puny race of men who cannot trust their God and who cannot, therefore, do anything—but a strong host of heroes who live by faith upon the Son of God—who loved them and gave Himself for them. Who shall be a thundering legion. Whose march to battle shall be but a march to victory and the drawing of whose swords shall be but the prelude and prophecy of their triumph.

Take not me as an example further than I follow my Lord, but pray for me that my faith may be increased. Doubt not, I pray you. Believe your God and you shall prosper. The joy of the Lord is our strength, not the melancholy of our hearts. It does not say, “He that doubts shall be saved,” but “He that believes shall be saved.”

I know some ministers preach up doubts and fears so much that you would really think that doubting was the way to Heaven. And the more you could doubt and fear, the more proof there would be that you were a child of God. The fact is—the children of God do doubt and fear. I am sorry to say all of them (not all of them—I question whether all of them do not, but still my Brother says he does not and I believe him. I fear, however, he will doubt one of these days, I hope he never may. But when he does, it will be very wrong and very wicked of him, indeed, just as it has been with me and as it has been with you), for when we doubt, it is sin.

Oh cursed sin of unbelief! Most damnable of sins, because it so stains God’s honor and so makes the enemy to blaspheme. “There,” say they, “there is a man who cannot trust his God. A minister who cannot trust his God. A Christian that cannot repose upon the promise of the Almighty.” We cannot measure the guilt of sins—all sins are all base and vile—but there are crimes which we set down as being very heinous, which, I believe, are but little when compared with that which we think so trivial— the sin of doubting God and mistrusting His promise.

If unbelief is like a thistle in the field, which proves that the soil is good, or it would not produce thistles—at any rate that is no reason why you and I should sow thistle seed. Let us cut the thistles up if there are any and may the Holy Spirit plant the evergreen fir of hope, the towering pine of love and the hardy box tree of faith. Trust in the Lord. “Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say, rejoice.” Let your joy be full. Be you not cast down and troubled, but rejoice in Him evermore.

IV. I shall now pass on to a fourth point very briefly—“is the Lord’s hand waxed short?” This is a question which I may well ask of any here present who are CONVINCED OF SIN, BUT ARE AFRAID TO TRUST THEIR SOUL NOW, AT THIS VERY HOUR, IN THE HAND OF A LOVING SAVIOR.

“Oh, He cannot save me, I am so guilty, so callous! Could I repent as I ought, could I but feel as I ought, then He could save me. But I am naked and poor and miserable. How can He clothe, enrich and bless me? I am cast out from His presence. I have grieved away His Spirit. I have sinned against light and knowledge—against mercy—against constant grace received. He cannot save me.” “And the Lord said unto Moses, Is the Lord’s hand waxed short? You shall see now whether My Word shall come to past unto you or not.”

Did He not save the chief of sinners, Saul of Tarsus? Why, then, can He not save you? Is it not written, “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleans us from all sin”? Has that blood lost its efficacy? Have Christ’s merits lost their savor? Are they no more an offering of a sweet smell before the Throne of God? Has His sacrifice lost its plea and the plea its authority? Is He no longer prevalent before the Father’s face? Soul! Soul! Soul! Would you add to your sin? Then doubt Christ’s power to save you. Would you seal your doom? Then through this mock humility distrust Christ.

But would you be saved? Then dare, I pray you, in the teeth of all your sins, to trust my Master—  
*“He is able  
He is willing: doubt no more.”*

He is able, for He is God. What can He not perform? He is willing, for He was the slaughtered Man. And He that died and had His heart rent for us cannot be unwilling. Do you wish to stab Him in the most tender point and vex Him? Then indulge that mean, ungenerous thought that He is unwilling to forgive. But would you wish to honor Him and relieve yourself at the same time? Then step out of all appearances, all hopes and fears suggested by your own feelings. Come to the foot of His Cross and looking up into those eyes full of languid pity and to those hands streaming with precious blood, say, “Jesus, I believe. Help You my unbelief,” and so you shall see whether He will not keep His Word.

If you should come to Him and He should refuse, then would He not have broken His promise? Did He not say, “Him that comes unto He, I will in no wise cast out”? “But, O Sir, I am so black a sinner, I am one of Satan’s castaways.” But what if you are? Christ did not make any exception. He said, “Him that comes,” and that means any “him” in all the world who comes. If with weeping and with supplication, mourning for past sins, you will go to Him now, poor Sinner, you will find Him quite as good as His Word and you shall wonder and be astonished to find your own hardness of heart suddenly taken away and all your load of guilt removed.

Oh, I would that I had words, that this heart had language and needed not to employ dull flesh with which to utter its thoughts! Soul, Soul, my Lord is worthy of your faith! I trusted Him. This poor man cried and the Lord heard him. I looked unto Him and was lightened and my face was not ashamed and—

*“Ever since by faith I saw the stream,  
His flowing wounds supply;  
Redeeming love has been my theme,  
And shall be till I die.”*

Oh, if you knew my Savior. If you knew Him, you must trust Him! Surely if you will but think of the tens of thousands that are around the Throne today, singing the song of grace, each one of these would seem to say to you, “Sinner, trust Him. He was true to me.” If God’s people who are here this morning could stand up and speak, I know their testimony would be, “Soul, trust Him—He has been good and true to me.” Ah, my Lord, why have You not cast some of us away long ago? When we think of our unbelief and our repeated backsliding, the wonder is that You have not torn up the marriage-bond and said, “He shall go—he shall go—he has rebelled against Me. He is as a backsliding heifer and as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke.”

But no. The strong love of God which first laid hold of us has never let go its grip. He has kept us when we have forsaken Him, pardoned all our shortcomings and blotted out all our trespasses. And here we are to bear witness that He is a God ready to forgive, passing by iniquity, transgression and sin. Sinner, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, I command you— believe on Christ and—“As though God did beseech you by me, I pray you, in Christ’s place, be reconciled to God.” Think not that He is hard towards you. Jehovah’s heart yearns to clasp His Ephraims to His breast. Prodigal! Your Father sees you—come, He will meet you—He’ll kiss you, He’ll clothe you, He’ll make a banquet for you. He will bring forth music and dancing. And His own heart will have the sweetest of the music in itself. Come, then, come, I pray you—trust Him and leaving all else behind, of good or bad which belongs to you, come empty to be filled. Come naked to be clothed.

V. I have but now one other point and I shall not detain you, probably two moments, while I dwell upon it. The subject would not be complete without it. It has been said of some preachers of the Word and especially of me that we delight to preach damnation and the fires of Hell. I think that all who have heard me constantly know that a more unfounded libel was never uttered against any living man. I have preached terrible sermons. They have been few and far between. But I have never preached them with a tearless eye. It has ever been to me a far greater misery to preach than it has been to any to hear. And this last sentence or two, with which I conclude, is wrung from my very soul.

And you say, do you, that God will not avenge your sins upon you— that you may go on in your iniquities and yet meet with no punishment? That you may reject Christ and do it safely? Trample on His blood and yet God is so calm that His anger will never flame forth against you? Well Soul, well Soul, “you shall see whether His Word shall come to pass or not.” But let me tell you His hand is not waxed short. He is as strong to punish as when He bade the floods cover the earth. As powerful to avenge as when He rained hail out of Heaven upon the cities of the plain.

He is today as mighty to overtake and punish His enemies as when He sent the angel through the midst of Egypt, or afterwards smote the hosts of Senacherib. You shall see whether He will keep His Word or not. Go on in the neglect of His great salvation. Go to your dying bed and buoy yourself up with the false hope that there is no hereafter, no Hell to come. But, Sinner, you shall see. You shall see. This point in dispute shall not long be a matter of question to be laughed at on the one side and to be taught with tears on the other. You shall see and we are willing enough ourselves to wait that time, only, Soul, when you shall see, it will be too late to escape.

When the fire gets hold upon you. When the hail of God begins to dash you in pieces and there shall be none to deliver, where will your infidelity be then? Where your hard sayings against God’s earnest ministers then? You will use another note and sing another tune and yell another cry. O God, grant that none among us may ever dare to doubt You here and think that You can not and will not punish us.

By Your grace may we come to the Cross as sinners and be saved, lest unhappily in the world to come when You say, “Depart you cursed,” we shall see whether Your Word shall come to pass unto us or not.

May God add His own blessing for Jesus’ sake!—  
*“From where then shall doubts and fears arise? Why trickling sorrows drown our eyes?  
Slowly, alas, our mind receives  
The comfort that our Maker gives.  
Oh for a strong, a lasting faith,  
To credit what the Almighty says!  
To embrace the message of His Son,  
And call the joys of Heaven our own!*

*Then should the earth’s old pillars shake, And all the wheels of nature break, Our steady souls should fear no more Than solid rocks when billows roar. Our everlasting hopes arise  
Above the venerable skies,  
Where the eternal Builder reigns, And His own courts His power sustains.”*

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MISTRUST OF GOD DEPLORED AND DENOUNCED  
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“How long will it be before they believe Me?”  
Numbers 14:11.**

THE children of Israel were very prone to unbelief. They wanted something visible to worship and to trust. They could not learn the lesson of faith in the one great Invisible and, therefore, they were one day bowing before an idol and the next they were murmuring against the true God. Their life was according to the flesh, after the sight of the eyes and the hearing of the ears and so they praised God when Pharaoh was drowned and when manna lay round about their camp, but the moment they were in need or difficulty and saw no supply or relief, they could not trust in God, but began to mistrust and murmur. With what wonderful longsuffering the Lord bore with them! His mercy seemed to outrun their unbelief!

They cried for water and they doubted God’s power to give it to them in the desert sands, but lo, the smitten Rock poured forth a crystal stream! Then they cried for bread and charged the Lord with bringing them into the wilderness to kill them with hunger—and yet, in answer to their murmuring—the heavens were opened and there fell a shower of angels’ food for them to feast upon! They then clamored for meat and they had not long began their unbelieving murmuring before a strong wind brought them up quail till they fed, even to the full! Such liberal answers to their vexatious murmuring ought to have silenced their fears and they should have exhibited confidence in their great Friend! Yet they did not do so, but for 40 years they provoked the Lord.

The incident before us relates to that great and terrible provocation in which the longsuffering of God came to a pause. They sent spies into Canaan and when they were informed by 10 false-hearted men that the giants were in the land and that the inhabitants of it dwelt in walled cities which they could not hope to capture, they then began to accuse the Lord according to their former manner, denying His power to fulfill His ancient Covenant and give them the land that flowed with milk and honey! This time the Lord lifted His hand and swore that they should not enter into His rest.

Let us be warned by this fact that there is a limit to the longsuffering of God and especially when it is tried by distrust. He may bear with unbelief for a time and, blessed be His name, for a long time, for He remembers that we are dust. But when it comes to willful perseverance in unbelief, the Lord will not forever be thus provoked. It behooves us to listen to the words of Paul—“Let us, therefore, fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” This morning my one subject is this sin of unbelief which I desire to deal with

in the fear of God and in the power of His Holy Spirit.

I. Our first head shall be the sin of Israel is here DEFINED—“HOW long will it be before they believe Me?” Observe that God’s account of all the murmuring, discouragement and fear which these people felt was simply that they did not believe Him. They doubtless said that they were naturally afraid of their enemies—the Anakim, the sons of the giants—these would overtop and overcome them. They seemed like grasshoppers in the sight of such gigantic beings and, therefore, they might well tremble. Had the Anakim been ordinary men, however numerous their bands, Israel declared that they should not have been afraid. But these huge monsters created a natural and unavoidable fear.

“No,” says God, “that is an idle excuse! No fear of giants would enter their minds if they believed Me. How long will it be before they believe Me?” If these sons of Anak had been 10 times as tall as they were, yet the almighty Lord could vanquish them! And if their cities had been literally, as well as figuratively, walled up to the skies, yet Jehovah could smite them out of Heaven and cast their ramparts into the dust! Gigantic men and fortified cities are nothing to Him who divided the Red Sea! When the Omnipotent is present, opposition vanishes. This was so clear that if the Israelites were afraid, the real reason was that they did not believe their God.

So, my Brothers and Sisters, let us strip our discouragements and murmuring of all their disguises and see them in their true character and they will appear in their own naked deformity as discrediting God. It is true the difficulty before us may appear great, but it cannot be great to the Lord who has promised to make us more than conquerors. It is true the circumstances may appear unusually perplexing, but they cannot perplex Him who has promised to guide us with His counsel! And since we are well aware of this, it is clear that the true reason why we are so dismayed is not to be found in the difficulties and the circumstances, but in our misgivings of God.

“Ah, but,” these people might have replied, “we fear because of our weakness. We are not a trained host like the armies of Egypt. We know not how to fight against chariots of iron! We are only feeble men with all these women and children to encumber our march. We cannot hope to drive out the hordes of Amalekites and Canaanites. A sense of weakness is the cause of our terror and complaint.” But the Lord puts the matter very differently. What had their weakness to do with His promise? How could their weakness affect His power to give them the land? He could conquer Amalek if they could not! Caleb had told them, “If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land.” They knew that their feebleness had not prevented the Lord’s bringing them out of Egypt, despite the pride and power of Pharaoh—and they must have known that He could, with equal ease, overthrow the Canaanites and their armies. Their weakness could only be a foil to the Glory of the Divine power, so that it would be made the more conspicuous!

We, also, when we plead our weakness, ought to be ashamed, for we know that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. If we probe to the bottom of those doubts and fears which apparently arise out of a sense of our own weakness, we shall find that they spring from mistrust of God! Our trembling is not humility, but unbelief! We may mask it however we please, but that is the state of the case as God sees it and He sees it in truth. The question is not, “How long will they be weak?” but, “How long will it be before they believe Me?” “No, no,” the people may have said, “we are not murmuring against God! It is against Moses and Aaron. They made a mistake when they brought us into the wilderness and they have undertaken an enterprise which they cannot carry through—we blame these two men for their foolhardiness.”

But the Lord would not have it so. Moses and Aaron were only His instruments and mere second causes. The Lord will not allow that the quarrel is with them, but He asks, “How long will it be before they believe Me?” Thus, Brethren, we sometimes fix upon our fellow man—his infirmity, his shortsightedness, his lack of wisdom—and we say that we do not doubt God but we can never feel secure while our leaders or our friends are such poor, unwise creatures. If you put this pretext to the test, you will see that it avails nothing, for God can use what instruments He pleases, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas. And He can accomplish His purposes despite their frailty.

His Word is not to fall to the ground because of the medium through which He carries it into effect. Strip our distrust of the agents whom God employs of all the masks with which it seeks to disguise itself and it comes to this—we do not believe God! Our dreading and complaining are often a kind of practical atheism. I mean this, that if God has pronounced a promise and we doubt its fulfillment for any cause whatever, we think and feel as if there were no God! We profess to believe that the promises of Scripture are the promises of God, Himself, and it follows that if we doubt their fulfillment, we do as good as deny the Godhead of the Promiser, since he who cannot or will not keep his promises cannot be God.

The Word of the true God has been proven to be Omnipotent by its creating force and, therefore, promises which are not of the same power cannot be the Word of the one almighty God! Dare we make it out that God speaks frivolously and that His solemn promises are like the false words of man which mock the ears and disappoint hope? Are God’s promises like yon sere leaves which the passing wind bears into forgetfulness? Then I say that such a god is no god at all and such a conception sets up a false god and robs the true God of His essential Character. Is it not so? Sometimes we put our doubts in one shape and sometimes in another—and we are apt to claim that we do not really doubt God for we know that He both can and will keep His promises as a rule—but for certain reasons we doubt whether He will keep His Word to us.

We talk of our unworthiness and so on, but, being interpreted, our inmost thought is that we can believe anything of God but that which is the most necessary for us to believe! We believe all other Words but that very one which we are most called upon to credit! Strange faith, which will exert itself everywhere but where it is needed! We claim that if things were otherwise than they are, we could believe God—and what is this but to say that under existing circumstances we do not conceive Him to be worthy of our confidence? He who doubts that particular promise which God

speaks to him may as well doubt all the rest, since they all hang together and they are either all of them lies or all of them eternal Truths of God! Yes, this is the essence of it—our timorous suspicions of any one promise are a reflection upon the Lord Himself!

So, Brothers and Sisters, I come back to that first point and solemnly declare that though our doubts and fears are called, oftentimes, by more respectable names because we do not like to see their sin in all its nakedness, yet they come to this—that we do not believe the ever-blessed God! If we look at our discouragement and mistrust in this light, we shall no longer pity, but blame ourselves—and instead of excusing, we shall accuse our heart of a great crime. Mistrust towards God is not a mere weakness—it is a wickedness of the most grave order.

II. We will now proceed, in the second place, to further DESCRIBE this sin of not believing. I would remark, first, that at the first blush it would seem incredible that there should be such a thing in the universe as unbelief of God. That God should manifest Himself to man so as to make a promise to Him is indescribable condescension! One would think that the high and lofty One would abide in His eternal silence, or communicate Himself to the most exalted creatures rather than speak to such a being as man. What is man that God should be mindful of him and speak to him? Yet we believe that the Lord has often spoken to us by His Prophets and in these last days by His Son.

Now, if an angel altogether unacquainted with human history could be informed that God had spoken to men, I imagine that his astonishment would be overwhelming if we also informed him that men have disbelieved Him. “What?” he would ask. “What? Dare to disbelieve the Lord? Doubt the Lord, whose infinite love stooped to speak with His creature? God, who is essential Truth and cannot possibly lie nor deceive—are there creatures vile enough to perpetrate such an insult upon their Maker, their Benefactor? Can they suspect the infinitely Pure of deceit? Dare they question the Truth of the Perfect One whom cherubim adore?”

I say that an angel would be staggered at such blasphemy! Why, look, Sirs—the Lord spoke to nothingness and out came this globe, swathed in the swaddling bands of darkness! He spoke again and forth leaped the light and all things were quickened into life and clothed with beauty! The power of His Word was all creating—and is it to be imagined or conceived that this Word can be a lie? Jehovah’s Word is but Himself in action! His will making itself manifest! And is it to be supposed that this can be a lie under any conceivable circumstances whatever? My Brothers and Sisters, it is sorrowful to have to confess that what looks like inconceivable blasphemy has, nevertheless, been perpetrated abundantly by the sons of men! Shame on our race that it should ever have insulted the Most High God! Oh, the incredible infamy which lies, even, in the bare thought of calling in question the veracity of God! It is so vile, so unjust, so profane a thing that it ought to be regarded with horror as a monstrous wrong!

Consider, next, that, though unbelief certainly exists, it is a most unreasonable thing. If God has made a promise, on what grounds do we doubt its fulfillment? Which of all the attributes of God is that which comes under suspicion? Probably the first distrusted attribute will be His power. Have not men said, “Can God furnish a table in the wilder-ness? Or can He deliver us out of the deep waters?” Let us think of this. Has the Lord promised to supply and deliver? Then, my dear Friend, do you really, in your sober senses, question the power of God to do as He has said? Has He not made the heavens and the earth? Do not all things subsist by His continuous power? Is anything too hard for the Lord? Is His arm shortened that He cannot save? Is His hand paralyzed that He cannot achieve His purpose? The more we consider the supposition that God is unable to keep His promises, the more we discard it with indignation! It is not to be entertained for a moment!

What, then, is it God’s goodness that we suspect? After He has filled the world with bounty and multiplied His loving kindnesses to His creatures—above all, after He has given from His bosom His only-begotten Son to die as the fulfillment as well as the seal of the great promises of His Covenant—dare we question His goodness? Do we call God evil? Do we impute unkindness to Him? Let horror seize us at the suggestion of such thought! Let our bones quake that we should ever tolerate the hideous libel upon Him whose very name is good! For what is “God” but “good” written in brief? It must come back to this with which we started, that we suspect the Truth of God and yet the more we shall consider the supposition, the more we shall be alarmed by its blasphemous character.

Do you believe, O Man, the creature of God, that your Maker can belie Himself? Do you imagine that He can forswear Himself? With reverence do I speak the word and awe is upon me as I utter it—do you profanely dream that He can perjure Himself? Every promise of His is virtually sealed with that oath by which the Covenant is confirmed. He has lifted His hand to Heaven and sworn by Himself because He could swear by no greater, that by two immutable things wherein it was impossible for God to lie we might have strong consolation! Reason itself teaches that the Judge of all must, Himself, be just! And this He could not be if He were not true. Truth enters into the very conception of God—a false god is no god. Any other doubt in the world may plead some ground and guarantee, but a doubt of God’s Truthfulness is utterly unreasonable—and if sin had not filled man with madness—unbelief would never find harbor in a single bosom!

Again, because this sin is so unreasonable, it is also most inexcusable. Let me try, if I can, to frame an excuse for doubting the truthfulness of the Lord our God. Look back upon your own experience and take with it the experience of all men that have ever lived and find, if you can, a single instance in which God has been untrue to the Word He has spoken. We challenge eternity to divulge such an instance! We appeal to all mankind, from Adam to the latest born—and to angels, yes—and to devils themselves, to produce one single case in which Jehovah has turned from a promise or from a threat so as to forfeit His Word. His faithfulness is indisputable! The ages witness it! Now, if there had been one instance, we might be justified in our misgivings. If we could find one authenticated case, fully established, in which God had acted contrary to His promise, or failed to keep His Word, then we might lawfully distrust. But as we can

never find such a case, what excuse can we make?

Moreover, when a man is suspected of untruthfulness, we usually impute to him some motive for it—he has something to gain by the lie and, therefore, we suppose he will prove false. But what motive can be imputed to the Lord Most High which could lead Him to forfeit His Word? He knows all things from the beginning and, therefore, even if it were supposable that to keep a promise would be inconvenient to Him, He would never have made it, for He would have foreseen that inconvenience. God is not bound to promise and, therefore, if the good deed were not to His mind, He would not promise to perform it! Nor has God changed, since immutability is essential to His being. If, therefore, He has uttered a Word, you may rest quite sure that it will stand fast—an unchangeable Being cannot be fickle and run back from His promise.

Why, my Friends, it is to God’s Glory to keep His Word! As it is to the glory of every man to be upright, so is it to the Glory and honor of God to be faithful to His solemn declarations. Even on the lowest conceivable ground, the Lord’s own interests are bound up with His Truth. All the Glory of His name and the honor of His Divine Person bend towards the keeping of His Word. There is no supposable reason why the Lord should not be true! How dare we, then, without the slightest cause, cast suspicion upon the truthfulness of the Most High? My dear Brothers and Sisters, I venture to say that unbelief of God’s word ought, therefore, to be impossible.

It ought to be impossible to every reverent-hearted man. Does he know God and tremble in His Presence and shall he think of distrusting and doubting Him? No one that has ever seen Him in contemplation and bowed before Him in sincere adoration would not be amazed at the impertinence that would dare to think that God could lie! O reverent heart, it ought to be to you beyond the bounds of possibility that you should doubt the Truth of the promises of God! And this ought to still be more impossible, if such an expression may be used, to God’s own children! You could not make a true-hearted child suspect his father of falsehood. If he heard such an accusation brought against a loving and kind father he would be indignant! He would not want to hear rebutting evidence, he would say, “It is impossible! I know my father, I know his character. I have seen him; I understand him; I cannot endure to hear him slandered and I do not need to hear him defended, for of this I am sure—he cannot lie.”

In the child’s case there might be a partiality and the father might have been guilty. But in the case of the children of God no such possibility exists, for our Father is the God of Truth. Oh, my Brethren, shall it ever be said that the children of God doubt their Father? I have heard some professing Christians say that they find it hard to believe His promises and yet they do not appear to think that they have said a dreadful thing—yet a very dreadful thing it is! What must be their opinion of God if they find it hard to believe Him? Think of it again—a child of God finding it hard to believe his own Father—his heavenly Father! Ah, wretched sin! Wretched insult to God! If we were not so false-hearted, ourselves, we should never dream of the Lord’s being so and, if we were not conscious of being chargeable with lies, the thought that God might fail to fulfill His Word would never be tolerated. It is horrible!

If it has crossed your mind, scuttle it and, with many tears, confess it before God, for to a child of God it ought to be impossible to doubt His Father’s truthfulness! To some children of God that impossibility ought to be still more striking because certain of us have received special and Infallible proofs of the Lord’s faithfulness to His promises. He has answered the prayers of some of us in a way that has drowned our eyes with tears of joy! He has made us laugh like Sarah when the child of promise was given to her. We have felt amazed at the mighty goodness of our God and for us to doubt, now, would be impossible! We ought to settle it in our minds that, come what may, though the earth were removed and the mountains cast into the midst of the sea—though everything should alter and the laws of Nature should be changed and day and night forget their time—yet would we never suppose, nor allow others to suppose that God could be false to His promises and break His Word!

I am resolved and, my Brethren, you will join with me in it and may God give us Grace to carry it out—to doubt the evidence of my eyes, but not to doubt God—for our eyes have often deceived us, but Jehovah, never! Light may play tricks with these poor optics, but the Lord has never spoken to mock us, nor said what He cannot perform. Resolve, my Brothers and Sisters, to doubt your ears and deny your hearing sooner than doubt your God, for sounds are often imaginary and ears are speedily duped! Resolve to doubt your most deliberate judgment rather than one Word of the Lord. How often have you been mistaken? Even when, according to mathematical calculations, it seems as certain as that twice two make four, that God cannot execute His Word—deny the mathematics but never doubt God. There is nothing certain under Heaven but God! Uncertainty is upon all things but upon His Word!

If you consult with friends and in their judgment they all unanimously conclude that the case is hopeless and that the promise cannot be fulfilled, reject them all and refuse to consult with flesh and blood! Let God be true and every man a liar! Yes, and everything a liar! Doubt your own feelings as much as you please—it is seldom that they are to be relied upon. Mistrust, as I have already said, your own senses—they are but very fallible reporters of fact—but never distrust your God! If devils, or even angels could stand in squadrons and swear unanimously that God had failed—call them liars, too, for God cannot, cannot, cannot lie!

The things which are seen are, after all, but mere shadows and dependent for their appearing and continuing upon the Lord, alone. Why, then, confide in them at the expense of your confidence in God? God, only, is true, and when you have no hope but in Him, alone, you have all the hope worth having! They say of us who trust in God, alone, that we have nothing to look to. Our answer is that faith in the unseen God is the highest reason and is grounded on the surest fact! His unseen arm is stronger than all that angel or human eyes can ever see and there is more potency in God, who is neither to be heard nor seen, than in all the crash of whirlwinds or the glare of tempests. There is no power but in Him and, therefore, no certainty of Infallible Truth but in the Word which He has

spoken.  
Look, Sirs, every promise in God’s Word comes to you, first, from the  
Father’s lips—will you doubt Him? It next comes by the Holy Spirit, who  
reveals it—will you doubt Him? Beware lest you sin against the Holy  
Spirit! It comes, next, sealed with the blood of Jesus! Will you doubt Him?  
Will you suspect your Savior? A single doubt of a promise of God casts a  
stigma upon Father, Son and Holy Spirit and is a triple transgression  
against the triune God! O the venom that lies in a single suspicion of the  
Most High! It is strange how you and I can enter into confidence and conviction about many things and yet we cannot exercise the same confidence towards our God!  
You all believe in the laws of matter. You expect that the law of gravitation will bring a weight downward if you throw it from the window—why  
are you so sure? Because you have seen the rule in action so often that  
you now expect to see it carried out—and yet the law of gravitation might  
be suspended! Indeed, it has been suspended, for at the Red Sea the  
floods stood upright as a heap and the depths were congealed in the heart  
of the sea! You all expect the sun to rise in the morning and to set at his  
appointed time because he has kept his daily marches for many years.  
And yet there was a time when there was no sun to rise or set and there  
will be a time when the sun shall be turned into darkness and day and  
night shall cease. Can you trust the temporary and yet doubt the eternal?  
You all expect the seasons of the year to come and go, but they might be  
reversed by God right easily.  
Now, if we can believe in the laws of Nature which are evidently  
changeable and which will one day certainly come to an end, how is it that  
we cannot believe in God whose regularity in the keeping of His promises  
has been as great as the regularity of day and night, of seedtime and harvest, cold and heat and whose permanent Immutability will run on  
throughout eternity? O that we were wise! O that we were commonly honest with God and spoke of Him as we have found Him! Then we should  
doubt Him no more, but abide in fixed and steadfast confidence! O Holy  
Spirit, work us to this end!  
III. This brings me, in the third place, to dwell upon this sin very much  
in the same way, only with this heading, the sin bitterly DEPLORED. We  
have all been guilty of it. Some, here, are living constantly in the commission of it. But what I need to call to your remembrance is this, that in any  
one case of doubting the truthfulness of God there is the full venom of the  
entire sin of unbelief. That is to say, if you distrust the Lord in one, you  
doubt Him altogether. You say that you can believe the Lord about other  
things, but there is one particular point which staggers you. But is it not  
clear that the man who is convicted of one falsehood is no longer trustworthy?  
The Scripture calls Him, “God who cannot lie.” Do you think He can lie  
once? Then He can lie and the Scripture is broken! “Ah, but I mean He  
may not keep His promise to me. I am such an unworthy person.” Yes, but  
when a man forfeits his word, it is no defense for him to say, “I told an untruth, but it was only to an unworthy person.” No, the truth must be spoken irrespective of persons! I have no right to deceive even a criminal! Do  
you dare say that to one person the Lord can be untrue? If it can be so,  
He is not a true God any more! It only needs one falsehood, one breach of  
promise, one lie to be proven and you have smitten the character of the  
accused to the very heart—you would not dream of doing such a thing to  
the great God!  
You may as well doubt Him about everything if you distrust Him upon  
any one matter. Get but the promise from God and there is an Infallible  
necessity that He will keep it, be it a little promise or a great one, for the  
character of a truthful Being is all square and He is false in nothing! Do  
you reply that you doubted Him upon a very trivial matter and it was only  
a little mistrust? Alas, there is a world of iniquity in the faint discredit of  
the thrice holy Lord! Reflect, then, with sorrow that we have been guilty of  
this sin, not once, but a great many times. Timorousness and suspicion  
spring up in some bosoms like weeds in the furrows. They sing the Lord’s  
praises for a great deliverance just experienced, but the next cloud which  
darkens the sky fills them with fear and they again mistrust Divine Love.  
Their heavenly Father delivers them, helps them, comforts them and they  
say they will never doubt again. But in a short time another trial looms in  
the distance and they are despondent and dismayed.  
Now, I will read to you, and I will read to myself these words of God  
which make up our text—“How long will this people provoke Me? And how  
long will it be before they believe Me for all the signs which I have showed  
among them?” Another thought upon this point and it is this—are there  
not some professing people of God who do not seem to live a life of faith at  
all? I mean some who have no faith about their temporal circumstances at  
all and almost look upon living by faith as if it were a kind of fanaticism  
which they admit to be very pious and good, but they can never come up  
to it. Yet faith should be an everyday thing with us.  
In the life of Abraham how few acts are mentioned of outward religion,  
of long retirements, fasts, public services, sacraments and so forth—but  
how clear it is that his daily secular and domestic life was a living unto  
God as a pilgrim and a sojourner with Him. There is no visible line between secular and sacred in the Patriarch’s life—it was all sacred! It is an  
evil distinction which says so far is spiritual and so far is secular. My  
Brothers and Sisters, your whole lives must be spiritual lives! There must  
be faith in God about your home, your families and your neighbors. Some  
look upon faith as a kind of Sunday Grace to be laid up in the Ark of the  
Covenant with Aaron’s rod but, indeed, it is an everyday faculty, a Grace  
for the table, a Grace for the cupboard, a Grace for the pocket, a Grace for  
the market, a Grace for the nursery and a Grace for the sick bed! The life of God’s people is not to be lived within the four narrow walls of  
a Meeting House—it is lived wherever they are, for in every place the just  
shall live by faith! The religion of a Christian is to be the whole of his life  
and faith is to run through it like a thread through a coral necklace. We  
are to believe God as much when He says, “Your bread shall be given you  
and your water shall be sure,” as when He says, “He that believes and is  
baptized shall be saved.” Oh, for more household faith, more Saturday faith, more real faith! Let us blush and never cease to blush that we have  
had so little of it!  
IV. Lastly, as we have now deplored this sin, we shall conclude by  
spending a moment or two in heartily DENOUNCING IT. This sin of unbelief, if there were no other reason for denouncing it, let it be reprobated  
because it insults God. I feel an infinite enmity to unbelief because it so  
terribly misrepresents and calumniates my God. If any man were to say to  
me, “Your father breaks his word,” I would not suffer the accuser to go  
unanswered and assuredly I cannot be silent when my heavenly Father is  
thus slandered! Our race fell by believing the old dragon’s base charge  
against God when he said to the woman in his vile serpentine language,  
“You shall not surely die!” He thus called God a liar!  
Away with you, you subtle serpent! Away with you! Go and eat the dust  
that is your predestinated meat, for God cannot speak that which is not  
true—He is Truth itself! How greatly does unbelief dishonor the Lord!  
What shame it casts upon the splendor of His name! Alas, that there  
should be going up and down this world creatures denying the existence  
of their Creator and other beings who admit that there is a God and believe that He has spoken and given promise of good things to come, but  
treat His Word as if it were worthless and unfit to be trusted! Oh, hateful,  
abominable, loathsome mistrust which dares to treat the Lord as unworthy to be believed!  
This is sufficient reason for denouncing it and yet, since weaker reasons may, perhaps, help the stronger, let me mention that we are bound  
to hate unbelief because it is the ruin of the great mass of our race. Why  
are men lost? All their sins which they have done cannot destroy them if  
they believe in Jesus, but the damning point is that they will not believe in  
Him. Thus says the Scriptures—“He that believes not is condemned already.” Why? “Because he has not believed on the Son of God.” God Himself hangs on a tree in human form and bleeds to death bearing the sin of  
man and yet men turn their backs on this infinite display of love and refuse to believe it? Therefore do they deserve to sink to death and Hell! I look upon the myriads now in outer darkness and I ask, “Who slew all  
these?” The answer is, “They could not enter into Heaven because of unbelief—they perished because they would not believe in the testimony of  
God concerning reconciliation by the blood of His Son.” May we not well  
hate this murderous unbelief?  
We may hate it, again, because it brings so much misery and weakness  
upon the children of God. My Brothers and Sisters, if we believed God’s  
promises, we should no longer be bowed down with sorrow, for our sorrow  
would be turned into joy. We would glory in our infirmities! Yes, we would  
glory in tribulation, also, seeing the good result which the Lord brings  
forth from them. The man who steadily believes His God is calm, quiet  
and strong. If men fail him, his God supports him. Suppose his business  
fails him—his chief business is to serve his God and that has not failed! If  
he is, himself, sick and racked with pain, he resigns himself to the great  
Father’s chastening hand and patience is given.  
If health is utterly failing—he leaves himself with God that he may take  
down his tabernacle, curtain by curtain, confident that he will build it again in nobler form. When death approaches, he so fully believes in God that he feels it will be gain to him to pass out of this state of trial into everlasting blessedness at the Lord’s right hand—and so he is always happy! How strong such a man becomes! The weakness which comes of fear and trembling does not touch him! His heart is fixed and, therefore, he has all his strength under control and can bring it to bear upon the place where  
it is needed.  
I do not know whether you have thought of the prowess of Samson. His  
is a very poor character in many aspects, but yet what a true hero he is  
when you view him in the light of his faith! It was not that he was physically strong by nature, but that he believed God and strength came upon  
him. As a Believer in God he trusted that the Lord could make his sinews  
and muscles strong enough for any task which was allotted him. And so,  
when the gates of Gaza shut him in, he rose up from his sleep and bowed  
himself before the huge doors—and with a mighty tug lifted them up! And  
as the bars were fastened to the posts, he pulled up posts and all and carried the whole away to the top of the hill—not as a feat of Herculean  
strength—but as an act of faith in God!  
But now the Philistines are upon him! He is upon a rock and cannot  
escape. He believes in God and he quails not before the host. There are a  
thousand of the enemy and he is but one—he looks for a weapon and  
there is nothing handy for him to fight with but a dried bone which once  
had made the jaw of an ass. What does it matter? He trusts in God and  
not in the weapon! Look how the Philistines flee before him, or would do  
so if they could, for with feet and knee and hands Samson is upon them!  
And his terrible arm sweeps them down in rows—this great child-man was  
a terrible Believer, but when the Divine fury of his faith was upon him, he  
was altogether irresistible! He never thought of odds against him, nor  
staggered at the promise through unbelief!  
It was a grand deed for one man to fling himself upon a thousand! I like  
him better in such silent daring than even when he cries, “Heaps upon  
heaps, with the jawbone of an ass have I slain a thousand men.” Only believe God and you can do anything! If the Lord should bid you shake the  
world, you could do it by faith! Plucking up sycamore trees by the roots  
and hurling mountains into the sea are mere sport for faith, which before  
now has subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, stopped the mouths  
of lions and quenched the violence of fire! She has grander things to do  
than the mere slaying of Philistines, for she wrestles with principalities,  
powers and spiritual wickedness in high places and comes off more than  
conqueror through Him that loved her!  
And yet, my Friend, are you hiding in the rear? Are you lying in the  
background? Are you being nursed and cared for as a babe? Shall it always be so? Will you forever be a mere child? If you do not believe, you  
will never grow strong, but he that believes comes to the full development  
of that celestial manhood which is akin to the manhood of the Christ of  
God in whom we live! One very shocking point about this unbelief is that  
it has hampered the work of Christ in the world. The Christ that can save  
is a Christ believed in, but of a Christ who is not believed in it is written—  
“He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.” The reason why, at this time, whole nations lie under popery or heathendom is  
that the Church has not faith enough for their conquest! There is no  
straitening in God—our limit lies in our own timorous hearts! The first thing to be done is for Zion to believe in God and then the rod  
of His strength shall go forth out of her midst and she shall become “Fair  
as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners.” If  
the Son of Man should now come on the earth, where would He find faith?  
Where would He discover a high degree of it? You know what most  
Churches do—there is the regular performance of worship service; the  
regular preaching of an orthodox sermon as dry as it is orthodox; the  
regular meeting of a few people for a Praying Meeting in which there is no  
real prayer; and the regular revolution of a spiritual barrel organ, from  
which all spirituality has long ago been ground out! Nothing comes of this  
lifeless routine and it was never likely that there could be anything, for  
out of death, only death can come.  
When we began to preach in faith, believing that men must be saved by  
the Gospel, they will be saved by it! When we go forth to battle, confident  
that the weapon of the Gospel in the hand of God cannot fail, it will not  
fail! It is lack of faith on our part which causes the eternal God to put His  
right hand into His bosom and keep it there! When once the Holy Spirit  
has worked a mighty faith in us—and we shall never have it till He does—  
then will the Lord lay bare His arm and we shall see marvelous things! His  
own right hand and His holy arm will get Him the victory! The world has  
never seen, since Apostolic times, what yet shall happen in our own day if  
we will but believe!  
If we will but confide in God, our young men shall see visions and our  
old men shall dream dreams and then shall be poured out upon the  
Lord’s servants and handmaidens of His own Spirit and they shall prophesy! Then will the world wake up and cry, “The old fanaticism has come  
back! These men are drunk with new wine!” It will only be that they speak  
as the Spirit gives them utterance, for He works mightily where faith is  
mighty! But He is restrained because of this wretched, wicked, insulting,  
blasphemous unbelief of ours that persists in suspecting the Lord! Forward, Brothers and Sisters!  
God the Holy Spirit helping you, resolve in your hearts this day that  
you will doubt all the boasted discoveries of science! You will doubt all the  
affirmations of the wise! You will doubt all the speculations of great thinkers! You will doubt all your own feelings and all the conclusions drawn  
from outward circumstances! Yes, and everything that seems to be demonstrable to a certainty, you will doubt! But NEVER, NEVER, NEVER,  
while eternity shall last, will you suffer the thought to pass your mind  
that God can ever, in the least degree, run back from anything that He  
has spoken, or change the Word that has gone forth from His lips! Thus have I spoken for Him. May His Holy Spirit make it powerful on  
your minds, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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CALEB—THE MAN FOR THE TIMES  
NO. 538

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 1, 1863, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“But My servant Caleb, because he had another spirit in him and has followed Me fully, him will I bring into the land he went. And his seed shall possess it.”  
Numbers 14:24.**

IT is a rough name that—“Caleb.” Most translators say it signifies “ a dog.” But what matters a man’s name? Possibly the man himself was somewhat rough—many of the heartiest of men are so. As the unpolished oyster yet bears within itself the priceless pearl, so oftentimes ruggedness of exterior covers worth. A dog, moreover, is not all badness, though, “Without are dogs and sorcerers.” It has this virtue, that it follows its master. And therein this Caleb was well-named. For never dog so followed his master as Caleb followed his God.

As we have seen the faithful dog following his master when he is on horseback through mud and mire and dirt, for many a weary mile, even though the horses heels might wound him, so Caleb keeps close to God. And even if stoning threatens him, yet is he well content to follow the Lord fully. The name, however, has another signification and we like it rather better—it means “All heart.” Here was a fitting surname for the man, whose whole heart followed his God. He says himself that he brought a report of the land according to all that was in his heart.

He was a man of a healthy and mighty spirit. He did nothing heartlessly. His spirit was not the Laodicean lukewarmness, which is neither hot nor cold, which God spits out of His mouth—it was a spirit of holy heat, of noble daring. If I may not call him lion-hearted, never lion had a braver heart than he. Many mortals appear to have no heart. They are like corporations of which we are often told that a corporation has a head— does it not have a new mayor every year? And yet who ever saw it blush?

It certainly has a mouth, for it swallows much—and hands, for it can grasp much—and feet, for it takes long strides. But whoever heard of a corporation with either heart or conscience? In the same manner it may be said of many persons—they have a head to understand and think, and feet to move and hands to act, but heart of compassion and a feeling heart they have not. Doubtless you have seen—doubtless you have met persons without hearts. The moment you come into their company you perceive what they are, as readily as the voyager on the Atlantic knows when there is an iceberg in the neighborhood—by the sudden chill which comes over him.

You shake the man’s hand—it drops into your hand as cold as a dead fish. The man’s blood is cold as a December frost. You talk with him, but no effort on your part can stir the frozen current of his soul. You begin to speak to him about religion—which he professes to love so much—his

words are few, his syllables faint, for his heart is not in the matter. Others we have the privilege of knowing—I trust there are many such in this community—who cannot talk of Jesus without emotion—

*“Their pulse with pleasure bounds,  
The Master’s name to hear.”*

If they sing, they wake up their glory, saying, with David, “Awake, psaltery and harp. I myself will awake right early.” If they pray, it is the wrestling prayer of Jacob at the brook Jabbok. And if they serve their God, they carry out the words of the Apostles, “Whatever you do, do it heartily, as unto God and not unto man.” It is a hearty Caleb, then. We will rather interpret his name this way than the other. But if we put both together, he shall be a dog for faithfully following his God, but he shall be all heart, because he so fully follows his Lord.

There are three things about Caleb worthy of consideration, then—first, his faithful following. Secondly, his favored reward. And thirdly, his inner character—that which was the secret source of his following God, namely, that “he had another spirit.”

I. First, then, let this brave veteran stand before us. Let us look at him and learn something of HIS FAITHFUL FOLLOWING OF HIS GOD. Perceive, Beloved, he never went before his God. That is presumption. The highest point to which the true Believer ever comes is to walk with God, but never to walk before Him. It is true that we walk before the Lord in the land of the living, but that is in another sense, meaning under His eyes. We never run before God so as to outrun His Providence and become the directors of our own steps.

They who travel before the cloud will soon find other clouds lowering upon them. Those who leave the fiery pillar and will be their own guides, shall soon be in the fire, without a guide to bring them out again. We ought to follow the Lord. The sheep follow the shepherd. “He puts forth His own sheep,” says Christ, “and goes before them, and they follow Him.” They follow as the soldier follows the captain—he points the road, leads the van and bears the thick of the danger—while the faithful warrior keeps close behind.

They follow as the disciple follows the Master, not teaching, nor discussing, nor disputing, but sitting at His feet, believing that when He leads in the way of knowledge, it is a true and a right way, whereas if we seek to be wise beyond what is written, we make unto ourselves pits and traps and fall into a snare. Caleb followed the Lord. Many others do the same, but then they can not win that adverb, which is Caleb’s golden medal. He followed the Lord, “fully,” says one text, “wholly,” says another.

Some of us follow the Lord, but it is a great way off, like Peter, or now and then as did Saul the king. We are not constant. We have not given our whole heart to God. The essence, then, of the man’s faithful following lies in the adverb—“fully.” And here, by your leave, in explaining this word “wholly.” I shall follow the explanation of good Matthew Henry. I cannot think of a better, nor even of one so good, myself.  
1. He followed the Lord wholly, that is, first of all, he followed Him universally, without dividing. Whatever his Master told him to do, he did—

*“In all the Lord’s appointed ways*

*His journey he pursued.”*  
He did not say, “I will perform this duty and neglect the other. I will be faithful to my conscience and to my God upon this point, but that shall be left unto another day.” He took the Commandments as he found them and if they were ten he did not desire to make them nine. Nor did he want to change their order and put that second which God had put first. He did not wish to divide the commands. What God had joined together, he did not desire to put asunder. He followed the Lord without picking and choosing, being universally obedient to his Master’s Law.

Brethren, I wish we could say the same of all professed Christians. You see Caleb was quite as ready to fight the giants as he was to carry the clusters. We have a host who are ready for sweet duties. Pleasant exercises and spiritual engagements which bring joy and peace are always very acceptable. But as for the fighting of giants—how many say, “I pray you have me excused.” To defend Christ’s cause against adversaries, to submit themselves to rebuke, to go up single-handed and fight against the Lord’s foes—from this the many will draw back and we are afraid there are some that draw back unto perdition, because they have never had the perfect heart given to them which is obedient to God in all His will.

If you have a servant who will choose which of your commands she will obey, she is rather the mistress than the servant. If you, dear Brother, shall say concerning the Lord’s will, “I will do this and I will not do that,” you do in fact make yourself master. The spirit of rebellion is in you, you have already erred and strayed from your Lord’s ways and set up the standard of revolt. Mind that you do not pierce yourself through with many sorrows. Some excuse themselves for neglecting duties on the ground that they are non-essential—as if all duty was not essential to the perfect follower of Christ.

“They are unimportant,” says the man, “they involve nothing.” Whereas it often happens that the apparently unimportant duty is really the most important of all. Many a great lord, in the olden times, has given up his land on copyhold to his tenant. And perhaps the fee which was to be annually paid was to bring a small bird, or a peppercorn—in some cases it has been the bringing of a turf, or a green leaf. Now, if the tenant should on the annual day refuse to do his homage and say it was too trifling a thing to bring a peppercorn to the lord of the manor in fee, would he not have forfeited his estate? Thus he would have been setting himself up as superior owner and asserting a right which his feudal lord would at once resist.

It is even so—to quote a single instance—in the matter of Believer’s Baptism. When the Believer says, “Well, surely this is but a small thing, I may safely neglect it,” does he not therein deny unto his Sovereign Lord and Master that act of homage which, though it is simple in itself, is nevertheless full of meaning, because it is an acknowledgment of the superior rights of the great King? Who told you it was nonessential? Who bade you

neglect it? Surely it must be a spirit of darkness that talked with you!

The Jew of old must not neglect circumcision. His child shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel unless the painful rite be performed. He must not refuse the paschal supper, for if he does, the destroying angel shall smite his household. And in that Passover everything must be observed. Not a bone must be broken. The creature must not be eaten raw, nor sodden at all with water. It must be roasted in the fire. It must be eaten with bitter herbs. There are minute particulars given and every one of these having the solemn command of God upon them are to be carefully observed by the children of Israel throughout all generations.

Surely it must be so with Christian ordinances and with the commands of the King of Heaven. We cannot violate them with impunity. The spirit which would prompt us to neglect one of the least of them is of the devil and leads down to Hell—a spirit of partial obedience is a spirit of radical disobedience. The old Prophet did but eat and drink at Bethel and that, too, as he thought, upon prophetic authority, and yet the lion slew him because he rebelled against the express bidding of God.

We are not to imitate the Pharisee who tithed the mint, anise and cummin, and then neglected the weightier matters of the Law, but we are to remember that Jesus said, “These things ought you to have done and not to have left the other undone.” So that mint and anise and cummin, are still to be tithed. And still in the little as well as in the great our obedience to God is to be carried out. Take care, dear Friends, that, like Caleb, you follow the Lord fully, that is, universally, without dividing.

Now may I put a question of conscience to all around me? Is there not something that I know to be my Master’s will which I have not done? Brothers and Sisters, is there not some command which as yet you have not obeyed? Some self-denying duty which you have shirked, some holy engagement for the good of your fellow men, or for your Lord’s glory, which you have carelessly avoided? If it is so, do, I pray you, see to it, for you can never have the blessing of Caleb till you have the complete and universal spirit of obedience which Caleb had.

2. But secondly, Caleb followed the Lord fully, that is, sincerely without dissembling. He was no hypocrite. He followed the Lord with his whole heart. One of the safest tests of sincerity is found in a willingness to suffer for the cause. I suppose that the twelve spies met each other in the south part of the land and held a little consultation as to what should be the report they would bring up. Like twelve jurymen they were now to bring in their verdict and ten of them were agreed—“It is a land that flows with milk and honey, but it eats up its inhabitants. It is full of giants with cities walled up to Heaven and it is impossible for us to take possession of it.”

Caleb and Joshua both dissent from that verdict. I cannot tell what were the arguments and the reasonings, what the bantering and the jests and the jeers, to which Caleb was exposed from the other ten princes. But we do know that when they came to give in their verdict Caleb dared to stand forth, alone, and declare that such was not his testimony. Joshua appears to have said nothing, probably from prudential reasons, because, being the servant of Moses, the people would attach less importance to what he said, arguing that he was sure to take part with Moses and would be biased by his superior.

Therefore Caleb stood out alone and took the brunt of the tumult. How courageous was that man, who had only numbered forty summers, to put himself in opposition to the other ten princes and declare in flat contradiction to them—“Let us go up. We are able to possess the land.” When the people took up stones and Joshua was forced to speak with Caleb, it was with no small peril and required no little mental courage to stand up amidst the insults and jeers of the crowd and still to bring up a good report of the land. Caleb followed the Lord sincerely.

O Beloved, how many profess to follow God who follow Him without their hearts! The semblance of religion is often dearer to men than religion itself. As one says, many a man has spent five hundred pounds upon a picture of a beggar by Murillo, or a brigand by Salvator Rosa, who would not give a penny to a real beggar and go out of their wits at the sight of a brigand. The picture of religion, the outward name of it, men will give much to maintain. But the reality of religion—ah, that is quite a different thing.

Many of our Churches are surmounted with the Cross in stone, but how few of the worshippers care to take up the Cross of Christ daily and follow Him. We know religious men who are respected by the ungodly, not for their religion, but on account of some adventitious circumstance. It was not the religion itself they cared for. If you should take a bear in a cage into a town, men will pay their money to see it, but let it loose among them and they will pay twice as much money to get rid of it. So sometimes if a religious man has gift or ability, there are many who will regard and admire him, but not for his religion.

Let the religion itself come abroad in the daily actions of his life and then straightway they begin to abhor him. There is much false love to Jesus—much unhallowed profession. Let us remember, however, that the day is coming when all false profession will be destroyed. The fan in Christ’s hands will leave none of the chaff remaining upon the wheat heap and the great fire will not suffer a single particle of dross to be unconsumed. Happy shall that man be whose faith was a real faith, whose repentance was sincere, whose obedience was true, who gave his heart, his whole heart to his Master’s cause!

3. The third point is most noteworthy. Caleb followed the Lord wholly, that is, cheerfully without disputing. Those who serve God with a sad countenance, because they do what is unpleasant to them, are not His servants at all. Our God requires no slaves to grace His Throne. He is the Lord of the empire of love. The angels of God serve Him with songs, not with groans. And God loves to have the joyful obedience of His creatures. In fact I will venture to say that that obedience which is not cheerful is disobedience, for the Lord looks at the heart of a thing and if He sees that we serve Him from force and not because we love Him, He will reject our offering.

That service which is coupled with cheerfulness is hearty service, and therefore true. Take away joy from the Christian and you have taken away, I believe, that which is the test of his sincerity. If a man is driven to battle, he is no patriot, but he that marches into the fray with flashing eye and beaming face, singing, “It is sweet for one’s country to die,” proves himself to be sincere in his patriotism. Cheerfulness, again, makes a man strong in service. It is to our service what oil is to the wheels of a railway carriage. Without its proportion of oil, the axle soon grows hot and accidents occur. And if there is not a holy cheerfulness to oil our wheels, we shall not be able to serve God with anything like power.

The man who is cheerful in his service of God proves that obedience is his element. I have seen the sea birds in stormy weather flying over the land with their huge heavy flapping wings. What a contrast between them and the lark, which, as it mounts to Heaven makes its wings vibrate many times in a moment, while these heavy broad-winged creatures fly as if they could not fly. They are out of their element. They long till again they shall be swimming upon the sea.

Some men in the service of God are like these heavy swans. Their wing goes every now and then with a sort of dying flap—there is no sprightliness of life in them. They are out of their element. Now God will never receive at our hands an obedience which is not consistent with our nature. Understand me, if it were possible for a man with an unspiritual nature, with a fallen nature, to perform the very same work which is performed by a saint, his nature would mar his act. God looks at the nature from which the act comes, and if He sees that it comes from a spiritual, renewed, regenerated nature, then He recognizes that obedience is our element and so accepts our service.

Let me put this question round among you all. Brothers and Sisters, do you serve the Lord cheerfully? Frequently people give to the cause of God because they are asked. A guinea is dragged out of them. Do you think God cares for your guinea? You might as well have kept it. No blessing can come to you. When you give to the cause of God, do it cheerfully. He that gives must not give grudgingly, or else he has offered an unacceptable offering unto God. When you come out to week night services, do you come because you should come, or do you love to come? This is the mark of the genuine child of God, the true Caleb—that he can sing—

*“Make me to walk in Your commands*

*It is a delightful road.”*  
The man has his heart right, he feels at home in the work of the Lord! Here is his joy—

*“It is love that makes our cheerful feet  
In swift obedience move.”*

Caleb was one of those who served the Lord cheerfully.  
4. But now there is a fourth point, he followed the Lord constantly  
without declining. Having begun when he first started upon the search to  
exercise a truthful judgment, he persevered during the forty days of his  
spying and brought back a true report. Forty-five years he lived in the  
camp of Israel, but all that time he followed the Lord and never once consorted with murmuring rebels. And when his time came to claim his heritage at the age of eighty-five, the good old man is following the Lord fully.  
Still his speech betrays him. He shows a constant heart. God set his seal  
upon that man’s soul in his youthful days and he remained his God’s  
when gray hairs adorned his brow.  
Beloved, how many professors fail in this respect? They follow the Lord  
by fits and starts. They go out from us because they are not of us. For if  
they had been of us, doubtless they would have continued with us. They  
leap into religion as the flying fish leaps into the air. They fall back again  
into their sins, as the same fish returns to its element. They make a great  
name for a time like the crackling of thorns, but lo, the flame has soon  
expired, for they are not like the miraculous bush which burned, God  
dwells not in them!  
Caleb was kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. He  
could say with Jude, “Now unto Him who is able to keep me from falling,  
unto Him be honor and glory forever and ever.” He was not as some are,  
who imitate the lame beggar who limped all day in the streets to gather  
money and then at night went to the thieves’ kitchen, where all the dainty  
bits were brought out of the bag, the money flowed freely and the wine  
and the good cheer was bought. Then the rogue unloosed his lame leg and  
danced as merrily as the rest.  
No, Caleb was not of this kind. He did not limp in virtue nor leap in  
vice. His walk was ever the same and the way was always straight. God  
had delivered him from dissimulation, and had given him constancy in its  
place. How brightly he shone when he was left alone, faithful among the  
faithless. Even Joshua for awhile is silent. But we may compare him, to  
use the metaphor of good old Gotthold—we may compare him to a tree.  
The wind had been blowing—it was a dreadful hurricane and Gotthold  
walked into a forest and saw many trees torn up by the roots. He marveled much at one tree which stood alone and yet had been unmoved in the tempest. He said, “How is this? The trees that were together  
have fallen and this alone stands fast!” He observed that when the trees  
grow too closely they cannot send their roots into the earth—they lean too  
much upon each other. But this tree, standing alone, had space to thrust  
its roots into the earth and lay hold on the rock and stones, and so when  
the wind came, it fell not. It was so with Caleb—he always would lay hold  
upon his God, not upon men. And so when the wind came, he stood. I saw this morning a huge tree which stood by the water’s edge but yesterday, blown into the large pond upon our common. Well might it fall  
during such a night, but there were other trees further from the water  
that stood fast. You know it is our prosperity, our mercy-side—it is where  
the water comes to the root, where the plenty comes. But the temptation  
comes, too, and we are ever weakest where perhaps we dreamt we were  
the strongest. Caleb was constant because he was a rooted man and even  
success did not overturn him. He was not one of those plants which  
spring up quickly because there is no depth of earth. He had a firm hold  
upon his God.  
You know, my Sisters, how you wear your rings. I would that every  
Christian wore his graces after the same fashion. You wear not only the wedding ring, but the keeper, too. And every Christian should wear the keeper of constancy to guard the ring of his faith. Caleb had set a seal upon his heart and a bracelet upon his arm—his love was strong as death and endured even to the grave. He saw the Lord, he loved the Lord, he trusted the Lord. And for these reasons he followed the Lord wholly. Here I leave him, only asking you, dear Friends, to see to it that you have his holy perseverance. Therefore pray, “Hold You me up and I shall be safe,”  
and trust yourself where Caleb trusted himself—in the hands of God. I will give you those four subdivisions again: universally, without dividing. Sincerely, without dissembling. Cheerfully, without disputing. Constantly, without declining.  
II. Now for the second point, which is CALEB’S FAVORED PORTION. In  
reward for his faithful following of his Master, his life was preserved in the  
hour of judgment. The ten fell, smitten with plague, but Caleb lived.  
Blessed is the man who has the God of Jacob for his confidence— *“He that has made his refuge God  
Shall find a most secure abode;  
Shall walk all day beneath His shade,  
And there at night shall rest his head.  
What though a thousand at your side,  
At your right hand ten thousand died,  
Your God His chosen people saves  
Among the dead, amidst the graves.”*  
If any man shall experience special deliverances, Caleb is he. If he follows  
God fully, God will fully take care of him. When you look to nothing but  
your Master’s honor, your Master will look to your honor.  
When Queen Elizabeth sent a certain merchant over to Holland, he  
complained to her, “If I do your Majesty’s business, my own business will  
be ruined.” “You do my business,” said the Queen, “and I will see to your  
business.” It is so with our God. “My servant, serve Me, and I will serve  
you.” Caleb is willing to give his life for his Master, and therefore his Master gives him his life. There are many who seek their life that lose it. And  
there are some who lose it for Christ’s sake, that find it to life eternal.  
Caleb was also comforted with a long life of vigor. At eighty-five he was as  
strong as at forty and still able to face the giants.  
If there is a Christian man who shall have in his old age a vigor of faith  
and courage, it is the man who follows the Lord fully. I have in my mind’s  
eye one who gave himself, while yet a young man, to his Master’s cause.  
He has zealously served the Church in his day and generation and it is his  
privilege now to see the good of God’s chosen. His heart is so glad at the  
sight of God’s mercy that he is ready to say with Simeon—“Lord, now let  
Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word: for my eyes have  
seen Your salvation.”  
We gain our old saints from among those faithful young ones. If ever we  
are to see among us noble veterans—champions of the age whose heads  
shall be crowned with gray hairs of honor—we must look for those who in  
the beginning of their days were hearty in their Master’s cause, were universal in their obedience, thorough in their consecration to God. Experience, wisdom, Divine Grace are the gifts of our Lord Jesus to those who  
walk with zeal and earnestness in His ways.  
Again, Caleb received as his reward great honor among his Brothers and  
Sisters. He was at least twenty years older than any other man in the  
camp except Joshua. How the mothers would hold up their little children  
in their arms to look at Caleb as he walked down the street! “All died,” the  
mothers would say, “all died in Israel’s host, except that man who walks  
yonder with steadfast tread. All died and their carcasses were buried in  
the wilderness, except that man and Joshua the son of Nun.” At their  
council he would be regarded with as much reverence as Nestor in the assemblies of the Greeks. In their camps he would stand like another Achilles in the midst of the armies of Lacedaemon.  
As king and sire he dwelt among men. As some mighty Alp lifts its head  
nearer to Heaven than all its compeers—its pure, snow-white head communing with celestial things—so this gray-headed old man must have  
seemed a towering summit in the midst of Israel’s worthies! A Grace-made  
prime minister of the people of Israel after Joshua himself had departed.  
Well, Brothers and Sisters, such will God make of us if we give our hearts  
wholly to Him. I say, again, if we honor God He will honor us. “They that  
honor Me I will honor. They that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.” Inconsistent professors—men and women who may be Christians, but  
who never enter thoroughly into the Lord’s work—are never honored in  
the Church. They must necessarily keep in the background. They are  
rather tolerated than admired. But warm-hearted spirits, zealous and full  
of life—these are the men who stand like Joseph’s sheaf in the midst of  
his Brothers and Sisters’ sheaves which do obeisance unto it. Again—and you will think this is a strange thing to say—Caleb had the  
distinguished reward of being put upon the hardest service. That is always  
the lot of the most faithful servant of God. There were three huge warriors  
in Mount Hebron. No one will undertake to kill them except our good old  
friend Caleb. These Anakims, with their six toes on each foot and their six  
fingers on each hand, are to be upset and driven out. Who is to do it? If  
nobody else will offer himself, here is Caleb. No, he does not merely allow  
himself to be sent upon the service, but he craves permission to be allowed to take the place, the reason being because it was the worst task of  
the war and he panted to have the honor of it.  
Grand old man! Would God you had left many of your like behind you.  
If there is some pleasant thing to do for Christ, how we scramble after the  
service. But if there is a front place in the battle, “Oh, let Brother So-andSo do it.” Do you not notice the way most men decline the honor of special  
danger? “Our friend So-and-So is much better qualified for that. Let him  
take it.” If we were true heroes we should each of us contend which  
should undertake the most hopeless, the most difficult, and the most  
dangerous task. Who wins the honor? Why the man that leads the forlorn  
hope!  
But there are not many who will strive to have the privilege of going  
first. They are not quite so fond of being knocked off the ladder and sent  
headlong from the wall to have their brains knocked out on the ground— not quite so desirous of being blown to pieces by the batteries. But, truly, if we could rival even earthly soldiers in their bravery and selfsacrifice, it were well. Caleb had the distinguished honor of being permitted to lead the van against the gigantic Anakim. Follow the Lord fully and the devil himself will be afraid of you—keep close to your Lord and defy all  
the fiends of Hell.  
Last Tuesday morning, when I left London to go to Worcester to preach,  
the fog was about as thick as I have ever seen it, but what did that matter? The engine had just to keep on the rails, stick fast to the metals and  
she was safe. There was no particular need of seeing, because the road  
was laid down. And when a Christian knows he is right, he may go  
straight on, fog or no fog. But when a man gets off the road, then he may  
well pause, for he may be in a ditch and no one knows how soon he may  
come to grief. Get your heart right and you are independent of weather.  
Get your soul right and you may defy the sharpest arrow of the Adversary.  
The Lord is with us, if we are with Him.  
This grand old man in his after years had the honor of enjoying what he  
had once seen. He had only seen the land when he said, “We are able to  
take it.” But others said, “No, no, no.” Well, he lived not only to take it,  
but to enjoy it for himself. We get in some of our Churches—I say nothing  
of mine just now—certain reverend old gentlemen who might as well have  
gone to Heaven years ago, who if there is any enterprise to be undertaken,  
say, “Oh, no, no! It cannot be done.” They sit down and figure away on a  
piece of paper with their pencil and say, “We have not enough money. It  
cannot be done.”  
Perhaps some youthful soldier of Christ in the army says, “It can be  
done. I am sure we can do it.” But the good old man, having made up his  
mind never to walk by faith, stands to his watchword, “It is imprudent.”  
That is the big word with which they try to knock out the brains of young  
Zeal—“imprudent, imprudent!” But thank God there are others of another  
sort, who though they grow gray, say, “Well, I do not know. I may be  
thought to be a boy in my old age, but I do believe that God will hear  
prayer and that if it is God’s work we can do it.” And the old man lays his  
hand on the young soldier’s shoulder and bids him go on and God be with  
him.  
That is the kind of Caleb I like! May such men live to see the reward of  
their confidence! Indeed they shall see that God is true to their faith and  
that He does reward those who dare to do hard things in confidence in His  
name. I may be speaking to some people from the country. You have got a  
minister down there but he wants to do a little more good than you like  
him to do. Now mind what you think. Stand back. If you cannot help him,  
let him alone. But I do pray you, on the other hand, endeavor to encourage him, cheer him on, for you will never win a Hebron for yourself or the  
Church if you are always talking about the giants and the difficulties and  
the dangers. There are no difficulties to the man who has faith enough to  
overcome them.  
To conclude this point, good old Caleb left a blessing to his children. He  
had many sons, but he fought for them and carved out a portion for them all. And he had a daughter, too, whom he promised to give to wife, you will remember, to anyone who would smite Kirjath-Sepher. He was a man of such a kind that he did not like to have a man for a son-in-law who could not fight as well as himself. He delighted to see valor in young people and so he offered his daughter as a prize. When he had given his  
daughter, she came to him and asked for a double blessing. She had the field and a south country—she would have the land of  
springs—and he gave her the blessing of the upper and the nether  
springs. If there is any man who shall be able to leave his children the  
blessing of the upper and nether springs, it is the man who follows the  
Lord fully. If I might envy any man, it would be the Believer who from his  
youth up has walked through Divine Grace according to his Lord’s Commandments and who is able, when his day comes, to scatter benedictions  
upon his rising sons and daughters and leave them with godliness which  
has the blessing of this life and that which is to come. The blessing of the  
upper and the nether springs, then, was the reward of good old Caleb. There are some of us who are young in years, members of this Church,  
men and women, and we have before us, I hope, the opportunity, if God  
gives us Divine Grace, of becoming Calebs. And if the Lord should spare  
me as he spared Joshua, and spare you as he spared Caleb, we may yet,  
when our hairs are gray, do something, still, for the Lord our God, when  
those that fought the fight before us shall sleep among the clods of the  
valley. O for the Holy Spirit within us and the love of Jesus upon us, that  
we may be accepted in the Beloved!  
III. And now, the last point of all—CALEB’S SECRET CHARACTER. The  
Lord says of him, “Because he has another spirit with him.” He had another spirit—not only a bold, generous, courageous, noble and heroic  
spirit, but the Spirit and influence of God which thus raised him above  
human inquietudes and earthly fears. Therefore he followed God fully—  
literally he filled after him. God showed him the way to take and the line  
of conduct he must pursue—and he filled up this line, and in all things  
followed the will of his Master. Everything acts according to the spirit that  
is in it.  
Yonder lamp gives no light. Why? It has no oil. Here is another. It  
cheers the darkness of the cell. Why? It is full of oil and oil is the mother  
of light. There are two huge bags of silk. One of them lies heavily upon the  
ground, the other mounts up towards the stars. The one is filled with carbonic-acid gas. It cannot mount, it acts according to the spirit that is in it.  
It has a heavy gas and there it lies. There is another full of hydrogen and  
it acts according to the spirit that is in it and up it goes. The light air  
seeks the lighter regions and up it mounts. Everything recording to its  
own order. The real way to make a new life is to receive a new spirit. There  
must be given us, if we would follow the Lord fully, a new heart and that  
new heart must be found at the foot of the Cross, where the Holy Spirit  
works through the bleeding wounds of Jesus.  
Dear Friends, I would to God that we had, all of us, that which is the  
distinguishing mark of a right spirit, the spirit of faith. That spirit which  
takes God at His Word, reads His promise, and knows it to be true. He that has this spirit will soon follow the Lord fully. Unbelief is the mother of sin, but faith is the nurse of virtue. More faith, Lord, more simple childlike faith upon a precious Savior! Then a faithful spirit always begets a meek spirit and a meek spirit always begets a brave spirit. It is said of the wood of the elder tree that none is softer, but yet it is recorded of old that  
Venice was built upon piles of the elder tree because it will never rot. And so the meek-spirited man who is gentle and patient lasts on  
bravely, holding his own against all the attacks of the destroying Adversary. The true Believer has also a loving spirit as the result of Jesus’  
Grace. He loves God, therefore he loves God’s people and God’s creatures.  
And having this loving spirit he has next a zealous spirit and so he spends  
and is spent for God and this begets in him a heavenly spirit. And so he  
tries to live in Heaven and to make earth a Heaven to his fellow men, believing that he shall soon have a Heaven for himself and for them, too, on  
the other side of the stream.  
Such a spirit had good Caleb. We cannot imitate him till we get his  
spirit. We are dead until He quickens us. O that the Holy Spirit would lead  
us to go to Jesus just as we are and look up to Him and beseech Him to  
fulfill that great Covenant promise—“A new heart also will I give them, a  
right spirit will I put within them.” You and I have not followed the Lord  
fully. What shall we do, then? First let us humbly repent. Caleb means a  
dog. Let us learn from a dog. When a dog has done amiss, and you take a  
stick and are about to beat him, he will lie down on the ground and howl  
and creep to your feet and look up so piteously at you that you throw  
down your stick.  
Now let us each do the same. Let us each be Calebs—dogs in this. Let  
us crouch at the feet of God’s justice. Let us look up into the face of God’s  
mercy and through Jesus Christ He will forgive us. Having done this, may  
He enable us to exercise a simple faith in Christ. As the child lives hanging upon the mother’s breast and deriving its nourishment from the parent, so be it yours and mine to hang upon the wounds of our own dear  
Lord. And tonight when we come to His Table, let us eat His flesh and  
drink His blood, keeping close to His Person, receiving our life from the secret channels of His life, living upon Him.  
Ah, if we live close to Jesus, we must be Calebs! He that is one with Jesus will follow God because Jesus is perfect in His following of His Father.  
And we, being parts of Him, shall be perfect, too. But the Holy Spirit’s  
work must begin by bringing us to Jesus just as we are. God help us to  
trust Him as we are and then, by His Grace He will make us Calebs and  
keep us to the end. Amen.

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THE SPIES  
NO. 197

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON THE SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 6, 1858, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eats up the inhabitants thereof. And all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature.”  
Numbers 13:32.**

**“And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes. And they spoke unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land.”  
Numbers 14:6, 7.**

THE unbelief of the children of Israel prompted them to send spies into Canaan. God had told them that it was a good land and He had promised to drive out their enemies—they ought therefore to have marched forward with all confidence to possess the promised heritage. Instead of this, they send twelve princes to spy out the land and, “alas, for human nature,” ten of these were faithless and only two true to the Lord. Read over the narrative and mark the ill effect of the lying message and the holy boldness of the true spies.

Now I must take up my parable. The land of Canaan is a picture of religion. I do not think it was ever intended to be a picture of Heaven, for there are no Canaanites in Heaven. Certainly in Heaven there are no sons of Anak, no giants to be driven out, no walled cities and no kings with chariots of iron. Canaan is, however, a very excellent picture of religion. The children of Israel must stand this morning as the representatives of the great mass of mankind. The great mass of mankind never try for themselves what religion is. They neither search our sacred books, nor taste and try our religion.

But this is what they do. They consider those who make a profession of religion as spies who have entered the land and they look upon our character and our conduct as the message which we bring back to them. The ungodly man does not read his Bible in order to discover whether the religion of Christ is holy and beautiful. No, he reads the living Bible— Christ’s Church—and if the Church is inconsistent he condemns the Bible, though the Bible is never to be accountable for the sins of those who profess to believe it.

Ungodly men, of course, do not come by repentance and faith and make a trial of the love of Christ. They do not enter into covenant with the Lord Jesus, or else they would soon discover that it is a good land that flows with milk and honey. But instead thereof they stand still and they say, “Let us see what these Christians make of it. Do they find it to be a happy thing? Does it succor them in their hour of trouble? Does it comfort them in the midst of their trials?” And if they find that our report is a gloomy or an unholy one, they turn aside and they say, “It is not a good land. We will not enter into it, for its difficulties are great, but its enjoyments are few.”

Beloved Brethren and Friends, to put the parable as simply as I can, I am about to make out every Christian man and woman here to be a spy who has entered into the good land of religion and who by his conduct and conversation brings either an evil or a good report of this good land and either moves the world to murmur at and to despise religion, or else inspires it with a holy dread of goodness and something of a longing after a portion therein.

But I shall begin with a word of caution. In the first place I shall notice that the men of the world are not to be excused for their folly in trusting a mere report from other persons. Then secondly, I shall endeavor to describe the evil reporters, the evil spies, which are in the camp. Then we will mention some good spies, who bring a good report of the land. And, in conclusion, bring a few weighty reasons to bear upon Christian men and women, why they should act like Caleb and Joshua and bring up a good report of the land

I. In the first place, then, THE UNGODLY WORLD IS NOT TO BE EXCUSED for that, which must nevertheless be admitted to be a very natural matter, namely, that INSTEAD OF INVESTIGATING RELIGION FOR THEMSELVES, THEY USUALLY TRUST TO THE REPRESENTATION OF OTHERS.

The worldly man looks at a Christian to see whether his religion is joyful. “By this,” says he, “shall I know whether there is that in religion which will make a man glad. If I see the professor of it with a joyous countenance, then I will believe it to be a good thing.” But hark, Sir, have you any right to put it to that test? Is not God to be counted true, even before we have proved Him? And has He not declared Himself, “Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity and in whose spirit there is no guile”? Does not the Scripture itself declare that godliness is profitable, not only for this life, but for that which is to come—that it has the blessing of two worlds, the blessing of this world below the sky and of that upper world above the stars?

Would you not know from Scripture if you were to take the Bible and read it, that everywhere the Christian is commanded to rejoice, because it is comely for him? “Rejoice in the Lord you righteous and shout for joy all you that are upright in heart.” “Rejoice evermore.” “Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say, rejoice.” Remember you have no right to put the joyfulness of religion to any test short of your own experience, for you are bound to believe God on His naked word. It is not for you to stand still till you can see it to be true. It is your duty to believe your Maker when He declares that the ways of religion are pleasantness and all her paths are peace.

Again, you say you will test the holiness of Christ’s religion by the holiness of Christ’s people. You have no right, I reply, to put the question to any such test as that. The proper test that you ought to use is to try it yourselves—to “taste and see that the Lord is good.” By tasting and seeing you will prove His goodness and by the same process you must prove the holiness of His Gospel. Your business is to seek Christ crucified for yourselves—not to take the representation of another man concerning the power of grace to subdue corruption and to sanctify the heart.

Your business is yourselves to enter into its valleys and pluck its grapes. Yourselves to climb its hills and see its inhabitants inasmuch as God has given you a Bible. He intended you to read it and not to be content with reading men. There is His Holy Spirit. You are not to be content with feelings that rise through the conversation of others. Your only power to know true religion is by having that Spirit operating upon your own heart—that you may yourself know what is the power of religion.

You have no right to judge religion from anything extra or external from itself. And if you despise it before you have tried it yourself, you must stand confessed in this world as a fool and in the next world as a criminal. And yet this is so with most men. If you hear a man rail at the Bible, you can usually conclude that he never reads it. And you may be quite certain if you hear a man speak against religion, that he never knew what religion was. True religion, when once it takes possession of the heart, never allows a man to quarrel with it.

That man will call Christ his best Friend who knows Christ at all. We have found many who have despised the enjoyments of this world—but we never found one who turned from religion with disgust or with satiety, after having once enjoyed it. No, remember my Hearers, if you take your religion from other people and are led by the example of professors to discard religion, you are nevertheless guilty of your own blood. For God has not left you to the uncertain chart of men’s characters. He has given you His own Word—a more sure Word and testimony—whereunto you do well if you take heed.

It will be in vain for you to say at the Day of Judgment, “Such-andSuch a man was inconsistent, therefore I despised religion.” Your excuse will then be discovered to be idle, for you shall have to confess that in other respects you did not take another man’s opinion in business, or in the cares of this life—you were independent enough. In your political opinions you did not pin your faith to any man’s coat. And, therefore, it shall be said of you at last you had enough independence of mind to steer your own course even against the example of others, in business, in politics and such like things. You certainly had enough of mental vigor, if you had chosen to have done so, to have stood out against the inconsistency of professors, and to have searched for yourselves.

If all Christ’s Church were inconsistent, so long as there is a Bible upon earth, you could have no excuse in the Day of Judgment. For Christ was not inconsistent and you are not asked to follow Christ’s followers—you are asked to follow Christ Himself. Until you can find a flaw in His character, a mistake in His conduct, you have no right to fling the inconsistency of His followers in the teeth of Christ, nor to turn from Him because His disciples forsake Him and flee.  
To their own Master they stand or fall. They must bear their own burden and you must bear yours, too. “Every man shall bear his own burden,” says Scripture, “for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to give an account for the things which we have done in the body, whether they are good, or whether they are evil.” You will not be accountable for another man’s sins, but for your own. And if another man by his sin has brought reproach upon Christ, still it shall be no excuse for you if you do not follow Him wholly, in the midst of an evil generation.

II. With that, by way of caveat and guard, I shall now bring forth THE BAD SPIES. I wish that the men mentioned in the text had been the only spies who had brought an evil report—it would have been a great mercy if the plague that killed them, had killed all the rest of the same sort. But alas, the breed, I am afraid, will never be extinct and as long as the world endures, there will be some professors who bring up an evil report of the land.

But now let me bring forth the evil spies. Remember, these spies are to be judged, not by what they say, but by what they do. For to a worldling, words are nothing—acts are everything. The reports that we bring of our religion are not the reports of the pulpit, not the reports that we utter with our lips, but the report of our daily life, speaking in our own houses and the everyday business of life.

Well, first, I produce a man who brings up an evil report of the land and you will see at once that he does so, for he is of a dull and heavy spirit. If he preaches, he takes this text—“Through much tribulation we must inherit the kingdom.” Somehow or other, he never mentions God’s people, without calling them God’s tried children. As for joy in the Lord, he looks upon it with suspicion. “Lord, what a wretched land is this!” is the very height of poetry to him. He could sing that always. He is always in the valley, where the mists are hovering. He never climbs the mountain’s brow to stand above the tempests of this life. He was gloomy before he made a profession of religion—since then he has become more gloomy still.

See him at home. Ask the children what they think of their father’s religion. They think they could wish their father was anything except religious. “Father will not let us laugh,” they say. “He pulls the blinds down on the Sunday. He tries to make us as dark and miserable as he can on the Sabbath-Day.” He thinks it his duty as a strict Sabbatarian, to make the Sabbath the greatest day of bondage out of the whole seven.

Ask his wife what she thinks of religion. She says, “I do not know much about it myself, but I wish my husband were a little more cheerful.” “Nay, but is it his religion that makes him miserable?” “I do not know what it is,” she says, “but I know when he is most miserable, he is generally most religious.” Hear him pray—when he is on his knees he gives a long list of his trials and troubles. He never says at the end, “More are they that are for us than all they that are against us.” He usually dwells upon the valley of Baca and about crying so much that he makes it a well. He never goes on to say, “They go from strength to strength, everyone of them in Zion appeared before God.” No, it is just the black part of the story.

If you want to see this brother in perfection, you must see him when he is talking to a young convert. The young man is full of joy and gladness, for he has found the Savior and, like a young fledgling that has just taken wing, he delights to fly about in the sunshine and chirp merrily in the joy of his faith. “Ah,” says the old Christian, “the black ox has not trod on your toes yet. You will have more troubles than you dream of.” Old Mr. Timorous was a friend of mine—did you ever hear what he said to Christian, when he met him on his journey? I will tell you the same. “The lions! The lions! The lions!” he cries. He, however, reveals not, “the lions are chained.” “The giants! the giants! The giants!” he exclaims.

He never says, “He carries the lambs in His bosom and gently leads those that are with young.” He takes always the dreary side of the question, bringing up an ill report of the land. And, do you know, some of these people are so proud of their ill report that they form themselves into a little knot and they cannot hear any preacher except his face be of an extreme length and except he has studied the dictionary to find all the most mournful terms and except he appear unto men to fast—just like the Pharisees of old.

Now, I do not hesitate to say that these men are evil spies. Far be it from us to mask the great fact that religion does entail tribulation and that a Christian, like everybody else, must expect in this world to have trouble, for man is born to it as the sparks fly upward. But it is as false as God is true, that religion makes men miserable. So sure as God is good, His religion is good and as God is good to all and His tender mercies are over all His works, religion is an atmosphere in which those tender mercies play and the sea in which His loving kindness swims.

Oh, come, you dreary professors, take away those storm clouds and wreathe a few rainbows on your brow. Come, now, anoint your head and wash your face, that you appear not unto men to fast. Take those harps from the willows. Down with them and now try if your unaccustomed fingers cannot make them alive with melody. And if you will not do it and cannot do it, permit me to bear my testimony. I can say, concerning Christ’s religion—if I had to die like a dog and had no hope whatever of immortality—if I wanted to lead a happy life, let me serve my God with all my heart. Let me be a follower of Jesus and walk in His footsteps, for never was there a truer word spoken than that of Solomon, “Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace.”

It is a land that flows with milk and honey. There are clusters even on earth too heavy for one man to carry. There are fruits that have been found so rich that even angel lips have never been sweetened with more luscious wine. There are joys to be had here so fair that even the nectared wine of Paradise can scarce excel the sweets of satisfaction that are to be found in the earthly banquets of the Lord.

Perhaps, however, this poor man that I have just sent off is to be pitied. Not so the next one, for he is a rascal indeed. Look at him! He comes forward as Mr. Meek-Face making a great profession of religion. How he mouths the hymns! When he stands up to pray, with what a spiritual kind of voice he prays. Nothing carnal about his voice! He is among the Christian people a great leader. He can preach sermons by the yard. He can

dissect doctrines by the hour. There is not a metaphysical point in all our theology that he does not understand—  
*“He can a hair divide,  
Betwixt the west and north-west side.”*  
His understanding is, in his own opinion, infinite. And he makes very boastful pretensions to piety. Everybody says when they see him in his good frames in Chapel or elsewhere, “What a dear good man he is!” You follow him to business. He will not swear, but he will lie. He won’t outand-out rob, but he will cheat. He will not curse a man to his face, but he will do worse—he will speak ill of him behind his back. You watch him! He, if he could find a drunkard in the street, would upbraid him and talk to him so proudly against the sin of intoxication—but he himself very seldom knows his own way upstairs to bed. Only that is in a quiet way— therefore nobody sees it—and he is thought to be a very reputable member of society.  
Don’t you know any such people? I hope you do not. But I have met with them. There is a great stock of them still living—men that make grand professions and their lives are as much opposed to their professions, as Hell is opposed to Heaven. Now what does the world say of religion when they see these people? They say at once, “Well, if this is religion, we had better have none of it.” Says the businessman, “I could not do what So-and-So does, it is true, I could sing out of his hymn book, but I could not keep his cash book.”  
We have known many men say, “I could not make so long a prayer as So-and-So and could not make out my invoices in the dishonest way he does.” We have met with worldly men who are far more honest as tradesman and professional men than persons who make a profession of religion. And we have known on the other hand, men who have made the greatest profession, indulging in all kinds of evil. Horrible shall be that man’s fate, who thus ruins other men’s souls by bringing up a bad report of the land. But, oh, I beseech you, my Hearers, if any of you have seen such professors, let the righteous stand out today, like Joshua and Caleb of old. Let the Church stand before you and rend its garments while it entreats you not to believe the lying and slanderous reports of such men. For, indeed, religion is holy. As Christ is holy, even so do His people desire to be holy. And the grace of God which brings salvation is pure and peaceful. It produces in men things that are holy and of good report, things that magnify God and that make human nature appear glorious. But scarcely do I need to tell you that in your own circle while you have met with hypocrites, you have met with men whom you could not doubt. Yes, you have sometimes seen even in your evil company, a man who was like an angel. You have felt as Satan did when Abdiel, the faithful among the faithless, stood forth and would not turn a rebel to his God—  
*“Abashed the devil stood,  
And felt how awful goodness was.”*  
I beseech you therefore, do not believe the ill report of the hypocrite and the unholy man.  
But there is a third class of professors who bring up a bad report of the land. And this I am afraid will affect us all in some measure—we must all plead guilty to it. The Christian man, although he endeavors uniformly to walk according to the Law of Christ, finds still another law in his members warring against the law of his mind and consequently there are times when his witness is not consistent. Sometimes this witness is, “The Gospel is holy” for he is holy himself. But, alas with the very best of men, there are times when our witness contradicts our faith. When you see an angry Christian—and such a thing may be seen—and when you meet with a Christian who is proud and such a thing has been known—when you catch a Christian overtaken in a fault, as you may sometimes do—then his testimony is not consistent. He contradicts then what he has at other times declared by his acts.  
And here, I say again, I fear that all of us must plead guilty. We have sometimes by our actions put in words which seem to conflict with the general testimony of our lives. Oh, my Friends, do not believe all that you see in us and if sometimes you see a Christian man betrayed into a hasty or a wrong expression—do not blame it on our religion—blame it on our poor fallen humanity. If sometimes you should catch us overtaken by a fault, and we trust it shall be rarely enough you do see us, abuse us, but do not abuse our Master! Say what you will concerning us, but do not, we beseech you, blame it on our religion—for saints are sinners still and the most holy men have still to pray—“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.”  
But we do beseech you, when the madness of sin deludes us, do not believe the maundering of our madness, but have regard to the general testimony of our lives and that, we trust, you will find to be consistent with the Gospel of Christ. I could bear to be abused, but I should not like to have the Master abused. I would rather have it believed that I was not a Christian at all than allow anyone to say that any faults I have were caused by my religion. No, Christ is holy. The Gospel is pure and spotless. If at any time we seem to contradict that witness, do not believe us, I beseech you, but look into the matter for yourselves—for indeed it is a good land—a land which flows with milk and honey.  
III. Thus I have brought forth the evil spies who bring up a bad report. And now, thank God, we have some GOOD SPIES, too. But we will let them speak. Come Joshua and Caleb, we want your testimony. Though you are dead and gone, you have left children behind you. And they, still grieved as you were at the evil report, rend their clothes—and they boldly stand to it that the land they have passed through is an exceeding good land.  
One of the best spies I have ever met with is an aged Christian. I remember to have heard him stand up and tell what he thought of religion. He was a blind old man, who for twenty years had not seen the light of the sun. His gray locks hung from his brow and floated over his shoulders. He stood up at the table of the Lord and thus addressed us—“Brothers and Sisters, I shall soon be taken from you. In a few more months I shall gather up my feet upon my bed and sleep with my fathers. I have not the tongue of the learned nor the mind of the eloquent but I desire before I go, to bear one public testimony to my God.  
“Fifty and six years have I served Him and I have never found Him once unfaithful. I can say ‘Surely goodness and mercy have followed us all the days of my life and not one good thing has failed of all the Lord God has promised.’ ” And there stood that old man, tottering into his tomb, deprived of the light of Heaven naturally and yet having the light of Heaven in a better sense shining into his soul. And though he could not look upon us, yet did he turn himself and seemed to say, “Young people, trust God in early life, for I have not to regret that I sought Him too soon. I have only to mourn that so many of my years ran to waste.”  
There is nothing that more tends to strengthen the faith of the young Believer than to hear the veteran Christian, covered with scars from the battle testifying that the service of his Master is a happy service and that if he could have served any other master he would not have done so, for His service was pleasant and His wages everlasting joy.  
Take the testimony of the sufferer—behold that fragile form of delicate transparent beauty, whose light-blue eye and hectic cheek are lit by the fires of decline—all droopingly she lies. As a dew-laden lily, her flaxen tresses, rashly luxuriant, damp with unhealthy moisture. I have seen her when her eyes were sunk, when she could scarce be lifted out of the bed, when the frame was wearied of life. And I have seen her quite complacent, as she took her Bible from beneath her pillow and read, “Yes, though I pass through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff they comfort me. You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies.”  
I have sat down and spoken to her and have said to her, “Well, you have been in this sad place these many months. Do you find religion cheers you now?” “Oh, Sir,” she has said, “what could I do without it? I cannot leave this bed. But it has been to me a couch of joy, where Christ has spread a banquet. He has made my bed in all my sickness. He has put His left hand under my head and His right hand has embraced me. He has given me joy in my sorrows and has prepared me to face death with a calm and unflinching countenance.” Such a case bears witness to the Master. Like that of the gray-headed saint, it is an excellent report of this good land.  
But we need not look to sick beds and to gray heads for the only witness. We know a Christian merchant. He is immersed in the cares of this life and yet he always finds time to prepare for a world that is to come. He has as much business as any man in the city and yet family prayer is never neglected. And perhaps you find him serving the office of civic magistrate—as was the case in one instance—and yet even on the day of banquet, he rises from his chair, in order that family worship may still be kept up in his house.  
He is known in business as one who is willing to help little tradesmen. He likes good securities, as other people do. But he will sometimes run a risk to help a rising man. When you go to him you find him a sharp man of business, he is not to be taken in. But at the same time you will find him a man that will not take you in. You may trust him. Whatever the transaction may be, you have no need to look over the invoice if he has had anything to do with it. There will be no mistake there—or if there be a mistake, it will be palpably a mistake and immediately confessed with the greatest possible sorrow—for he is upright in his dealings.  
There has come sometimes in his case an unhappy crisis and when houses were tumbling and bankrupts were as common as leaves upon the trees he was not disturbed and distracted like other men, for his confidence was in his God and his trust in the God of Jacob. He had some anxiety, but he had more faith. And when his prosperity returned to him, he dedicated part of his substance unto the Lord. Not in a noisy way, so that it might appear in a report that So-and-So gave a hundred a year to a society—but he gave five hundred and nobody knew of it.  
Men said

of him in the Exchange and in the Market, “If there is a Christian, it is that man.” When they saw him, they said, “There is something in religion. We have watched him. We have never found him trip or turn aside. We have always found him the same upright character, fearing his God and fearing no man.” Such a man brings up a good report of the land. I may talk here Sunday after Sunday and every day in the week elsewhere, but I cannot preach in so forcible a way as you can, who by your actions are preaching to the world. Ah, and I cannot preach so well as those who are servants, who by their holy action in the midst of trial and difficulty have an opportunity to show what grace can do in the heart. Those are good spies who bring up a good report of the land. And, my Sisters, let me say a word to you. It is possible for you, too, to bring up a good report. Not by neglecting your households in order to attend to visiting societies. Let visiting societies be attended to. God be thanked for them, for they are among the best institutions of our times. But I have known some people who would have been a great deal better employed in scrubbing their dressers and seeing their servants wash up the tea things, than going out visiting the sick from house to house. For their house has run to riot and their families have been quite out of order, because the wife, like a foolish woman—was plucking everything down at home—while trying to do good abroad.  
We have known many true Sisters of mercy, who are really blessed among women and God shall bless them abundantly. We have known others who very seldom go out visiting the sick, but they are at home ordering their household. We have known an ungodly husband converted by a godly wife. I remember to have heard an instance of a man who had a wife of so excellent a disposition, that though he was a worldly man, he used to boast in his company that he had got the best wife on earth. Said he, “You cannot put her into a passion. I go home late at night, in all sorts of trim, but she always receives me meekly and I feel ashamed of myself every time I see her, for her holiness rebukes me. You may put her to any test you like, you will find her the best of women.”  
“Well,” said they, “let us all go to supper with you tonight.” They did—in they rushed. She did not hint there was nothing in the house, though there was very little. But she and her maid set to work with all their might, although it was past twelve o’clock and very soon had supper and she waited on them with all the grace of a duchess, seeming as glad to see them as if they were her friends and had come at the most opportune time. And they began to tell how it was they had come and asked her how it was she could bear it so patiently. She said, “God has given me a husband. I was not converted before I was married, but ever since I was converted, my first endeavor has been to bring my husband to know Jesus. and I am sure,” said she, “he will never be brought to do so except by kindness.”  
Her husband, through these words, after the company had gone, confessed how wrong he had acted to her. His heart was touched—next Sabbath he went to the House of God with her and they became a happy couple, rejoicing in the Lord Jesus Christ with all their hearts. She was a good spy and brought a good report of the land. I doubt not there are many women whose names will never be heard of on earth who will receive the Master’s commendation at last, “She has done what she could.” And when you have done what you can for Christ, by holy, patient, quiet meekness, you are good spies. You have brought a good report of the land. And you servants, you can do the same. A religious servant girl ought to be the best servant anywhere. A religious shoeblack ought to black shoes better than anybody else. If there is a religious man who is set to clean knives, he ought to take care that he does not take the edge off. You know of the slaves’ piety in America. It is such that a religious slave is worth many dollars more than another and always sells well. The masters like them to get religious because they are the men that do not rebel, but submit meekly and patiently. And the poor men, who, finding themselves slaves—much as they may hate their position—yet by God’s grace they regard One to be their master who is higher than all and “not with eye service as men-pleasers, but with singleness of heart,” they endeavor to serve God.  
IV. And now I want to press with all my might upon every professing Christian here THE GREAT NECESSITY OF BRINGING OUT A UNIFORMLY GOOD TESTIMONY CONCERNING RELIGION. Brethren, I feel persuaded if Christ were here today, there are some of us who love Him so well that we would turn our own cheek to the smiters, rather than He should be smitten. One of Napoleon’s officers loved him so well that when a cannon ball was likely to smite the emperor, he threw himself in the way, in order that he might die as a sacrifice for his master. Oh Christian, you would do the same, I think, If Christ were here you would run between Him and insult, yes, between Him and death.  
Well, then, I am sure you would not wantonly expose Christ. But remember, every unguarded word you use, every inconsistent act, puts a slur on Christ. The world, you know, does not find fault with you—they lay it all to your Master. If you make a slip tomorrow they will not say, “That is John Smith’s human nature.” They will say, “That is John Smith’s religion.” They know better, but they will be sure to say it. They will be sure they put all the mischief at the door of Christ. Now, if you could bear the blame yourself you might bear it manfully. But do not allow Christ to bear the blame—do not suffer His escutcheon to be tarnished—do not permit His banner to be trampled in the dust. Then there is another consideration. You must remember, if you do wrong the world will be quite sure to notice you. The world carries two bags—in the bag at the back they put all the Christian’s virtues—in the bag in front they put all our mistakes and sins. They never think of looking at the virtues of holy men. All the courage of martyrs and all the fidelity of confessors and all the holiness of saints, is nothing to them. But our iniquities are ever before them. Please remember, that wherever you are as a Christian, the eyes of the world are upon you. The Argus eyes of an evil generation follow you everywhere. If a Church is blind, the world is not.  
It is a common Proverb, “As sound asleep as a Church,” and a very true one, for most Churches are sound asleep. But it would be a great falsehood if anyone were to say, “As sound asleep as the world,” for the world is never asleep. Sleeping is left to the Church. And remember, too, that the world always wears magnifying glasses to look at Christians’ faults. If a man trips who makes no profession, oh, it is nothing—you never hear of it. Let a minister do it—let a Christian professor do it—and then comes out the magnifying glass. It is nothing in anybody else, but it is a great sin in us.  
There are two codes of morality in the world and it is very right there should be. If we make profession to be God’s children and to have God’s grace in our hearts, it is no more wrong of the world to expect more of us than of others than it is for a gardener to expect his plants to grow more quickly on a hot-bed and under a glass-shade than he would out of doors in the cold frost. If we have more privileges and more culture and make more profession, we ought to live up to them and the world is quite right in expecting us to do so.  
There is another consideration I must offer you before I have done. Remember, if you do not bring a good testimony for your religion, an evil testimony will defeat a great deal of good. All the saints in a Church but one may be faithful to Christ and the world will not honor the Church for it. But let one professor in that Church turn aside to sin and you will hear of it for many a day. It is even so in nature. Take the days in the year. The sun rises and shines upon us and we do not note it. All things continue as they were—the stars smile sweetly by night and the day and night roll on in quiet. But there comes one day, a day of thunder and lightning, a day of earthquake and storm and it is put on the rolls of our history that such-and-such a remarkable day occurred at such-and-such a time. Why not note the good days? But so it is. The world will only note the evil. You may cross through a country and you will notice a hundred fair rivers, like silver streams threaded with emeralds running through the pastures. Who hears the sound of their waters, as they flow gently to the sea? But there is one precipitous rock and a waterfall dashes there. You may hear that half a mile off. We never hear anything about the river St. Lawrence, in all its lengths and breadths, it is only the falls of Niagara that we hear of. And so the Christian may flow on in a steady course of life, unseen, unheard—but you are sure to hear of him if he makes a fall. Be watchful, therefore—your Master comes. Be watchful—the enemy is at hand even now. O may the Holy Spirit sanctify you wholly, that you may abound in every good work, to the glory of God!  
As for you who fear not God, remember, if Christians do sin, that shall not be an excuse for you. Suppose a man you are dealing with says to you, “I cheated you, but I did not make any profession of being honest.” You would tell him he was a confirmed rogue. Or if a man were taken before a magistrate and were to say, “You need not put me in a prison, I never made a profession of being anything but a thief. I never said I would not break into people’s chambers and get at their plate baskets!” The magistrate would say, “You speak honestly, but you are by your own confession a great rogue and I will transport you for life and you shall never have a ticket of leave.”  
It will be of no use for you at the Last Day, to say that you never made a profession of wanting to go to Heaven or to escape Hell, of leaving sin and trusting in Christ. If you never made a profession of serving God, you may rest assured He will have short work with you. “You have made no profession. O there is no judgment required. Depart! You did make no profession of loving Me and now you shall have no possession of My glory. Depart, accursed, into everlasting fire.” May the Lord deliver us from that, for Jesus’ sake.

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #341 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

THE HIGH PRIEST STANDING BETWEEN THE DEAD AND THE LIVING  
NO. 341

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, OCTOBER 21, 1860, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT EXETER HALL, STAND.

**“And Aaron took as Moses commanded and ran into the midst of the congregation: and behold, the plague was begun among the people. And he put in incense and  
made atonement for the people. And he  
stood between the dead and the  
living; and the plague  
was stayed.”  
Numbers 16:47, 48.**

WE have attentively read the passage which contains the account of this transaction. The authority of Moses and Aaron had been disputed by an ambitious man belonging to an elder branch of the family of Levi. He had craftily joined with himself certain factious spirits of the tribe of Reuben, who themselves also sought to attain to power by their supposed rights through Reuben the first-born. By a singular judgment from Heaven God had proven that rebellion against Moses was a mortal sin. He had bid the earth open its mouth and swallow up all the traitors and both Levites and Reubenites had disappeared, covered in a living grave.

One would have imagined that from this time the murmurings of the children of Israel would have ceased. Or at least should they have been daring enough to even gather in a little mutinous mob, their traitorous spirit never would have come to so great a height as to develop itself in the whole body openly before the Lord’s tabernacle. Yet so it was. On the very morrow after that solemn transaction, the whole of the people of Israel gathered themselves together and with unholy clamors surrounded Moses and Aaron, charging them with having put to death the people of the Lord.

Doubtless they hinged this accusation upon the fact that whenever Moses prayed, God heard him. Then would they say, “Had he prayed upon this occasion the people would not have been destroyed, the earth would not have opened her mouth and they would not have been swallowed up.” They would thus attempt to prove the charge which they brought against these two great men of God.

Can you picture the scene now in your mind’s eye? There is the infuriated mass of people. The spectacle of such a crowd as I see before me in this hall is overpowering—and were all this multitude in tumult against two men, the two might have sufficient cause for trembling. But this would be but as a grain of sand compared with that inconceivable number who were then gathered. A large part of those three millions would come up in one vast tumultuous host. Whatever was proposed by any leader of the mob would no doubt have instantly been carried into effect and had it not been for the awful majesty which surrounded the

person of Moses, no doubt they would have torn him to pieces on the spot.

But just as they are rushing up like the waves of the sea, the cloudy pillar which hung above the tabernacle descends and envelopes in its fold, as with a protecting Baptism, the whole of the sacred place. Then in the center of this cloud there blazed out that marvelous light called the Shekinah, which was the indication of the presence of Him who cannot be seen, but whose glory may be manifest. The people stand back a little. Moses and Aaron fall upon their faces in prayer. They beg of God that He would spare the people, for they have heard a voice coming out of the excellent glory, saying, “Get you up from this people, that I may destroy them in a moment.”

This time God’s blow goes forth with His word, for the destroying angel begins to mow down the outer ranks of the vast tumultuous host. There they fall one upon another. Moses with his undimmed vision, looking over the heads of the people, can see them begin to fall beneath the scythe of death. “Up,”  
says Moses, “up and take with you your censer. Snatch fire from off the holy altar and run among the people, for the plague has begun.” Aaron, a man of a hundred years of age, fills his censor, runs along as if he were a youth and begins to swing it towards Heaven with holy energy, feeling that in his hand was the life of the people.

And when the incense is accepted in Heaven, death stops in his work. On this side are heaps upon heaps of corpses slain by God’s avenging angel and there stand the crowd of living people, living only because of Aaron’s intercession. They are living simply because he had waved that censor and burned that incense for them—otherwise, had the angel smitten them all, they would all have lain together as the leaves of the forest lie in autumn—dead and sear.

I think you can now, in your imaginations, picture the scene. I desire to use the picture before us as a great spiritual type of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for that erring multitude of the sons of men who, “like sheep have gone astray and have turned every one to his own way.” We shall look at Aaron this morning in a five-fold character. The whole scene is typical of Christ. And Aaron, as he appears before us in each character is a most magnificent picture of the Lord Jesus.

I. First, let us look at Aaron as the LOVER of the people. You know who it is to whom we give that name, “Lover of my Soul.” You will be able to see in Aaron, the lover of Israel, Jesus the lover of His people. Aaron deserves to be very highly praised for his patriotic affection for a people who were the most rebellious and stiff-necked that ever grieved the heart of a good man. You must remember that in this case he was the grieved party. The clamor was made against Moses and against Aaron, yet it was Moses and Aaron who intercede and saved the people. They were the offended ones, yet were they the saving ones.

Aaron had a special part in the matter, for no doubt the conflict of Korah especially, was against the priesthood, which belonged exclusively to Aaron, than against the prophetical dispensation which God had granted to Moses. Aaron must have felt when he saw Korah there and the two hundred and fifty men, all of them with their censors, that the plot was against him—that they wished to strip from him his miter—to take from him his embroidered vest, and the glittering stones that shone upon his breast. He felt they wished to reduce him to the position of a common Levite and take to themselves his office and his dignity.

Yet, forgetting himself, he does not say, “Let them die. I will wait awhile till they have been sufficiently smitten.” But the old man with generous love hastened into the midst of the people, though he was himself the grieved person. Is not this the very picture of our sweet Lord Jesus? Had not sin dishonored Him? Was He not the Eternal God and did not sin therefore conspire against Him as well as against the Eternal Father and the Holy Spirit? Was He not, I say, the One against whom the nations of the earth stood up and said, “Let us break His bands asunder and cast His cords from us”?

Yet He, our Jesus, laying aside all thought of avenging Himself, becomes the Savior of His people—

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

Oh, generous Christ, forgetting the offenses which we have committed against You and making atonement by Your own blood for sins which were perpetrated against Your own glory!

Well, you note again that Aaron, in thus coming forward as the deliverer and lover of His people, must have remembered that he was abhorred by this very people. They were seeking his blood. They were desiring to put him and Moses to death, and yet in spite of all thoughts of danger, he snatches up his censer and runs into their midst with a Divine enthusiasm in his heart. He might have stood back and said, “No, they will slay me if I go into their ranks—furious as they are, they will charge this new death upon me and lay me low.”

But he never considers it. Into the midst of the crowd he boldly springs. Most blessed Jesus, You might not only think thus, but, indeed, You did feel it to be true. You did come unto Your own and Your own received You not. You did come into the world to save a race that hated You and oh, how they proved their hatred to You, for they did spit upon Your cheeks. They did cast calumny and slander upon Your Person. They did take the heir and say, “Come, let us kill Him that the inheritance may be ours.”

Jesus, You were willing to die a martyr, that You might be made a sacrifice for those by whom Your blood was spilt. Jesus transcends Aaron—Aaron might have feared death at the hands of the people—Jesus Christ did actually meet it. And yet there he stood even in the hour of death, waving his censer, staying the plague and dividing the living from the dead.

Again, you will see the love and kindness of Aaron, if you look closer. Aaron might have said, “But the Lord will surely destroy me, also, with the people. If I go where the shafts of death are flying they will reach me.” He never thinks of it. He exposes his own person in the very forefront of the Destroying One. There comes the Angel of Death, smiting all before him and here stands Aaron in his very path, as much as to say, “Get back! Get back! I will wave my incense in your face—destroyer of men, you can not

pass the censor of God’s high priest.”

Oh, glorious High Priest of our profession, You might not only have feared this which Aaron might have dreaded, but You did actually endure the plague of God, for when You did come among the people to save them from Jehovah’s wrath, Jehovah’s wrath fell upon You. You were forsaken of Your Father. The plague which Jesus kept from us slew Him, “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” The sheep escaped, but, “His life and blood the Shepherd pays, a ransom for the flock.”

Oh, You lover of Your Church, immortal honors be unto You! Aaron deserves to be beloved by the tribes of Israel, because he stood in the gap and exposed himself for their sins. But You, most mighty Savior, You shall have eternal songs, because, forgetful of Yourself, You did bleed and die, that man might be saved!

I would again, for one moment, draw your attention to that other thought which I have already hinted at, namely, that Aaron as a lover of the people of Israel deserves much commendation, from the fact that it is expressly said, he ran into the host. I am not just now sure about Aaron’s age, but being older than Moses, who must have been at this time about ninety years of age, Aaron must have been more than a hundred and probably, a hundred and twenty, or more. It is no little thing to say that such a man, clad no doubt, in his priestly robes, ran—and that for a people who had never shown any activity to do him service, but much zeal in opposing his authority.

That little fact of his running is highly significant, for it shows the greatness and swiftness of the Divine impulse of love that was within. Ah, and was it not so with Christ? Did He not hasten to be our Savior? Were not His delights with the sons of men? Did He not often say, “I have a Baptism to be baptized with and how am I straitened till it is accomplished”? His dying for us was not a thing which He dreaded. “With desire have I desired to eat this Passover.” He had panted for the moment when He should redeem His people.

He had looked forward through eternity for that hour when He should glorify His Father and His Father might glorify Him. He came voluntarily bound by no constraint, except His own Covenant engagements and He cheerfully and joyfully laid down His life—a life which no man could take from Him—but which He laid down of Himself. While I look with admiration upon Aaron, I must look with adoration upon Christ. While I write Aaron down as the lover of his race, I write down Jesus Christ as being the best of lovers—the Friend that sticks closer than a brother.

II. But I now pass on to take a second view of Aaron as he stands in another character. Let us now view Aaron as THE GREAT PROPITIATOR.  
Wrath had gone out from God against the people on account of their sin and it is God’s Law that His wrath shall never stay unless a propitiation is offered. The incense which Aaron carried in his hand was the propitiation before God, from the fact that God saw in that perfume the type of that richer offering which our Great High Priest is this very day offering before the Throne.  
Aaron as the propitiator is to be looked at first, as bearing in his censer that which was necessary for the propitiation. He did not come empty-handed. Even though God’s high priest, he must take the censor, he must fill it with the ordained incense, made with the ordained materials—and then he must light it with the sacred fire from off the altar and with that alone. With the censer in his hand, he is safe—without it Aaron might have died as well as the rest of the people. The qualification of Aaron partly lay in the fact that he had the censer and that that censer was full of sweet odors which were acceptable to God.  
Behold, then, Christ Jesus as the propitiator for His people. He stands this day before God with His censor smoking up towards Heaven. Behold the Great High Priest! See Him this day with His pierced hands and head that once was crowned with thorns. Mark how the marvelous smoke of His merits goes up forever and ever before the eternal Throne. It is He, it is He, alone, who puts away the sins of His people. His incense, as we know, consists, first of all, of His positive obedience to the Divine Law. He kept His Father’s commands. He did everything He should have done. He kept to the full the whole Law of God and made it honorable.  
Then mixed with this is His blood—an equally rich and precious ingredient. That bloody sweat—the blood from His head, pierced with the crown of thorns. The blood of His hands as they were nailed to the tree. The blood of His feet as they were fixed to the wood. And the blood of His very heart—richest of them all—all mixed together with His merits—these make up the incense—an incense incomparable—an incense peerless and surpassing all others.  
Not all the odors that ever rose from tabernacle or temple could for a moment stand in rivalry with these. The blood, alone, speaks better things than that of Abel—and if Abel’s blood prevailed to bring vengeance—how much more shall the blood of Christ prevail to bring down pardon and mercy! Our faith is fixed on perfect righteousness and complete atonement, which are as sweet frankincense before the Father’s face.  
Besides that, it was not enough for Aaron to have the proper incense. Korah might have that, too, and he might have the censor also. That would not suffice—he must be the ordained priest. For mark, two hundred and fifty men fell in doing the act which Aaron did. Aaron’s act saved others—their act destroyed themselves. So Jesus, the Propitiator, is to be looked upon as the ordained one—called of God as was Aaron. Settled in eternity as being the predestinated Propitiation for sin, He came into the world as an ordained Priest of God, receiving His ordination not from man, neither by man, but like Melchisedek, the priest of the Most High God, without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life—He is a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek.  
Stand back, sons of Korah, all of you who call yourselves priests. I can scarce imagine that any man in this world who takes to himself the title of “priest,” except he take it in the sense in which all God’s people are priests—I cannot imagine that a priest can enter Heaven. I would not say a thing too stern or too severe. But I do most thoroughly believe that an assumption of the “office of priest” is so base an usurpation of the priestly office of Christ, that I could as well conceive of a man being saved who called himself God, as conceive of a man being saved who called himself a “priest.”  
If he really means what he says, he has so trenched upon the priestly prerogative of Christ, that it seems to me he has touched the very crown jewels and is guilty of a blasphemy, which, unless it be repented of, shall surely bring damnation on his head. Shake your garments, you ministers of Christ, from all priestly assumption. Come out from among them— touch not the unclean thing. There are no “priests” now specially to minister among men. Jesus Christ—and He only—is the Priest of His Church and He has made all of us priests and kings unto our God and we shall reign forever and ever.  
If I should have any person here so weak as to depend for his salvation upon the offerings of another man, I bid him to forego his deception. I care not who your “priests” may be. He may belong to the Anglican or to the Romish Church. Yes, and to any Church under Heaven. If he claims to be anything of a priest more than you can claim yourself—away with him! He imposes upon you. He speaks to you that which God abhors and that which the Church of Christ should abhor and would detest, were she truly alive to her Master’s glory. None but Jesus, none but Jesus. All other priests and offerings we disdain. Cast dirt upon their garments—they are not—and they cannot be priests. They usurp the special dignity of Jesus.  
But let us note once more, in considering Aaron as the great propitiator, that we must look upon him as being ready for his work. He was ready with his incense and ran to the work at the moment the plague broke out. We do not find that he had need to go and put on his priestly garments. We do not find that he had to prepare for performing the propitiatory work—he went then and there as soon as the plague broke out. The people were ready to perish and he was ready to save.  
Oh, my Hearer, listen to this—Jesus Christ stands ready to save you now! There is no need of preparation. He has slain the victim. He has offered the sacrifice. He has filled the censor. He has put to it the glowing coals. His breastplate is on His breast. His miter is on His head. He is ready to save you now. Trust Him and you shall not find need for delay. Rely upon Him and you shall not find that He has to go a day’s journey to save you. “He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.”  
You who know not Christ, hear this! You are lost and ruined by the Fall. Wrath is gone out from God against you. That wrath must consume you to the lowest Hell, unless someone can propitiate God on your behalf. You cannot do it. No man can do it. No prayers of Yours. No sacraments— no—though you could sweat a bloody sweat, it would not avail. But Christ is able to make propitiation. He can do it and He alone. He can stand between you and God and turn away Jehovah’s wrath and He can put into your heart a sense of His love. Oh, I pray you, trust Him, trust Him!  
You may not be ready for Him. But He is always ready to save and, indeed, I must correct myself in that last sentence, you ARE ready for Him. If you are ever so vile and ever so ruined by your sin, their needs no preparation and no readiness. It was not the merit of the people that saved them, nor any preparation on their part. It was the preparedness of the High Priest that saved them. He is prepared. He stands on the behalf of those who believe on Him.  
Would that you would now believe on Him and trust your soul in His hands. And oh, believe me, your sins which are many shall be all forgiven. The plague shall be stayed, nor shall God’s wrath go out against you, but you shall be saved.  
III. Let me now view Aaron as THE INTERPOSER.  
Let me explain what I mean. As the old Westminster Annotations say upon this passage, “The plague was moving among the people as the fire moves along a field of corn.” There it came. It began in the extremity. The faces of men grew pale and swiftly on, on, it came and in vast heaps they fell till some fourteen thousand had been destroyed. Aaron wisely puts himself just in the pathway of the plague. It came on, cutting down all before it and there stood Aaron the interposer with arms outstretched and censor swinging towards Heaven, interposing himself between the darts of death and the people.  
“If there are darts that must fly,” he seemed to say, “let them pierce me. Or let the incense shield both me and the people. Death,” says he, “are you coming on your pale horse? I arrest you, I throw back your steed upon his haunches. Are you coming, you skeleton king? With my censor in my hand I stand before you. You must march over my body—you must empty my censer. You must destroy God’s High Priest, before you can destroy this people.”  
Just so was it with Christ. Wrath had gone out against us. The Law was about to smite us—the whole human race must be destroyed. Christ stands in the forefront of the battle. “The stripes must fall on Me,” he cries. “The arrows shall find a target in My breast. On Me, Jehovah, let Your vengeance fall.” And He receives that vengeance and afterwards, springing up from the grave, He waves the censer full of the merit of His blood and bids this wrath and fury stand back.  
On which side are you today, Sinner? Is God angry with you, Sinner? Are your sins unforgiven? Say, are you unpardoned? Are you abiding still an heir of wrath and an inheritor of death? Ah, then would that you were on the other side—the side of Christ. If you do believe on Christ, then let me ask you, do you know that you are completely saved? No wrath can ever reach you, no spiritual death can ever destroy you, no Hell can ever consume you, and why? What is your guard, what is your protection?  
I see the tears, glistening in your eyes as you say, “There is nothing between me and Hell save Christ. There is nothing between me and Jehovah’s wrath save Christ. There is nothing between me and instant destruction save Christ. But He is enough. He with the censor in His hand—God’s great ordained Priest—He is enough!” Ah, Brothers and Sisters, if you have put between you and God things, such as Baptisms and communions, fasting, prayers, tears and vows, Jehovah shall break through your refuges as the fire devours the stubble.  
But if, my Soul, CHRIST stands between you and Jehovah, Jehovah cannot smite you. His thunderbolt must first pierce through the Divine Redeemer before it can reach you and that can never be. My dear Hearers, do you perceive this great Truth of God, that there is nothing which can save the soul of man, save Jesus Christ standing between that soul and the just judgment of God? And oh, I put again the personal enquiry to you—are you sheltered behind Christ? Sinner, are you standing today beneath the Cross? Is that your shelter? Is the purple robe of Jesus’ atonement covered over you?  
Are you like the dove which hides in the clefts of the rock? Have you hidden in the wounds of Christ? Say, have you crept into His side and do you feel that He must be your shelter till the tempest is past? Oh, be of good cheer! He for whom Christ is the intercessor is a rescued man. Oh, Soul, if you are not in Christ, what will you do when the destroying angel comes? Careless Sinner, what will become of you when death arrests you? Where will you be when the judgment trumpet rings in your ears and sounds an alarm that shall wake the dead? Sleepy Sinner, sleeping today under God’s Word, will you sleep then, when Jehovah’s thunders are let loose and all His lightning set the heavens in a blaze?  
I know where you shall seek a shelter! You shall seek it where you cannot find it. You shall bid the rocks fall upon you and ask the mountains to hide you. But their stony hearts shall know of no compassion—their hearts of adamant shall yield you no pity—and you shall stand exposed to the blast of vengeance and the shower of the hot hail of God’s fury. Nothing shall protect you—and as Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed from off the face of the earth, so must you be destroyed—and that forever and ever—because you believed not on Jesus Christ, the Son of God.  
IV. But we cannot tarry longer here. We must again pass to another point. We have viewed Aaron in three characters—as the lover, the propitiator and the intercessor. Now, fourthly, let me view him as THE SAVIOR.  
It was Aaron, Aaron’s censor, that saved the lives of that great multitude. If he had not prayed, the plague had stayed and the Lord would have consumed the whole company in a moment. As it was, you perceive there were some fourteen thousand and seven hundred that died before the Lord. The plague had begun its dreadful work and only Aaron could stay it.  
And now I want you to notice with regard to Aaron, that Aaron and especially the Lord Jesus, must be looked upon as a gracious Savior. It was nothing but love that moved Aaron to wave his censor. The people could not demand it of him. Had they not brought a false accusation against him? And yet he saves them. It must have been love and nothing but love. Say, was there anything in the voices of that infuriated multitude which could have moved Aaron to stay the plague from before them? Nothing!

Nothing in their character! Nothing in their looks! Nothing in their treatment of God’s High Priest! And yet he graciously stands in the breach and saves them from the devouring judgment of God!  
Oh, Brothers and Sisters—if Christ has saved us, He is a gracious Savior, indeed. Often as we think of the fact that we are saved, the tears fall down our cheeks, for we never can tell why Jesus has saved us— *“What was there in you that could merit esteem! Or give the Creator delight?  
‘Twas ‘Even so, Father!’ You ever must sing ‘Because it seemed good in Your sight.’”*  
There is no difference between the glorified in Heaven and the doomed in Hell, except the difference that God made of His own Sovereign Grace.  
Whatever difference there may be between Saul the Apostle and Elymas the sorcerer has been made by infinite sovereignty and undeserved love. Paul might still have remained Saul of Tarsus and might have become a damned fiend in the bottomless pit, had it not been for free Sovereign Grace which came out to snatch him as a brand from the burning. Oh, Sinner, you say, “There is no reason in me why God should save me,” but there is no reason in any man. You have no good points, nor has any man. There is nothing in any man to commend him to God. We are all such sinners, that Hell is our deserved portion. And if any of us is saved from going down into the pit, it is God’s undeserved sovereign bounty that does it and not any merits of ours. Jesus Christ is a most gracious Savior.  
And then again, Aaron was an unaided Savior. Even Moses did not come with Aaron to help him. He stood alone in the gap with that censer— that one solitary stream of smoke dividing between the living and the dead. Why did not the princes of Israel come with him? Alas, they could have done nothing, they must have died themselves. Why did not all the Levites come with him? They must have been smitten if they had dared to stand in the place of God’s High Priest. He stands alone, alone, ALONE! And herein was he a great type of Christ, who could say, “I have trod the winepress alone and of the people there was none with Me.”  
Do not think, then, that when Christ prevails with God, it is because of any of your prayers, or tears, or good works. He never puts your tears and prayers into His censor. They would mar the incense. There is nothing but His own prayers and His own tears and His own merits there. Do not think that you are saved because of anything that you have ever done or can ever do for Christ. We may preach and we may be made in God’s hand the spiritual fathers of thousands of souls, but our preaching does in no way help to turn away the wrath of God from us.  
Christ does it all, entirely and alone, and no man must dare to stand as His helper. Sinner, do you hear this? You are saying, “I cannot do this or that.” He asks you not to do anything. You say, “I have no merits.” Man, He does not want any—if you try to help Christ you will be lost. But if you will leave Christ to do it all, you shall be saved. Come now, the very plan of salvation is this—to take Christ to be your All in All. He will never be a part-Savior. He never came to patch our ragged garments. He will give us a new robe, but he will never mend the old one.  
He did not come to help build the palace of God—He will quarry every stone and lay it on its fellow, He will have no sound of hammer, or help in that great work. Oh, that this voice could ring through the world while I proclaim again those words, the death blow of all Popery, legality and carnal merit, “Jesus only, JESUS ONLY!” “There is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Nor does He need a helper; “He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” “He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.”  
He was, then, you will perceive, a gracious Savior and an unaided one. And, once more, Aaron, as a Savior, was all-sufficient. Death came up to the very feet of Aaron. There lay a dead man, there lay a mother, a child, a prince, a hewer of wood, a drawer of water—there they lay. There stood a strong man in his agony and implored that he might not die, but he fell backward a corpse. There stood up a prince of Israel and must he die? Yes, he must fall. All-devouring death, like a hungry lion, came howling onward, amidst the screams and shrieks of the people, but there he stood. That censer seemed to say, “Up to here shall you come, but no further.”  
What a miracle that the censer should stop the reign of death! Up to this mark the waves of that shoreless sea are flowing. There men stand on the terra firma of life. Aaron stands and as God’s High Priest, with only that censer, he puts back grim death. The whole host of Israel, if they had been armed and had carried bows, could not have driven back the pestilence. No, all the hosts of armed men that ever stained the earth with blood could not have driven back God’s plagues. Death would have laughed at them, yes, he would have trod in among their ranks and cut them in pieces.  
But Aaron alone is enough, fully sufficient and that through the burning of the incense. Oh, Sinner, Christ is an all-sufficient Savior, able to save. You cannot save yourself, but He can save you. Oh, Sinner, all sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men. It matters not how base and vile you may have been, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” Though the remembrance of your sins makes you blush to think what a wretch you have been—has your life been foul adultery? Has it been blasphemy, lying, hatred of God’s people and what not? I add to this another, if you will—lasciviousness, debauchery, murder—if all these crimes were there, the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, would be able still to cleanse you from them all.  
Though you had committed every crime in the catalogue of iniquity, sins which we cannot mention, yet, “Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as white as snow.” And you say, “How can I partake of this?” Simply by trusting Christ with your soul. “He that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damned.” This was Christ’s commission to the Apostles, He bid them go forth and preach this great Truth and again I proclaim it, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believes not must be damned.”  
He that believes not shall be damned, be his sins ever so few—he that believes shall never be lost—though his sins may have been ever so many. Trust your soul with Christ and your sins are at once forgiven, at once blotted out.  
V. And now I come to my last point and that is, Aaron as THE DIVIDER—the picture of Christ.  
Aaron the anointed one stands here. On that side is death, on this side life. The boundary between life and death is that one man. Where his incense smokes the air is purified—where it smokes not the plague reigns with unmitigated fury. There are two sorts of people here this morning. We forget the distinction of rich and poor. We know it not here. There are two sorts of people—we forego the distinction of the learned and unlearned—we care not for that here. There are two sorts here and these are the living and the dead, the pardoned and the unpardoned, the saved and the lost.  
What divides the true Christian from the unbeliever? Some think it is that the Christian takes the Sacrament, the other not. That is no division—there are men who have gone to Hell with sacramental bread in their mouths. Others may imagine that Baptism makes the difference, and indeed, it is the outward token—the Baptismal pool is the means by which we show to the world that we are buried in Christ’s grave—in type that we are dead to the world and buried in Christ. We rise up from it in testimony that we desire to live in newness of life by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.  
He who is baptized does in that way cross the Rubicon, he draws the sword and throws away the scabbard, he is the baptized one and has a sign that can never be eradicated from him. He is dedicated through that Baptism to Christ, but it is but an outward sign—for many have there been who have been baptized with water—who not having the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, have afterwards been baptized in the fiery sufferings of eternal torment.  
No! No! The one division, the one great division between those who are God’s people and those who are not, is Christ. A man in Christ is a Christian. A man out of Christ is dead in trespasses and sins. “He that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is saved, he that believes not is lost.” Christ is the only divider between His people and the world. On which side, then, are you today, my Hearer? Come, let the question go individually to you. Young man, on which side are you? Are you Christ’s friend and servant, or are you His enemy?  
Old man, you with the gray head yonder, you have but a little while to live, on which side are you? Are you my Master’s blood-bought one, or are you still a lost sheep? And you matron, you who are busied, perhaps, even now in your thoughts upon your children, think not of them for a moment—on which side are you? Have you believed, have you been born again, or are you still in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity? You that stand yonder, let the question penetrate your thick rank now, where are you? Can you take the name of Christ upon your lips and say, “Jesus, I am Yours and You are mine, Your blood and righteousness are my hope and trust”? If not, my Hearer, you are among the spiritually dead and you shall soon be among the damned unless Divine Grace prevent and change and renew you.  
Please remember, Brothers and Sisters, that as Christ is the great Divider now, so will He be in the Day of Judgment. Do you ever think of that? He shall divide them the one from the other—as the shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. It is the Shepherd’s Person that divides the sheep from the goats. He stands between them and in that last day of days for which all other days were made, Christ shall be the great Divider. There will be the righteous clad in white, in songs triumphant, glorified with Him. And there the lost, the unbelieving, the fearful, the abominable. What divides them from yon bright host? Nothing but the Person of the Son of Man, on whom they look—and weep and mourn and wail because of Him.  
That is the impenetrable barrier that shall shut out the damned from eternal bliss. The gate which may let you in now will be the fiery gate which shall shut you out hereafter. Christ is the door of Heaven—oh, dreadful day when that door shall be shut—when that door shall stand before you and prevent you entering into the felicity which you shall then long for, when you cannot enter into it.  
Oh, on which side shall I be when all these transitory things are done away with—when the dead have risen from their graves, when the great congregation shall stand upon the land and upon the sea—when every valley and every mountain and every river and every sea, shall be crowded with multitudes standing in thick array? Oh, when He shall say, “Separate My people, thrust in the sickle, for the harvest of the world is ripe.” My Soul, where shall you be? Shall you be found among the lost?  
Shall the dread trumpet send you down to Hell, while a voice that rends your ear, shall call after you, “Depart from Me, depart from Me, you workers of iniquity into everlasting fire in Hell, prepared for the devil and his angels”? Oh, grant that I may not be there, but among Your people may I stand. So may it be. May we be on the right hand of the Judge to all eternity and remember that forever and ever Christ will be the Divider. He shall stand between the lost and the saved. He shall interpose forever between the damned and the glorified.  
Again I put it to you, give me your ears just for one moment while I speak. What do you say, Sirs—shall this congregation be rent in two? The hour is coming when our wills and wishes shall have no forge. God will divide the righteous from the wicked then, and Christ shall be the dread division. I say, are we prepared to be separated eternally? Husband, are you prepared to renounce today your wife forever? Are you prepared when the clammy sweat gathers on her brow to give her the last kiss and say, “Adieu, adieu, I shall never meet with you again”?  
Child, son, daughter, are you ready to go home and sit down at the table of your mother and before you eat, say, “Mother, I now forswear to you once and for all, I am determined to be lost and as you are on the side of Christ, and I will never love Him, I will part with you forever”? Surely the ties of kinship make us long to meet in another world and do we wish to meet in Hell? Do you wish all of you to meet there—a grim company to lie in the midst of the flames? Will you abide in the devouring fire and dwell in everlasting burning?  
No, your wishes are that you may meet in Heaven! But you cannot unless you meet in Christ! You cannot meet in Paradise unless you meet in Him. Oh that now the Grace of God were poured upon you, that you might come unto Jesus.

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THE CENSUS OF ISRAEL  
NO. 2198

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 5, 1891, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“These are they that were numbered by Moses and Eleazar, the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho. But among these there was**

**not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron, the Priest, numbered, when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. For the Lord had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.” Numbers 16:66.**

WE have come to another census, an important stopping place in the march of a nation’s history. This carries our thoughts back to the ancient Bible story connected with the chosen people of God. A census was taken of the tribes of Israel in the wilderness two years after they had left Egypt. It only numbered males who were over twenty—the men capable of active service in war. By thus taking a census of His people, the Lord showed that He valued each one of them. They were registered by their families and by their names, thus were they personally enrolled in the family book of the living God and He thus, in effect, said to each one of them, “I have called you by your name; you are Mine.” By the registration of each man by name, he felt that he was not lost in the crowd, but was, by person and pedigree, acknowledged as one of those to whom the Lord had promised the land which flowed with milk and honey. There was good reason for taking the number of the people just as the nation was forming, so that in the wilderness they might be arranged, marshaled and disciplined for the conflict which lay before them. When commanded of God, because He saw that great ends would be served thereby—and when associated with redemption—a census was by no means a wrong or a dangerous national arrangement. David ordered the people to be numbered, but because his motive and his method were wrong, it brought a pestilence on the land but, in itself, the taking of a census was a wise and useful thing.

Thirty-eight years had passed away since the first numbering at Sinai and the people had come to the borders of the Promised Land, for they were in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho. The time had come for another census. The wisdom which commanded the counting of Israel at the beginning of the wilderness journey also determined to count them at the end of it. This would show that He did not value them less than in former years. It would afford proof that His word of judgment had been fulfilled to them and, moreover, it would marshal them for the grand enterprise of conquering the land of Canaan! They were to go forth in their armies to fight giant races and armies versed in war. They were to dislodge nations from their ancient strongholds and, with the sword, destroy guilty aboriginal races which God had condemned to destruction. And for this, their military strength needed numbering and ordering. Here was good reason for the census, which now, for the second or third time, was carefully carried out.

Our text is from the Book of Numbers and the book well answers to its title, for it continually deals with numbers and numberings. The numbering on this occasion was not of the women and children or the infirm, for the order ran thus, “Take you the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, throughout their fathers’ house, all that are able to go to war in Israel.” If the numbers of our Churches were taken in this fashion, would they not sadly shrink? We have many sick among us that need to be carried about, nursed and doctored. Half the strength of the Church goes in ambulance service towards the weak and wounded. Another diminution of power is occasioned by the vast numbers of undeveloped Believers, to whom the Apostle would have said, “When for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again what are the first principles of the oracles of God: and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.” They should have become men, but they remain babes in Grace! They are sadly slow in reaching the fullness of the stature of men in Christ Jesus. How many are quite unable to bear arms against the foe, for they need to be, themselves, guarded from the enemy! To revise the Church rolls so as to leave none but vigorous soldiers on the muster roll would make us break our hearts over our statistics. May the Lord send us, for this evil, health and cure!

When the second census was taken, it was found that the people were nearly of the same number as at the first. Had it not been for the punishment so justly inflicted upon them, they must have largely increased. But now they had somewhat diminished. They were a rapidly increasing people when they were in Egypt—the more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied! The family of Jacob increased at a marvelous rate from the time of the going down into Egypt to the time of leaving that land. This was changed during the 40 years of the wilderness, for the whole of the grown men who came out of bondage were judged unfit to enter into the Promised Land because of unbelief. And these, dying away rapidly, the people scarcely maintained their number. It is of God to multiply a nation, or a Church. We may not expect any advance in our numbers if we grieve the Spirit of God and if, by our unbelief, we drive Him to declare that we shall not prosper. Israel’s growth ceased for 40 years—may it never be so with us as a Church! We would say with Joab, “Now the Lord your God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold.” May the righteous seed multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it, till their number shall be as countless as the sands of the shore, or as the stars of the sky!

Concerning the second census of Israel, I would speak with you, since this is the morning of the day on which our British census is to be taken. May we gather lessons of wisdom from the theme!

I. First, observe with interest and with a design to be profited—THE NOTABLE CHANGE WORKED AMONG THE PEOPLE BY DEATH. “But among these there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron, the priest, numbered, when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai.”

They answered to their names, 600,000 and more of them—and there they stood in their ranks, full of vigorous life. About 40 years had passed away and if these same names had been read out, not a man save Caleb and Joshua could have answered to the roll call. The entire mass of the nation had been changed! The old ones were all gone. All that stood in their places by the Jordan were men who were under age at the first census, or who were not even born at that time. “Not a man of them” remained, says the text. And it repeats the statement—“There was not left a man of them.”

Such changes strike us as most memorable . They must not be passed over without remark. In the course of 40 years, my Brothers and Sisters, what changes take place in every community, in every Church, in every family! A friend showed me, last Thursday, a photograph of myself in the midst of my first deacons. It was taken scarcely 38 years ago and yet, of the entire group, only I survive! Those associates of the youthful preacher have all gone to their reward. We have likenesses of other groups of Church officers of a later date, in which I am placed in the center, and I am there still, but nearly all of those who once surrounded me have gone Home. Those who were our leaders in our days of struggle—and who saw the hand of God with us in those first years—are growing few in number. We have not yet completed the 40 years, but when we have done so, the words of our text will be almost literally applicable to our case as a Church.

The going and the coming, the adding and the taking away have changed the texture of this fabric and no thread will soon be left. Surely the Lord would have us notice this, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. A costly operation, involving so many sorrows, is not to be passed over without thought. Beloved, we, too, are passing away! The pastor and his present helpers must, themselves, be summoned Home in due course. The march of the generations is not a procession passing before our eyes, while we sit, like spectators, at the window, but we are in the procession ourselves, and we, too, are passing down the streets of time and shall disappear in our turn. We, too, shall sleep with our fathers, unless the Lord shall come speedily. I hear a clarion blast sounding out from the graves which lie behind us—“Be you also ready!” From the last closed sepulcher there comes the prophetic warning, “Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live.”

This change was universal throughout the whole camp . There was a change even in the enumerators. The Sinai census had been taken by Moses and Aaron and now Moses remains just long enough to take his leading place, but his brother, Aaron, is not there. The High Priest of God has gone up to Mount Hor, has been stripped of his garments, has been buried and mourned by all Israel—and now Eleazar, his son, stands before the Lord in his father’s place. It was so among the other priests and Levites and elders of the people. There was change everywhere—among the poorest dwellers in that canvas city and among the princes who dwelt beneath the standards of the tribes, all had changed. “There was not left a man of them.”

Thus is it among ourselves—no offices can be permanently held by the same men—“They are not suffered to continue by reason of death.” No position, however lofty or lowly, can retain its old possessor. It is not only the cedars that fall, but the fir trees feel the axe. “There is no discharge in that war.” That same scythe which cuts down the towering flower among the grass also sweeps down whole regiments of green blades. See how they lie together in long rows, to wither in a common decay! Throughout the whole body, this change is gradually taking place. No man can climb the rock of immortality and sit there, amid the seething sea, and say to Death, “Your waves cannot reach me here!” Though vigorous in health, though sound in constitution, though guarded by all the armor of the science of health, you, too, must fall by the arrows of the insatiable archer. “It is appointed unto men once to die.”

The change is inevitable . Man that is born of woman must be of few days. If it had not been for the great sin of Israel at Kadesh, many of the people might have lived to the second census and beyond it. But even then, if by reason of strength their lives had been lengthened, yet would they soon have died out in the ordinary course of nature. If 40 years had not been appointed as the end of that generation, yet without that appointment they would all have passed away in another 20 or 30 years. As Moses said in his wilderness Psalm, “The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.”

We must soon quit our tents for the last battle. When the conscript number shall be drawn, we may escape this year and next, but the lot will fall upon us in due time. There is no leaping from the net of mortality wherein, like a shoal of fish, we are all enclosed. Unless our Lord shall soon appear, we shall each one find a grave, for, as the wise man says, “All are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.” “We must necessarily die and are as water spilt on the ground which cannot be gathered up again.” Therefore we wisely bow before the stern decree and yield ourselves to death.

But let us not forget that all this change was still under the Divine control. Though the people must pass away, yet still, the Lord’s hand would be in each death and its surroundings. If not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father’s knowledge, we may rest assured that no man dies without the will of God—no man is carried to his long Home unless the Lord has said, “Return, you children of men.”—

*“What can preserve my life, or what destroy? An angel’s arm can’t snatch me from the grave— Legions of angels can’t confine me there.”*

To create and to destroy are sole prerogatives of the King of Kings! Till He speaks the word, we live not, or, living, we die not. Walking in the midst of 10,000 stricken with the plague, we are safe till God appoints our removal. Concerning those that are asleep, we know that they have not died without the will of our Father. Concerning our time, also, we know that we shall not be the toys of chance, or the victims of fate. A wise and loving God fixes the date and place of our decease, for, “precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” Stern though the work may be, His great and tender heart rules the ravages of death! Let us, therefore, be comforted concerning the great changes which death is working. Here is no cause for tears, as though we were left in a monster’s power and bereft of a Father’s care. The Lord is still ruling and nothing happens save as He appoints.

Moreover, the change was beneficial. It was well that the first generation should die in the wilderness. The people who had been accustomed to servitude in Egypt had acquired the vices of slaves—and when they came out of the house of bondage they were fearful, fickle—the creatures of appetite and the victims of panic, selfishness and discontent. They had all the vices of subject races and were, alike, destitute of manliness and selfcontrol. They were soon cowed by fear and baffled by difficulty. They were easily persuaded and as easily dissuaded. They were a people of whom nothing could be made. Even the Divine tuition in which Moses and Aaron were engaged and in which miracles, and types, and laws were employed, could not teach them anything so that they really knew it. To make a nation which could preserve the worship of the one God in the world, the generation which came out of Egypt must die out. The taint of slavery and idolatry must be lessened if it could not be quite removed.

It was desirable that there should be a people trained in a better school, with a nobler spirit, fit to take possession of the promised land. The change was working rightly—the Divine purpose was being fulfilled. Maybe we do not think thus of the changes which are taking place in the communities to which we belong. We scarcely think that better men are coming on—we even fear that the coming race is weaker than the present, but then, we are not fair judges, for we are prejudiced in favor of our own generation! I do not doubt that God means well to His own Church and that the accomplishment of His eternal purposes requires that men should come and go and thus the face of society should be changed. It is well that the age of man is not so protracted as in the days of Methuselah. A teacher influential for error dies and is forgotten. A sinner pestilential for vice passes away and the air grows pure. Imagine a gambler with 500 years of craft to guide him, or a libertine reeking with 600 years of debauchery! Surely the present narrowed limits of human life are all too wide for the depraved! We need not wish for giants of iniquity such as centuries of life would produce. The incoming of new blood into the social frame is good in a thousand ways—it is well that we should make room for others who may better serve our Master. God grant they may! Our prayer is, “Let Your work appear unto Your servants and Your Glory unto their children.” We are content to take the work if our sons may behold the glory! We are glad to move off that they may rise on stepping stones of our ended lives to nobler things!

One other remark I cannot help making and that is that these changes are most instructive. If we are now serving God, let us do so with intense earnestness, since only for a little while shall we have the opportunity to do so among men. “Whatever your hands find to do, do it with all your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave where you go.” Live while you live! At the same time, lay plans for influencing the rising generation. Lay yourself out to work while it is called today. If anything should be done, it were well that it were done quickly. If we wish the Truth of God to conquer and the Gospel to prevail, let us fight the Lord’s battles now! And if we would see Truth prevail after we are gone, let us seek out faithful young men who will teach others that the testimony for the Lord God of Israel dies not out of the land. We must soon quit the field. Let each man set his house in order, for he must soon leave it to be gazed upon by strangers’ eyes. Let us see that our lifework is rounded off and well-finished, so that in the survey of it by our successors they may say of us, “He being dead yet speaks.” As we must soon be gone from among the living, let us bless them while we may. Arise, you saints, and bestir yourselves, for the day is far spent and the shadows of evening are falling! I pray that we may learn well this first lesson of our text. O Spirit of Life, teach us life even by the doings of death!

II. Secondly, we have here before us THE PERPETUITY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD. There was a change in the constituent elements of the Israelite nation, but the nation was still there. Not one man was there who was counted 38 years before, save Caleb and Joshua, and yet the nation was the same! Do you ask for Israel? There it is. Balaam can see the people from the top of the hill and they are the same people whom Pharaoh pursued to the Red Sea. The nation is living, though a nation has died. It is the same chosen seed of Abraham with whom Jehovah is in covenant. God has a Church in the world and He will have a Church in the world till time shall be no more! The gates of Hell and the jaws of death shall not prevail against the Church, though each one of its members must depart out of this world in his turn.

Mark well that “ the Church in the wilderness” lives on. There are the same 12 tribes, the same standards heading the tribes, the same tabernacle in the midst of the host and the same priesthood celebrating sacred service with solemn pomp. Everything has changed and yet nothing has changed. God has built His holy habitation upon foundations which can never be removed! Although the men who bear the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord wear other names, yet they fulfill the same office. The music of the sanctuary rises and falls, but the strain goes on. The hallelujah never ceases, nor is there a pause in the perpetual chorus, “His mercy endures forever.”

The gaps were filled up by appointed successors . As one warrior died, another man stepped into his place, even as one wave dying on the shore is pursued by another. The men were not all swept away at once, but by perceptible degrees. Now and then there came an awful and sudden destruction, as when Korah, Dathan and Abiram went down alive into the pit, but, as a rule, the people dropped off gradually, as ripe fruit falls from the trees—and they were succeeded by others as the fading leaves of autumn have the buds of spring just beneath them. In the Church of God one dies in the order of Nature, but another is born into the Kingdom by the power of Divine Grace. We miss some useful Christian woman and we lament her, but before many days another Sister is prepared of the Lord to serve in her place. Baptism for the dead never ceases among us. An honored Brother falls asleep and we carry him to the grave and, possibly, we fear no other can do his work and fill the vacancy he leaves. Perhaps no one can do the same work, but yet, in some other way or form, the work is done! The vines are trimmed, the sheep are fed and the lambs are cherished. Not one dead man lies in the way to stop the march of the army, as did the corpse of Amasa, which lay dead in the road in David’s day. The chosen host still marches on! Even as the stars in their courses, we still move on. God buries His workmen, but His work lives.

In Israel’s case the gap were filled by their own sons. As these men passed away, their children took their places. I commend to you, my Brothers and Sisters, this fact as your encouragement in prayer for your children. Oh, that the Lord would pour His Spirit upon our seed and His blessing upon our offspring! Oh, that every saint here may be succeeded by his own descendants! This is the Lord’s frequent way of keeping alive the gracious succession. Abraham is gone, but Isaac still kindles the altar fire. In a blind old age Isaac is gathered to his fathers, but Jacob worships “the Fear of his father Isaac.” Jacob gathers up his feet in bed, but Judah and Joseph, and the rest of them, continue as salt in the earth. Oh, that it may be so in all our families! May we never lack a man to stand before the Lord God of Israel to testify for Him! Among all the honors that God can put upon our households I think this is the greatest, that we should have in our families a succession of saints! It is no small privilege to look back and to remember our ancestors who feared the Lord—may we also look forward with hope that if this dispensation lasts, there may still be some of our name, bearing our blood in their veins, who shall be called by Sovereign Grace into the service we have loved so well! Search beyond the congregation for new converts, but do not forget to look within your own doors for the largest accessions to the Church! Hope that your sons and daughters after the flesh may be born into “the one family in Heaven and earth,” which bears the name of Jesus! Pray that your children may be God’s children—and may your prayer come up with acceptance into the ears of the Lord our God whose mercy is on children’s children of them that fear Him and keep His Covenant!

All the offices of “the Church in the wilderness” were filled with fitting men. Behold Aaron, in his robes of glory and beauty! What a man is he to be the High Priest! With what grace and dignity he presides! He dies—will not the priesthood fail? No, my Brothers and Sisters, yonder is Eleazar, who occupies his father’s place most worthily! Moses also passes away. There is none like Moses. He is King in Jeshurun, without peer or rival! The Jews have a tradition that when he was called to go up to the top of Nebo to die, the people followed him up the hill, the women beating on their breasts and bitterly wailing, while the strong men bowed themselves with grief and cried, “The father of the nation is to be taken away! Alas, what shall we do?” He was bid to leave the people on the mountain side and he went up, alone, to the place where Jehovah kissed away his soul— and so he passed into his rest. Truly it was a great loss, but the Lord found a man to follow Moses. Joshua was not equal to Moses in many things and yet, for the work he had to do, he was a much more fit man than Moses. The times were red with war and Joshua was more able than Moses to fight the Canaanites and conquer the land. Joshua was the man for the sword, as Moses had been the man of the Book. And God will fill every office in His Church, not as you and I might wish, but as His infinite wisdom determines. Therefore let us be of good courage and fear no lack.

At this second numbering, the people stood ready for greater work than they had ever done before. The first numbering found them fit for the wilderness—the second numbering found them ready for the capture of the goodly land and Lebanon. God had been preparing them, by 40 years of marching, for their new enterprise and for development into a nation. May it please the Lord to make His Church ready for the coming of her Lord and for the salvation of nations! If brighter days are dawning, the Church will be prepared as a bride for her husband—and if tribulation is to come to try all the earth, she shall be strengthened as a martyr for the burning! The Lord keeps her lest any hurt her—He will keep her night and day.

It was Israel’s joy that God’s love was not withdrawn from the nation. The Lord still acknowledged the tribes as His people. His Glory was still above the Mercy Seat and His fiery, cloudy pillar still guided their marching or fixed their stopping. Still the manna dropped from Heaven and still they drank of the water from the smitten Rock. Thus the Lord still has a Church and it is always the same Church, loved of her lord, indwelt by His Spirit and dedicated to His praise. Let us take courage—the Church is not destroyed! Many changes take place and many sorrows are involved therein, but the Church of God is as always as alive as her Immortal Head, who has declared, “Because I live, you shall live also.” Her stars are still the hope of the world’s night and her angels are the heralds of the eternal morning! She follows the bleeding Lamb who is the Doctrine of her teaching, the Model of her acting, the Glory of her hope!

III. Thirdly, let me bring before your minds THE UNCHANGEABLENESS OF THE WORD OF GOD. This we perceive in the last verse. “For the Lord had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.”

Note how unchangeable are the threats of the Lord. “Among these there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron, the Priest, numbered. For the Lord had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness.” Take note of this, you that think God’s Word can fail—you know not what you dream! His Words of righteous wrath are not lost—they kill as with a twoedged sword. The verse says, “There was not left a man of them.” Whom the Lord had condemned to die, nothing could keep alive. Therefore, do not imagine, O you that obey not the Lord, that you shall go unpunished!

The unbelievers were many, yet not one escaped. “Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished.” The rebels were a terribly large majority, but the crowds in the broad way make it none the safer. God has no respect for multitudes—“The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God.” Here they outnumbered the faithful more than 10,000 times and yet the justice of God did not spare one of them! “There was not left a man of them.” How can any of you hope to escape? “Your hands shall find out all your enemies.” The proudest sinner shall be laid low—the thunders of Jehovah shall smite down each individual transgressor—and no one shall go away free in the day of God’s wrath!

It was a long time before all the sinners died, but the long-suffering of God had its limit and, in the end, every rebel died in the wilderness. They lived on, some of them, for all the 40 years, but they could not pass the boundary. Perhaps they said, “Ah, this ban from God will never take effect on us.” Yet, before the years were up, the survivors of the doomed race had to share the common fate. Not a man of those whom Moses and Aaron numbered at Sinai could pass the line of fire which closed in the 40 years. God waits, waits in infinite mercy, but the punishment of the wicked is none the less sure. “Their foot shall slide in due time.” The Lord has bent His bow and made it ready, and when their hour is come, they shall find that He is not slack concerning His Word. Do not, I pray you, doubt the terrible certainty of Divine threats because they are long in taking effect. Say not, “Where is the promise of His coming?” He will come— and when He comes it shall be “in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Some of the unbelieving generation were, no doubt, full of vigor, and they said, “We are as strong as old Caleb and quite as likely as he to cross the Jordan. Our eyes are as clear as those of Moses and we shall outlive the 40 years appointed us.” But death chilled the coals of juniper and quenched their vehement flame. The stalwart man of war laid down his weapons, vanquished by the unconquerable foe of men. “There was not left a man of them.” How like a knell those words sound in my ears! The mighty in the day of battle were no longer mighty when their hour had come! “They could not enter in because of unbelief.” “Their carcasses fell in the wilderness.” All their days were passed away in the wrath of God. Beware, you that forget God, lest He tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver. It is vain for you to indulge a hope, “larger” or smaller, if you die in your sin! The Justice of the Most High is not to be escaped! In that Last Great Day, when the Throne shall be set, and every man shall give an account for the things done in his body, whether they are good or whether they are evil, the strict Judge will, by no means, clear the guilty, but they shall be driven away in His wrath to the place where their worm dies not and their fire is not quenched!

Oh that you would flee to Christ for refuge! Look to His Cross, I pray you, that you may be saved! As the Lord fulfilled His threats, so did He cause His promises to come to pass. Caleb lived on and so did Joshua. They were often in danger. Did not the rebels take up stones to stone them? They were often near to death—Joshua was commander-in-chief of the army and Caleb was a man of war from his youth up. They endured the common risks of soldiers, but nothing could kill them, for God had promised that they should enter the land! They believed God and honored Him by their conduct and, therefore, He kept them until the hour came to go in unto the land to possess it. There were only two of them, but God did not, therefore, overlook them. He keeps covenant with individuals as well as with nations! They were not men who kept themselves out of harm’s way, neither were they timorous and, therefore, afraid to advance their opinions. No doubt they came in for a special share of envy and malice, but their reward with God was sure. If you believe in Jesus, though you should be the only one of your family, yet you shall be saved! Though you know none of your kin fear the Lord, yet the God of Israel will not forget the lone one who is separated from his brethren. Though the faithful should become so few that all the saints together should only make a handful, yet it is written, “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.”

God’s Word stands! “The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away: but the Word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the Word by which the Gospel is preached unto you.” Jehovah’s threats and promises are of equal force. “Has He said, and shall He not do it?” There shall be no change, even, to a jot or tittle in this wondrous Book! God forbid that we should begin to doubt it, for if we once begin, where shall we end? With this striking confirmation before us, we believe that the Word of the Lord must stand. Let us be as the man whom the Lord blesses, because, says He, “he trembles at My Word.”

IV. Our last point is this—learn from my text THE ABIDING NECESSITY OF FAITH. Those people came out of Egypt with Moses and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea when they came forth into the wilderness. One would have hoped that they all would march to Canaan, but it was not so. The first census is taken. Their names are on the roll. But, sad to say, at the next numbering all those names have vanished! What a difference between the church roll at Sinai and the Book of Life by Jordan!

If you profess to be the people of God, we count you among His children—you are written among the living in Zion. But what an awful thing it would be if your name should not be written in the Lamb’s Book of Life at the last! What if you should lie on the threshing floor in the great heap before the winnowing, but should be gone with the chaff as soon as the Lord has come, “whose fan is in His hand”? Oh, that none of us may provoke the Lord to swear in His wrath that we shall not enter into His rest!

Learn, first, that no man is, was, or ever shall be saved without faith. “He that believes not shall be damned” is our Lord’s solemn declaration. It is written, “He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” This is as true today as when it was first spoken.

Learn, next, that no privilege can supply the lack of faith. We read that they heard, as you do. But some, “when they had heard, did provoke.” Their provocation lay mainly in their unbelief. No hearing, no, not hearing the Apostles, themselves, could save you without faith! “The Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.” Hearing may minister to condemnation if the Truth of God is not believed!

These people went a certain way with Moses towards the Lord’s promised rest. They did come out of Egypt. They were numbered with Jehovah’s people in the numbering at Sinai. They were separated from all the world in the quietude of the wilderness. But we read there was in them “an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.” In heart they went back to Egypt! It is not enough to begin well—“he that endures to the end shall be saved”—and no other! They had ceremonies in abundance, but they were not saved by them. They had the morning and the evening lambs. They were circumcised. They ate the Passover. They kept the Day of Atonement. But all these things together did not save them from dying in the desert, shut out of Canaan by unbelief. “They could not enter in because of unbelief.” Nothing can make up for the absence of faith. They had nothing to do all the day long in the wilderness but to learn the lessons of God. They had time for thought and they had the best of teachers to instruct them—and the best of textbooks in the ceremonial Law—and yet their knowledge did not preserve them from leaving their carcasses in the desert! They had plenty of time for meditation and contemplation. They had no care about temporals, for their bread was given them and their waters were sure. And yet, because of absence of faith, they did not learn that elementary Truth of God which would have ministered to them an entrance into rest.

But none perished who had faith—no, not one! All those who believed God and held fast to Him, were made inheritors of the land. Caleb and Joshua—these two saw the land and took their places in it. If you believe, whatever your name may be, you shall be saved, for, “he that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” It is written, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” Caleb and Joshua, by faith, entered into the land promised to the fathers and you, my Hearer, can only enter in by faith! Have faith in God and you have all things! But without faith it is impossible to please God.

Mark this—while it was faith alone which saved them, faith gave these men notable characters. We read of, “My servant, Caleb.” He that believes God becomes a servant of God and counts it all joy to obey his Lord! Faith is the mother of obedience. The Lord said that Caleb “had another spirit with him”—faith puts quite another spirit into a man—it is not a murmuring or a mutinous spirit. It is not an ungrateful or distrustful spirit. Neither is it a haughty, willful, rebellious spirit. But it is a spirit of love, of hope, of confidence in God. The faithful man is of another spirit from that of the world, for the Holy Spirit abides in him! Such a man chooses the way of God, so that the Lord says, “He has followed Me fully.” This was well—it is wise not to run before God, nor to run away from God, but to follow Him step by step. It is wise not to follow man, but to wholly follow the Lord! It is commendable to follow Him fully with undivided, unwavering, unquestioning, untiring steps! The Lord will see that His servant, Caleb, enters into His rest—there is rest for good servants. As Caleb followed the Lord fully, it was meet that he should enter in where his Lord abides. Men of faith are not idle men, but servants—they are not wicked men, but they follow the Lord. They are not half-hearted men—they follow Him fully. It is not their holiness that saves them, but their faith— nevertheless, where there is no holiness, there is no fruit of faith and no evidence of salvation.

As for Joshua, he was like Caleb. He was a brave and truthful man, a true servant of God. And though we have his life given somewhat at length, yet we discover no flaw in his character. It is almost a rare thing in the Word of God to find a life written at any length without a record of infirmity and sin, for the biographies of Scripture are truthful and they mention men’s faults as well as their virtues. As there is no recorded fault in Joshua’s career, we gather that he was of a noble character. “The Lord said unto Moses, Take you Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand upon him.” So that the faith which took these two men into Canaan was in them the creator of a noble character.

Now, what do you say, Beloved Friends? Do you believe God? Do you believe His Word? Or are you of a captious and dubious spirit? Do you believe like children? Is God your Father and, therefore, is His Word your Father’s Word which you cannot think of questioning? Will you follow the Lamb wherever He goes, against giants or Canaanites? Will you believe God, whatever may give Him the lie? If so, you shall dwell in the land that flows with milk and honey—and you shall have your portion when the Lord appears! But if you do not truly believe, whatever profession you may make, your carcasses must fall in the wilderness! Woe is me that I have to deliver such a prophecy! Greater woe to you if it should be fulfilled in you! Believe the Lord and you shall prosper.

This day, as you are preparing for the census of the nation, think of the time when God shall make up His last account of natives in His holy city. Will you be numbered with His people, or will your names be left out at the reading of the muster roll? God give us a place among His redeemed— and to His name shall be Glory forever and ever! Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Numbers 1:1-5: 44-46; 14:1-10, 20-35; 26:1-4; 6-65.**  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—87, 88, 90.

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WOMEN’S RIGHTS—A PARABLE  
NO. 3141

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 22, 1909.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. “And Moses brought their cause before the LORD.” Numbers 17:5.

BY the help of God the Holy Spirit, I want to use this incident which forms a kind of episode in the rehearsal of the history of Israel’s 40 years’ wanderings in the wilderness, for a twofold purpose. First, let me indicate its general teaching and, secondly, let me take it as a ground of appeal to certain special classes.

I. First, I will try to indicate ITS GENERAL TEACHING.  
I would ask your attention and exhibit for your imitation, the faith which these five young women, the daughters of Zelophehad, possessed with regard to the promised inheritance. You must remember that the children of Israel were still in the wilderness. They had not seen the promised land, but God had made a Covenant with them that they should possess it. He had declared that He would bring them into a land which flowed with milk and honey and there plant them. And that that land should belong to them and to their descendants by a Covenant of salt forever. Now, these women believed in this heritage. They were not like Esau, who thought so little of the inheritance which was his birthright that he sold it to his brother Jacob for a mess of pottage—they believed it to be really worth having. They regarded it, though they had never beheld it, as being something exceedingly substantial and so, thinking about it, they were afraid lest they should be left out when the land was divided. And though they had never seen it, yet, being persuaded that it was somewhere and that the children of Israel would have it in due time, their anxiety was they, having no brothers, would be forgotten in the distribution and so would lose their rights. They were anxious about an inheritance which they had never seen with their eyes and, therein, I hold them up to the imitation of this present assembly.  
There is an inheritance that is far better than the land of Canaan. Oh, that we all believed in it and longed for it! It is an inheritance, however, which mortal eyes have not seen and the sounds of which mortal ears have not heard. It is a city whose streets are gold, but none of us have ever walked them. Never has traveler to that country come back to tell us of its glories. There the music never ceases, no discord ever mingles in it, it is sublime, but no member of the heavenly choir has ever come to write out for us the celestial score, or to—  
*“Teach us some melodious sonnet  
Sung by flaming tongues above.”*

It is not a matter of sight—it must be to each one of us a matter of faith. By faith we know that there is another and a better land. By faith we understand that our disembodied souls shall mount to be with Christ and that, after a while, our bodies shall also rise to join our spirits so that body and soul may together be glorified forever in the Presence of our gracious Redeemer. We have never seen this land, however—but there are some of us who as firmly believe in it as if we had seen it—and are as certain of it and as fully persuaded as though these ears of ours had listened to its songs of joy and these feet of ours had walked its streets of gold!

There was this feature, too, about the faith of these five women—they knew that the inheritance was only to be won by encountering great difficulties. The spies who came back from the land had said that the men who dwelt in it were giants. They said, “We were in our own sight as grasshoppers and so we were in their sight.” There was many a man, in the camp of Israel, I have no doubt, who said, “Well, I would sell my share cheaply enough, for though the land is there, we can never win it! They have cities walled up to Heaven and they have chariots of iron—we can never win the land.” But these women believed that although they could not fight, God could! And though they had never put their fingers to a more terrible instrument than a needle, yet did they believe that the same right arm which got itself the victory when they went with Miriam, dancing to the timbrels’ jubilant sound, would get the victory, again, and bring God’s people in and drive the Canaanites out even though they had walled cities and chariots of iron!

So these women had strong faith. I would to God that you had the same, all of you, dear Friends, but I know that some of you who believe that there is a land which flows with milk and honey, are half afraid that you shall never reach it! You are vexed with many doubts because of your own weakness, which, indeed, should not merely make you doubt, but should make you utterly despair if the gaining of the goodly land depended upon your own fighting for it and winning it! But, inasmuch as “the gift of God is eternal life” and God, Himself, will give it to us, and inasmuch as Jesus has gone up on high to prepare a place for us and has promised that He will come again and receive us unto Himself that where He is, there we may also be, I would to God that our doubts and fears were banished and that we said within ourselves, “We are well able to go up and attack the land, for the Lord, even the Lord of Hosts, is with us! Jehovah-Nissi is our banner! The Lord Our Righteousness is our helper and we shall surely enter into the place of the beloved people of God and shall join the general assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in Heaven.”

I commend the faith of these women to you because believing in the land and believing that it would be won, they were not to be put about by the ill report of some who said that it was not a good land. There were 10 out of the 12 who spied out the land who said, “It is a land that eats up the inhabitants thereof.” They brought back an evil report. But, whoever may have been perverted by these lies, these five women were not. Others said, “Why, the land is full of pestilence and hornets and those who live in it now are dying,” forgetting that God was making them die in order to bring in the children of Israel in their place. And so they said, “who cares to have a portion there? Give us the leeks, the garlic and the onions of Egypt—and let us sit again by the flesh-pots that we had at Rameses—but as for going on to this Canaan, we will never do it.” But these five women, who knew that if there were troubles in the household, they would be sure to have their share of them, that if the bread ran short, they would be the most likely to feel the straitness of it, and that if it were a land of sickness, they would have to be the nurses, yet coveted to have their share in it, for they did not believe the ill report. They said, “No, God has said it is a good land, a land of hills and valleys, a land of brooks and rivers, a land of olive oil and honey, a land out of whose hills we may dig iron and brass—and we will not believe what you spies say— it is a good land and we will go in and ask for our share of it.” So I commend their faith in this respect.

I know that some of you are occasionally met by sneering skeptics and they say to you, “There is no such place as Heaven! We have never seen it—are you such fools as to believe in it? Are you going on a pilgrimage over hedge and ditch, helter-skelter, to a country that you know nothing of? Are you going to trust that old-fashioned Book and take God’s Word, and nothing but His Word, and believe it?” Oh, I hope there are many of us—would that all of us were in that happy position—who can say, “It is even so!” Stand back, Mr. Atheist, and stop us not, for we are well persuaded that ours is no wild-goose chase! Stand back, Sir Ironical Skeptic! Laugh if you will. You will laugh on the other side of your face one of these days and we shall have the last laugh at that time! At any rate, if there is no Heaven, we shall be as well off as you will be, but if there is a Hell, where, O where will you be—and what will your portion be? So we go on our own way confident and sure, doubting nothing—believing as surely as we believe in our own existence that—

*“Jesus, the Judge will come  
To take His people up  
To their eternal home”—*

and believing that one hour with Him will be worth all the trials of the road—worth enduring ten thousand deaths, if we could endure them, in order to win it and that, moreover, by God’s Grace we shall win it—

*“We shall behold His face,  
We shall His name adore!  
And sing the wonders of His Grace  
Henceforth forevermore!”*

So I hold up these daughters of Zelophehad to your commendation and imitation on account of their faith.  
But there was another point. Feeling certain concerning the land, we must next commend them for their anxiety to possess a portion in it. Why did they think so much about it? I heard someone say, the other day, speaking of certain young people, “I do not like to see young women religious—they ought to be full of fun and mirth and not have their minds filled with such profound thoughts.” Now, I will be bound to say that this kind of philosophy was accredited in the camp of Israel and that there were a great many young women there who said, “Oh, there is time enough to think about the good land when we get there! Let us be polishing up our mirrors. Let us be seeing to our dresses. Let us understand how to put our fingers upon the timbrel when the time comes for it! But as for prosing about a portion among those Hivites and Hittites, what is the good of it? We will not bother ourselves about that.” But such was the strength of the faith of the five women that it led them to feel a deep anxiety for a share in the inheritance. They were not such simpletons as to live only for the present. They had outgrown their babyhood—they were not satisfied to live merely for the day. They knew that in due time the tribes would cross the Jordan and would be in the promised land, so they began, as it were, like good housewives, to think about where their portion would be and to reflect that were they left out when the musterroll was read—and should no portion be appointed for Tirzah, no portion for Milcah and no place for any of the five sisters, they would be like beggars and outcasts in the midst of the land! The thought of all others having their plot of ground and their family having none, made them anxious about it. O dear Friends, how anxious you and I ought to be to make our calling and election sure! And how solemnly should that question of the Countess of Huntingdon come home to our hearts— *“But can I bear the piercing thought—  
What if my name should be left out  
When You for them shall call?”*  
Suppose I should have no portion in the skies? O you foundations of chrysolite and all manner of precious stones, you gates of pearl, you walls of jasper, must I never see you? O troops of angels and armies of the blood-bought, must I never wave the palm or wear the crown in your midst? Must the word that salutes me be that awful sentence, “Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire”? Is there no place for me, no room for me in the inheritance of the saints?  
I do beseech you, never be satisfied till you can answer this question in the affirmative and say, “Yes, I have a place in Jesus’ heart! I have been washed in Jesus’ blood and, therefore, I shall be with Jesus where He is in His Glory when the fitting time comes.” Oh, I would have you who are not sure about this, be as anxious as these women were! Let it press upon your hearts! Let it even take the color from your cheek sooner than that you should have an empty and frivolous gaiety and mirth which will entice you down to the Pit! Oh, make sure work for eternity! Whatever else you trifle with, seek to have an anchor that will hold you fast in the last great storm! Seek to be affianced unto Christ! Be sure that you are founded upon the Rock of Ages, where alone we can safely build for eternity!  
These women were taken up with prudent anxious thoughts about their own part in the land of promise—and they were right in desiring to have a portion there when they remembered that the land had been given by Covenant to their fathers. They might well wish to have a part in a thing good enough to be a Covenant blessing! The land had been promised over and over again by Divine Authority—they might well wish to have a share in that which God’s own lips had promised! It was a land to bring them into which God had killed the first-born of Egypt and saved His people by the sprinkling of blood—they might well desire a land which cost so great a price to bring them to it! Besides, it was a goodly land. It was the most princely of all lands, peerless among all the territories of earth. Its products were most rich. The grapes of Eshcol—what could equal them? Its pomegranates, its olives, its rivers—the land that flowed with milk and honey—there was nothing like it in all the world! These women might well say, “Let us have a portion there!”  
And, my dear Hearers, the Heaven of which we have to tell you is a land so good that it was spoken of in the Covenant before the world was! It has been promised to the people of God ten thousand times! Jesus Christ has shed His precious blood that He might open the gates of it and bring us in! And it is such a land that if you had but seen it, if you could but know what it is, you would pine away in stopping here for it’s very dust is gold, its meanest joys are richer than the transports of earth and the poorest in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he who is the mightiest prince in the kingdoms of this world! Oh, that your mouths were set a-longing after the feasts of Paradise! Oh that you pined to be where Jesus is and then, surely, you would be anxious to know whether you had a portion there!  
I hold these women up as an example because they believed in the unseen inheritance and they were anxious to get their portion in it.  
But I must commend them yet again for the way in which they set about the business. I do not find that they went complaining from tent to tent that they were afraid that they had no portion. Many doubters do that—they tell their doubts and fears to others, but they get no further. But these five women went straight to Moses. He was at their head, he was their mediator—and then it is said that “Moses brought their cause before the Lord.” You see, these women did not try to get what they wanted by force. They did not say, “We will take care to get our share of the land when we get there.” They did not suppose that they had any merit which they might plead, and so get it, but they went straight to Moses—and Moses took their cause and laid it before the Lord. Sinner, do you want a portion in Heaven? Go straight to Jesus and Jesus will take your cause and lay it before the Lord! It is a very sorry one as it stands by itself, but He has such a sweet way of so mixing Himself up with you and yourself with Him, that His cause and your cause will be one cause—and the Father will give Him good success—and give you good success, too! Oh, that someone here would breathe the prayer, if he has never prayed before, “Savior, will You see that I have a portion in the skies? Precious Savior, take my poor heart and wash it in Your precious blood, change it by your Holy Spirit and make me ready to dwell where perfect saints are! Oh, undertake my cause for me, blessed Advocate, and plead it before Your Father’s face!” That is the way to have the business of salvation effectually done! Take it out of your own hands and put into the hands of the Prophet like unto Moses, and you will surely succeed!  
Now, observe the success of these women. The Lord accepted their plea, for He said unto Moses, “The daughters of Zelophehad speak rightly.” Yes, and when you cry to Him and when His dear Son takes your prayer to Him, God will say, “That sinner speaks rightly.” Beat on your breast and cry, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” and He will say, “That soul speaks rightly.” Young woman, imitate these five sisters right now! May God the Holy Spirit bring you to imitate them by humbly offering your plea through the Mediator, Jesus Christ, and God will say, “Ah, she speaks rightly, I have heard her and I have accepted her.” And then God said that these sisters should have their portion just the same as the men had—that they should have their share of land just as if they had inherited it as sons—and so will God say to every seeking sinner! Whatever may be the disability under which you labor. Whatever bar there may have seemed to be to your claim, you shall inherit among the children, you shall take your part and your lot among the chosen people of God! Christ has set your cause before His Father, and it shall be unto you, poor Sinner, according to your desire—and you shall have a part among the Lord’s people!  
I wish I had power to press this matter more immediately home upon you. Many of us who are now present are saved. It is a great satisfaction to remember how large a proportion of my congregation has come to Christ, but ah, there are many, many here who are—well, what are they? They do not know that they have any inheritance! They cannot read their title clear to mansions in the skies and, what is worse, they are unconcerned about it! If they were troubled about it, we would have hope concerning them, but no, they go their way and, like Pliable, having got out of the Slough of Despond, they turn around and say to Christians, “You may have the brave country all to yourselves for all we care.” They are so fond of present pleasure, so easily enticed by the wily whispers of the arch-enemy, so soon overcome by their own passions that they find it too hard to be Christians—to love Christ is a thing too difficult for them! Ah, may God meet with you and make you wiser! Poor Souls, you will perish—some of you will perish while you are looking on at this world’s bubbles and baubles! You will perish—you will go down to Hell with this earth’s joys in your mouths—but they will not sweeten those mouths when the pangs of Hell get hold upon you! Your life is short. Your candle flickers in its socket. You must soon go the way of all flesh. We never meet one week after another without some death occurring between. Out of this vast number, surely it is all but impossible that we should ever all meet here again! Perhaps before this day next week, some of us will have passed the curtain, will have learned the great secret and will have entered the invisible world! Whose portion will it be? If it is yours, dear Hearer, will you mount to worlds of joy, or shall—  
*“Devils plunge you down to Hell  
In infinite despair?”*  
God make that a matter of concern with us, first, and then may we come to Jesus and receive the sprinkling of precious blood! And thus may He make it a matter of confidence with us that we are saved through Him and shall be partakers with them that are sanctified!  
II. Secondly, I am going to use the whole incident as a GROUND OF APPEAL TO CERTAIN SPECIAL CLASSES.  
Does it not strike you that there is here a special lesson for our unconverted sisters? Here are five daughters, I suppose young women, certainly unmarried women, and these five were unanimous in seeking to have a portion where God had promised it to His people. Have I any young women here who have not acted like that? I am afraid I have! Blessed be God for the many who come in among us who become solemnly impressed and give their young days to Jesus! But there are some, there may be some here, of another mind. The temptations of this wicked Metropolis, the pleasures of this perilous city lead them away from the right path and prevent them from giving a fair hearing to God’s Word. Well, but you are here, my Sister, and may I, as a Brother, put this question to you? Do you not desire a portion in the skies? Have you no wish for Glory? Have you no longing for the everlasting crown? Can you sell Christ for a few hours of mirth? Will you give Him up for a giddy song or an idle companion? Those are not your friends who would lead you from the paths of righteousness! Count them not dear, but loathe them if they would entice you from Christ! But, as you will certainly die and will as certainly live forever in endless woe or in boundless bliss, do see to your souls! “Seek you first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness,” and all other necessary things shall be added to you. You have come fresh from the country, young woman, and leaving your mother’s care it is very likely that you have begun to absent yourself from the means of Grace, but I charge you not to do so! On the contrary, let this bind you to your mother’s God and may you feel that whereas you may have up to now neglected God’s House and profaned God’s Day, yet henceforth, like the daughters of Zelophehad, you will seek to have a portion in the promised land!  
The subject bears another way. Has it not a voice, and a loud voice too, to the children of godly parents? I like these young women saying that their father did not die with Korah, but that he only died the ordinary death which fell upon others because of the sin of the wilderness. And also their saying, “Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family because he has no son?” It is a good thing to see this respect to parents—this desire to keep up the honor of the family. I was thinking whether there may not be some here, some children of godly parents, who would feel it a sad thing if they should bring disgrace upon the family name? Is it so, that though your father has been for many years a Christian, he has not one to succeed him? O young man, have you no ambition to stand in his place, no wish to let his name be perpetuated in the Church of God? Well, if the sons have no such ambition or if there are none, let the daughters say to one another, “Our father never disgraced his profession. He did not die in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the Lord, but he served the Lord faithfully—and we will not let his name be blotted out from Israel! We will join ourselves to the people of God and the family shall be still represented.” But oh, how I desire that the brothers and sisters would come together! And what a delightful thing it would be to see the whole family! In that household there were only five girls, but they all had their heritage. Father, would you not be happy if it should be so with your children? Mother, would you not be ready to say, “Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation,” if you could see all your children brought in? And why not, my Brothers and Sisters, why not? We will give God no rest until it is so! We will plead with Him until they are all saved! And young people, why not? The Lord’s mercy is not straitened! The God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob and your father’s God, we trust, will be your God! Oh, that you would follow in the footsteps of your parents so far as they followed Christ! These daughters of Zelophehad seem to me to turn preachers—and I stand here to speak for them, and all five of them say to you— “We gained our inheritance by seeking for it through a mediator. Young women, brothers and sisters, you shall gain it, too, by seeking it through a Savior.”  
And does not this text also speak to another class—to orphans? These good girls had lost their parents, or otherwise the question would not have arisen. Father and mother had passed away and, therefore, they had to go to Moses for themselves. When the parents could not come to Moses for them, they came for themselves. Think of the skies a moment, some of you. Perhaps this morning you were in a very different place, but think of the skies a minute. No, I do not mean the meteoric stones! I do not mean the stars, nor yon bright moon—but I want you to think of your mother, who is yonder. Do you remember when she gave you the last kiss, bade you farewell and said, “Follow me, my children. Follow me to the skies”? Think of a father who is there. His voice, doubtless, helping to swell the everlasting hallelujah! Does he not beckon you from the battlements of Heaven and cry, “Children of my loins, follow me, as I followed Christ”? Some of us have an honored grandfather there, an honored grandmother there. Many of you have little infants there, young angels whom God lent you for a little time and then took them to Heaven to show you the way, to lure you to go upwards too! You all have some dear friends there with whom you walked to God’s House in company. They have gone, but I charge you, by the living God, to follow them! Break not your households in two! Let no solemn rifts come into the family, but, as they have gone to their rest, God grant unto you by the same road to come and rest eternally too. Jesus Christ is ready to receive sinners! He is ready to receive you! And if you trust Him, the joy and bliss which your friends now partake of shall also be yours! Daughters of godly parents, children of those who have gone before to eternal Glory, I entreat you, look to Jesus! Go and present your suit to Him now. It shall surely prosper. If the question was once doubtful, it has now become “a statute of judgment.” The Lord has commanded it! May God bless these counsels and exhortations to you, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**GENESIS 1.**

Genesis 1:1. In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth. When that “beginning” was, we cannot tell. It may have been long ages before God fitted up this world for the abode of man, but it was not selfexistent—it was created by God, it sprang from the will and the word of the all-wise Creator!

2. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. When God began to arrange this world in order, it was shrouded in darkness and it had been reduced to what we call, for lack of a better name, “chaos.” This is just the condition of every soul of man when God begins to deal with him in His Grace—it is formless and empty of all good things. “There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way.”

2. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. This was the first act of God in preparing this planet to be the abode of man—and the first act of Grace in the soul is for the Spirit of God to move within it! How that Spirit of God comes there, we know not. We cannot tell how He acts, even as we cannot tell how the wind blows where it wishes, but until the Spirit of God moves upon the soul, nothing is done towards its new creation in Christ Jesus!

3, 4. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. “Light be.” “Light was.” God had but to speak the word and the great wonder was accomplished! How there was light before there was any sun—for the sun was not created until the fourth day of the week—it is not for us to say. But God is not dependent upon His own creation. He can make light without a sun! He can spread the Gospel without the aid of ministers, He can convert souls without any human or angelic method, for He does as He wills in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.

5. And God called the light, Day, and the darkness, He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. It is a good thing to have the right names for things. An error is often half killed when you know the real name of it—its power lies in its being indescribable! But as soon as you can call it, “darkness,” you know how to act towards it. It is a also good thing to know the names of truths and the names of other things that are right. God is very particular in the Scripture about giving people their right names. The Holy Spirit says, “Judas, not Iscariot,” so that there should be no mistake about the intended person. Let us also always call persons and things by their right names—“God called the light, Day, and the darkness He called Night.” “And the evening and the morning were the first day.” Darkness first and light afterwards. It is so with us spiritually—first darkness, then light. I suppose that until we get to Heaven, there will be both darkness and light in us. And as to God’s Providential dealings, we must expect darkness as well as light. They will make up our first day and our last day, till we get where there are no days but the Ancient of Days.

6-8. And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. “The firmament”—an expanse of air in which floated the waters which afterwards condensed and fell upon the earth in refreshing showers. These waters above were divided from the waters below. Perhaps they were all one steamy conglomeration before, but now they are separated. Note those four words, “and it was so.” Whatever God ordains always comes. You will find that it is true of all His promises, that whatever He has said shall be fulfilled to you, and you shall one day say of it all, “And it was so.” It is equally certain concerning all His threats that what He has spoken shall certainly be fulfilled—and the ungodly will have to say, “And it was so.” These words are often repeated in this Chapter. They convey to us the great lesson that the Word of God is sure to be followed by the deed of God. He speaks and it is done!

9-13. And God said, let the waters under the heaven be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land, Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself; upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day. Having attended to the air, God further exercised His power by setting the earth in order. Observe the remarkable fact that no sooner had God made the dry land appear, than it seemed as if He could not bear the sight of it in its nakedness. What a strange place this world must have been with its plains and hills and rooks and vales without one single blade of grass, or a tree, or a shrub! So at once, before that day was over, God threw the mantle of verdure over the earth and clad its mountains and valleys with forests and plants and flowers, as if to show us that the fruitless is uncomely in God’s sight, that the man who bears no fruit unto God is unendurable to Him. There would be no beauty whatever in a Christian without any good works and with no graces. As soon as ever the earth appeared, then came the herbs, the trees and the grass. So, dear Brothers and Sisters, in like manner, let us bring forth fruit unto God and bring it forth abundantly, for herein is our heavenly Father glorified—that we bear much fruit.

14-19. And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day. Whether the sun and moon are here said to be absolutely created, or whether they were only created so far as our planet was concerned by the dense vapors being cleared away so that the sun and moon and stars could be seen, is a matter of no consequence at all to us. Let us rather learn a lesson from them. These lights are to rule, but they are to rule by giving light. And, Brothers and Sisters, this is the true rule in the Church of God. He who gives most light is the truest ruler—and the man who aspires to leadership in the Church of God, if he knows what he is doing, aspires to be the servant of all by laying himself out for the good of all, even as our Savior said to His disciples, “Whoever of you will be the chief, shall be servant of all.” The sun and moon are the servants of all mankind and, therefore, do they rule by day and by night. Stoop, my Brothers, if you wish to lead others! The way up is downward! To be great, you must be little. He is the greatest who is nothing at all unto himself, but all for others.

20-23. And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that has life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moves, which the water brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. There was no life in the sea or on the land until all was ready for it. God would not make a creature to be unhappy. There must be suitable food to feed upon and the sun and moon to cheer and comfort before a single bird shall chirp in the thicket or a solitary trout shall leap in the stream. So, after God has given men light, and blessed them in various ways, their spiritual life begins to develop to the glory of God. We have the thoughts that soar like fowl in the open firmament of heaven, and other thoughts that dive into the mysteries of God, as the fish dive in the sea. These are after-development, after-growths of that same power which at the first said, “Let there be light.”

24, 25. And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good. There is as much wisdom and care displayed in the creation of the tiniest creeping insect as in the creation of leviathan himself. Those who use the microscope are as much amazed at the greatness and the goodness of God as those are who use the telescope. He is as great in the little as He is in the great. After each day’s work, God looks upon it—and it is well for us, every night, to review our day’s work. Some men’s work will not bear looking at and tomorrow becomes all the worse to them because today was not considered and its sin repented of by them. But if the errors of today are marked by us, a repetition of them may be avoided on the morrow. It is only God who can look upon any one day’s work and say of it, as a whole, and in every part, that it is “good.” As for us, our best things need sprinkling with the blood of Christ which we need not only on the lintels and side posts of our house, but even on the altar and the Mercy Seat at which we worship God!

26-28. And God said, Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth. God evidently meant the two persons, male and female, to complete the man, and the entireness of the manhood lies in them both. The earth is completed now that man has come upon it, and man is completed when the image of God is upon him, when Christ is formed in him the hope of Glory, but not till then. When we have received the power of God and have dominion over ourselves and over all earthly things in the power of God’s eternal Spirit, then are we where and what God intends us to be.

29, 30. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creeps upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. Now you see God’s commissariat. He has not made all these creatures in order to starve them, but He has supplied them with great variety and abundance of food, that their needs may be satisfied. Does God care for the cattle and will He not feed His own children? Does He provide for ravens and sparrows and will He allow you to lack anything, O you of little faith? Observe that God did not create man until He had provided for him—neither will He ever put one work of His Providence or of His Grace out of its proper place—but that which goes before shall be preparatory to that which follows after.

31. And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good. Taken in its completeness, and all put together, God saw that it was very good. We must never judge anything before it is complete.

—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 #527 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE RED HEIFER  
NO. 527

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 30, 1863, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“This is the ordinance of the law, which the Lord has commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring you a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish and upon**

**which never came yoke: and you shall give her unto Eleazar the priest, that he may bring her forth  
without the camp and one shall slay  
her before his face.”  
Numbers 19:2, 3.**

THE true heading of all the books of Moses is to be found in the words of Jesus, “Moses wrote of Me.” Take the Lord Jesus Christ with you as a key, and however difficult the riddles of Leviticus or Numbers may at first sight appear, there is not one enigma in the whole collection which will not speedily open and yield instruction. To the Israelites themselves, these rites and ceremonies must have been rather an exercise of faith, than a means of instruction. “I cannot perfectly understand why this heifer is slain, or why yonder lamb is offered,” said the pious Israelite, “but though I cannot understand, I believe there is virtue in it all and I reverently do, even to the smallest particular, that which God, through His servant Moses, has commanded me to do.”

To us, the types are not a dark mystery to perplex our faith, but an open vision to delight our eyes. Having believed in Christ Jesus, having received Him as the Father’s Sent One and being reconciled unto God by His death, we look back to the ceremonies of the old Law as the patterns of heavenly things. We endeavor to discover some new light in which the Savior’s beauties may be set and to behold Him from some different point of view, so that we may love Him the better and may trust Him more. Now, the particular point to which the red heifer referred, concerning Christ and His work, is just this—the provision which is made in Christ Jesus for the daily sins and failings of Believers.

In order to bring out our point clearly, we shall remark, first, that even true Israelites are in daily danger of defilement. Secondly, that there is a provision made in the Covenant of Grace for the removal of the daily defilement of sin. And thirdly, that the red heifer most beautifully sets forth Christ as being the constant purification of His people, that they, having their consciences purged from dead works, may have power to worship acceptably the living and true God.

I. It is undoubtedly true, that even THE TRUE ISRAELITE, THE TRUE BELIEVER IN CHRIST, IS THE SUBJECT OF DAILY DEFILEMENT. My Brothers and Sisters, we who have believed in Christ are free from sin before the Divine judgment seat. The moment that we believe in Christ, our sin is no longer ours. It was laid upon Christ and cannot be in two places at one time. And therefore are we perfectly clean from sin before the eyes of a holy God. This is justification, full, complete, everlasting. But we are

all aware, that in the matter of sanctification, we are not, as yet, delivered from evil.

Sin dwells, though it reigns not in our mortal bodies. And since there is sin within, there is the capability of the defilement of sin without. Who has lived for a single day in this base world without discovering that in all his actions he commits sin? Who does not realize that in everything to which he puts his hand, he receives, as well as imparts, some degree of defilement? How is it, my Brothers and Sisters, that this is the case? The answer is easy, and it is to be found in the chapter before us.

Some of our defilement arises from the fact that we do actually come into contact with sin, here imaged in the corruption of death. Read the eleventh verse—“He that touches the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days.” We actually touch that dead thing and sin, by overt acts of transgression. The best man living still pollutes himself with evil. We have met with a few vain and ignorant persons who have boasted that they were perfect, but we never believed in their perfection, except so far as to concede that they were perfect in self-conceit, in boastful arrogance, and infamous impudence.

“If any man says he has no sin, he deceives himself, and the truth is not in him.” The best of men are men at the best and while they are men, they will sin. We find the Apostle Paul crying out because of corruption and even using such strong language as this—“O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” We are in close connection with sin, because sin is in ourselves. It has dyed us through and through, staining the very warp and woof of our nature. Until we lay aside these bodies and are admitted to the Church of the First-Born above, we shall never cease very close and intimate connection with sin.

Therefore, my Brothers and Sisters, we need to be constantly cleansed, because we are always defiling ourselves. In fact, we are always defiled because we are always touching the body of this death. Moreover, we get defilement, not only from our own actual sins, but from companionship with other sinners. You will read farther on in this chapter, “When a man dies in a tent: all that come into the tent and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean.” The mere being with sinners defiles us. Christ could walk with publicans and sinners and yet incur no danger. The great Physician could walk the leper house of this world untainted by contagion, but this is not possible with us.

Even if the most honest and laudable motives shall lead us into the company of the ungodly, though our only aim may be to bring them to Jesus, yet their unhallowed conversation will not only vex, but defile. It is not possible to look upon another man’s sin, even to look upon it with abhorrence, without receiving some degree of contamination, because the thought of evil is sin. Our hatred of evil always lacks in intensity—we do not detest it as we ought—and a failure here is a sin of omission which pollutes. You may say you can go into evil company and get no defilement—my Brothers and Sisters—I doubt it.

It may be absolutely necessary for you in your calling, and more especially in your desire to bless others, to mingle with the ungodly, but you might as well attempt to carry fire in your bosom and not be burnt, or handle pitch and not be blackened, as to dwell in the tents of Kedar without receiving uncleanness. This dusty world must leave some mark upon our white garments—let us travel as carefully as we may. “I am black because the sun has looked upon me,” must ever be the confession of the bride of Christ. This world is full of the spiritually dead, and since we live, we must be often rendered unclean among the sinful. And therefore we need a daily cleansing to fit us for daily fellowship with a holy God.

Reflect, dear Brothers and Sisters, again, that one reason why we are so constantly defiled, is our want of watchfulness. You will observe that everything in the tent of a dead man was defiled except vessels that were covered over. Any vessel which was left open was at once unclean. You and I ought to cover up our hearts from the contamination of sin. It were well for us if we kept our heart with all diligence, since out of it are the issues of life. Good Mr. Dyer says, “The Christian should lock up his heart in the morning and give God the key, lest any evil should come in. And then when He unlocks it at night, a sweet perfume of prayer will rise at eventide.”

But alas, we forget to lock up our hearts. We do not keep our Graces covered up. I believe that a man might go into the most sinful places under Heaven without receiving defilement if he exercised a sufficient degree of watchfulness. But it is because we do not watch that the poisoned arrows wound us. I noticed the other day an allegory of a candle in a lantern, with the motto, “One weak point is too much.” An enemy outside the lantern tried to blow out the candle. He blew all around, but it was wellsecured, until, at last, he found a single crack and then through it he sent the destroying breath and soon the flame of the candle was extinguished.

This is what the devil does with us. We may be guarded in nine points out of ten, but our strength is to be measured, mark you, by the strength of the weakest point. The devil will find out, sooner or later, some crack through which he will attack us to our soul’s evil. Watch, my Brothers and Sisters, watch carefully. It is because you and I fail here that we acquire this daily defilement and need daily to be purified.

A yet more striking thought is suggested by this chapter—sin is so desperately evil that the very slightest sin defiles us. He who touched a bone was unclean. It was not necessary to put your hand upon the clay-cold corpse to be defiled. The accidentally touching with the foot a bone carelessly thrown up by the grave digger. Even the touching it by the plowman as he turned up his furrow—even this was sufficient to make him unclean. Sin is such an immeasurably vile and pestilent a thing, that the slightest iniquity makes the Christian foul—a thought, an imagination, the glancing of an eye. We may have shut out all the world from our closet, and yet find we have not shut out sin.

We may make a covenant with our eyes and with our hands and with our feet and with our lips, but still our wanton hearts will go after evil. We have heard of some perfumes of which it is said that the thousandth part of a grain would leave a scent for ages in the place where it had been. And certainly it is so with sin—about its merest bone there is an eternal pest— one sin of thought would be enough to destroy forever all communion with

God. Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, we are defiled and need to be daily cleansed.

I must not fail to remind you, also, that sin, even when it is not seen, defiles, for you will observe in the chapter that a man was defiled who touched a grave. The bones might be buried deep down so that he could not discern them. And over those bones the grass might have grown in green hillocks, decked with a few sweet flowers and yet, if the Israelite did but touch that grave with his foot, or with his hand, he was defiled. Oh, how many graves there are of sin—things that are fair to look upon, externally admirable but internally abominable!

Such-and-such a custom is tolerated, no, it has become fast fixed in society and who shall find fault with it? Yet, many of our customs are but the graves of sin and many of our actions, which we think so admirable, have loathsome rottenness within. Too much, even of our sanctuary services, is comparable to a whitewashed sepulcher. Those sweet hymns, the unanimous and hearty shout of praise, the earnest prayer, the reverent deportment—all those, I say, may be but the whitewashed sepulcher. For our thoughts may be going abroad after all sorts of mischief, and so our very sanctuary services may be but the green sods which conceal the loathsomeness of sin.

O dear Friends, this is enough to startle us! We sin enough to our own knowledge, but how much of sin we commit of which we are not aware who shall possibly tell? Sins unknown! I have often reminded you of the expression in the Greek liturgy, “Your unknown sufferings.” It is such a blessing that there are unknown sufferings for these unknown sins. We are ignorant of the heights and depths of Jesus’ love. Thank God that there is a vast atonement whose vast efficacy we must leave in ignorance, just as there are sins of ignorance utterly undiscoverable by us.

Only one more thought here. I would have you notice, dear Friends, that the Jew was not only in danger of defilement in his tent and when he walked the roads, but he was in danger in the open fields. For you will observe that it says that if he touched a body that had been slain in the open fields, or a bone, he should be unclean. For all he knew, there might have been a battle there. Perhaps he thought, “Well, this is out of the way of men. I see no footprints, no tracks here,” and he walks carelessly across the green fields. But, though he knows it not, there lies in his way the corpse of old who had been killed by misadventure, or murdered by his fellow in strife. He stumbles upon the body and lo, he is unclean!

You may go where you will, but you cannot escape from sin. If you take the wings of the morning and fly unto the uttermost parts of the sea, sin is there. If you make your bed in Hell, it is there it reigns. If you seek the cover of midnight, is not midnight the very noon and carnival of evil? If you enter the Church of God, you shall find it there—high and low, rich and poor, polite and uncivilized—you shall search all ranks and positions of men, but sin is everywhere. And until we mount with eagles’ wings to dwell before the Eternal Throne, we shall have to complain that we are daily in danger of defilement.  
II. This brings us now to change the subject, by observing THAT A PURIFICATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED. A constant expiation is prepared. As Hart puts it—

*“If guilt removed, return and remain,*

*Its power may be proved again and again.”*The ransomed Church of God needs daily to be washed in the Fountain and the mercy is that the precious blood shall never lose its power, but its constant efficacy shall abide till they are, everyone of them, “Saved to sin no more.” Beloved, there is a propitiation provided for daily defilement, for first of all, if it were not so, how melancholy were your case and mine!

Suppose we were Israelites, true Believers, and then to have sinned, as we certainly should do? Then, Beloved, at once we should be cut off from all privileges. The unclean person had no right to go up to the house of the Lord. He had no participation in its solemn worship. For him there was no glory of sacred praise and no prevalence of earnest prayer. You and I would have no right to Christ, no adoption, no justification, no sanctification—for the unclean person has no right to any of these. And as we should have no privileges, so we could have no communion with God.

God cannot immediately commune except with perfectly holy beings. He does now commune with the imperfect—but then it is through a perfect Savior—and He cannot commune directly with you and me while sin abides in us. He has to look upon us as purified through Christ Jesus and being, therefore, wholly clean—or else it were not possible for Him to walk with us, and to manifest Himself to us. The ultimate result in the Israelites’ case would have been death. You observe that he who did not purify himself was cut off from Israel. First, cut off by excommunication, so as no longer to be a sharer in the citizenship of Israel.

And then probably cut off, either by the executioner, or else by the sudden judgment of God through plague, or fiery serpent, or some other terrible means. And certainly if you and I, though Believers, could live for a season without being purified, carrying about with us the daily defilement of sin—before long it must end in spiritual death and in utter destruction. But thanks be unto God, He has provided against these terrible consequences.

But think again, Beloved, the Lord must provide a daily cleansing for our daily defilement, for if not, where were His wisdom, where His love? He has provided for everything else. There is not a lack a saint can know, but God has furnished a supply. Out of the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus, our necessities are all supplied. But if this, this glaring, this souldestroying need had not been provided for, how could we call Him our Father and trust in Him? How could we know Him to be the only wise God, our Savior? A failure would have occurred in a most important point. Beloved, the love, the wisdom, the complete wisdom of God demands that there should be such a purification supplied.

The work of our Lord Jesus Christ assures us of this . What is there opened for the house of David, for sin and for uncleanness? A cistern? A cistern that might be emptied, a water pot, such as that which stood at Cana’s marriage feast and might be drained? No, there is a fountain open for sin and for uncleanness. We wash, the fountain flows. We wash again, the fountain still flows. From the great depths of the Deity of Christ, the eternal merit of His passion comes everlastingly welling up. Wash! Wash!

It is inexhaustible, for it is fountain-fullness. Is it not said in Scripture, “If any man sins, we have an Advocate”? Why is Christ an Advocate today? Only because we need an Advocate every day.

Does He not constantly intercede yonder before the Eternal Throne? Why does He do that? Because we need daily intercession. And it is because we are constantly sinning that He is constantly an Advocate— constantly an Intercessor. He Himself has beautifully set forth this in the case of Peter—after Supper the Lord took a towel and girded Himself and then, taking His basin and His water, He went to Peter and Peter said, “You shall never wash my feet.” But Jesus told him, “If I wash you not, you have no part in Me.” He had been washed once. Peter was free from sin in the high sense of justification, but he needs the washing of purification. When Peter said, “Lord, wash not my feet only, but also my head and my hands,” then Jesus replied, “He that is washed”—that is, he who is pardoned—“needs not, save to wash his feet, for he is clean every whit.”

The feet need constant washing. The daily defilement of our daily walk through an ungodly world brings upon us the daily necessity of being cleaned from fresh sin, and that the mighty Master supplies to us. Methinks I see Him at this very day still girded with that towed, still with that basin and flowing water, going round to all His saints, coming round to us, Brothers and Sisters, and saying, “I have washed your feet, I, your Master and your Lord. And you are clean every whit.” There is a provision then. The work of Jesus Christ just meets the case.

Moreover, Beloved, the work of the Holy Spirit also meets the case, for what is His business but constantly to take of the things of Christ and reveal them unto us—constantly to quicken, to enlighten and to comfort? Why all this, but because we are constantly in need, perpetually being defiled, and therefore needing perpetually to have the purification applied? Best of all, facts show that there is a purification for present guilt. The saints of old fell into sin, but they did not remain there. David cries, “Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean: wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.” Peter denies his Master, but he does not always remain a blaspheming, ungrateful coward.

No, he comes back again to his Lord and Master and makes the avowal, “You know all things. You know that I love You.” You and I, I hope, can give a better proof, still, that we have tried it ourselves. We remember that dear hour when first we came to Christ. Oh, it was no fiction, no dream. We were weighed down with a thousand sins, but one look at Jesus took them all away. And since that time we have often been cast down. There may be some of you who escape from doubts and fears. If you do, I greatly envy you, but I think that most of us get, at times, in such a position that we cry with David, “My soul lies cleaving unto the dust.” You feel as if you dare not come into the Lord’s Presence. You cannot hope that He will hear your prayer.

You cannot grasp the promises, they seem too good for such as you. You cannot look up to Christ to call Him Brother. “Abba, Father,” falters on your tongue. But, have you not known what it is to look to your Redeemer again just as you did at first? And then your love and joy have come back to you again once more, as if it had been a new conversion. And you have gone on your way rejoicing—you that only yesterday were hanging your harps upon the willows and refusing to sing to the praise of your Lord!

My dear Friends, if this were not a great Truth of God, some of us would die in despair. I am sure if I might not still come to Jesus as a sinner and still rest in Him, expecting to be cleansed from all defilement, I do not know that there would be anything in the Bible which could yield comfort to me. I must have a remedy as broad as the disease. I must have a supply as deep, as wide, as constant as my needs, and, thanks be unto God, here is just such a supply! The foulest sins Jesus takes away and when our hearts have backslidden from God He does bring us back. Why, some of us have appeared in our own consciences to have gone into the very belly of Hell, and yet the Lord has brought us up again to the gates of Heaven.

Ah, it does not take many minutes to work this change. Sometimes I have felt all God’s waves and billows rolling over me till I was ready to despair under a sense of my own unworthiness. And yet the next moment I have been able to read my title clear to mansions in the skies. And believing on Christ, I have had full fellowship with Him! This is the power of purification—thus is it that the application of the precious blood of sprinkling always works, when faith, through the Holy Spirit, brings it to the conscience. May you and I know this by our daily constant experience of it—that there is a daily purification for daily defilement.

III. But now, Beloved, I bring you to the chapter itself. THE RED HEIFER SETS FORTH, IN A MOST ADMIRABLE MANNER, THE DAILY PURIFICATION FOR DAILY SIN. It was a heifer—an unusual thing for a sacrifice to be a female. And we scarcely know why it should be in this case, unless indeed, to make the substitution more evident. This red heifer stood for all the house of Israel—for the whole Church of God. And the Church is always looked upon and considered in Scripture as being the spouse—the bride—always feminine.

Perhaps, to make the substitution obvious and complete, to show that this heifer stood in the place of the whole seed of Israel, it was chosen rather than the customary bullock. It was a red heifer. Some think because of its rarity, for it was very difficult to find one that was red without a single spot—for if there were one white or black hair it was always rejected—it must be wholly and entirely red. Some think that this was to signify how unique and unrivalled is the Person of Christ. How extraordinary—the only One of His Father—the only Redeemer of souls. Of such matchless virtue and of such glorious pedigree, that no angel can match with Him, neither any of the sons of men, for a moment, be compared with Him.

Probably, however, the red was chosen only from its bringing to the mind of the Israelites the idea of blood, which was always associated with atonement and putting away of sin. Surely, my Brothers and Sisters, when we think of Christ, we always associate Him with the streaming gore, when we are under a sense of sin. At other times we think of Him as white and ruddy, as Perfection itself. But there is no point about Jesus which the trembling conscience loves to rest upon so much as that red

crimson blood of His.

We have heard complaints sometimes made of our theology, that there is too much blood in it. “The blood is the life thereof.” If there were no blood in our preaching, there were no life in it, no joy, no true power. It is just because we love to extol that precious blood, that God is pleased to honor the Word and make it comfortable to saints and make it the Word of quickening to sinners. I am sure, dear Brothers and Sisters, sometimes when we have sung that verse—

*“His dying crimson, like a robe,  
Spreads over His body on the Tree,”*  
in the presence of that blood-red mantle, we have felt the next lines to be

no imagination, but a sober fact—  
*“Then am I dead to all the globe,  
And all the globe is dead to me.”*

My Master, His face covered with bloody sweat, with ruby drops of blood around His head. My Lord with His back like a river of gore, where the accursed whips have beaten Him—His hands streaming with founts of crimson, and His feet flowing with rills of scarlet, and His side giving forth a rich waterfall of His heart’s blood—He never seems so lovely as when thus I see him arrayed in “a vesture dipped in blood.” “Who is this that comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Why are You red in Your apparel and Your garments like He that treads in the wine vat?”

This is the glorious Savior, mighty to save and never seen so mighty to save as when He is robed in crimson. Let it be the red heifer. It shall ever bring to the mind of the pious Believer the remembrance of Him who trod the winepress alone. It was a heifer without spot. This denotes the perfection of Christ’s Character—“not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” Born without any human defilement, conceived immaculately through the Holy Spirit. “That holy Thing which is conceived in you,” said the angel to the Virgin. Without any natural defilement such as we receive, He felt not the taint of original sin.

Then the heifer must be without blemish. Our Christ, as He had no spot of original sin, has no blemish of actual sin. “The prince of this world comes and has nothing in Me.” He became like unto us in all points, but always with this exception—“yet without sin.” Observe that this red heifer was one where there never came a yoke. Perhaps this sets forth how willingly Christ came to die for us. Not forced from Heaven, but freely delivering Himself for us all. “Lo, I come to do Your will. In the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will, O God.” Not dragged to His death. “I lay down My life of Myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again. No man takes it from Me.” The free Son of God wears no yoke, except that yoke which was easy to Him and that burden which was light, the yoke of love which constrained Him to lay down His life for His people.

An interesting circumstance about this red heifer is that it was not provided by the priests. It was not provided out of the usual funds of the sanctuary, nor yet by the princes, nor by any one person. The children of Israel provided it. Why? Why, that as they came out of their tents in the desert, or their houses in Jerusalem and saw the priests leading the red heifer, every man and every woman and every child might say, “I have a share in that heifer. I have a share in that victim which is being lead out of the city to be consumed.” Brethren, I wish—oh, I would to God I dare hope that every man and every woman here could say, “I have a share in Jesus Christ,” for that is the meaning of this national provision, to let us see how Christ shed His blood for all His people. And they have all a part and all an interest in Him.

If you believe in Him, though you are the weakest of all His children, you have as good a share as the strongest. He is as much your Christ as He is the Christ of an Apostle, or of a martyr who went to Heaven in a chariot of fire. I hope, Brothers and Sisters, that you see this and are assured that you have an interest in Him. As we noted what this victim was, there is yet to be observed what was done with it. Again, let me beg you to refer to your Bibles, to see what became of this red heifer.

First, it was taken out of the camp. Herein it was a picture of Christ. That He might sanctify His people with His own blood, He suffered without the camp. Without the camp was the place of uncleanness. There the lepers dwelt. There every defiled person was put in quarantine. Jesus Christ must be numbered with the transgressors and must suffer upon Mount Calvary, outside the city gates, upon that General Tyburn of criminals, “the place of a skull.” The people of God are to be a separate people from all the rest of the world. They are not to be numbered with the dwellers in this world’s city. They are to be strangers and pilgrims and sojourners, as all their fathers were. Therefore, Christ, to set them an example of separation, suffers Himself without the camp.

When taken without the camp, the red cow was slain. A dying Savior that takes away our sins. Brethren, we love Christ the Risen One, we bless Christ the living, pleading Intercessor, but after all, the purification to your conscience and to mine comes from the bleeding sacrifice. See Him slain before our eyes. Let us sing with Watts—

*“My soul looks back to see  
The burdens You did bear  
When hanging on the cursed Tree,  
And hopes her guilt was there.”*

When the heifer was slain, Eleazar dipped his finger in the blood as it flowed gurgling forth. He dipped his finger in the warm blood and sprinkled it seven times before the door of the Tabernacle. Seven is the number of perfection—to show that there was a perfect offering made by the sprinkling of the blood. Even so, Jesus has perfectly presented His bloody sacrifice.

Now mark, all this does not purify. I am not yet come to that point. Atonement precedes purification—Christ must die and offer Himself a victim, or else He cannot be the Purifier. All this is necessary, but the vital part of the purification comes presently. They then took the body of the slain heifer, which was an unclean thing and made everybody unclean who touched it, and laid it upon a pile prepared for its burning. They consumed it utterly—its skin, its flesh, its blood, even to its dung—not a single thing must be left. This sets forth the pangs of the Savior, His great and terrible agony upon the Cross. His real death, His real forsaking by

God. It sets forth how God accounted Him unclean, how our Master was compelled to say, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

The heifer does not burn on the altar, it never smoked within the holy place as did the bullock which was God’s offering. This was a foul and guilty thing. The man who killed it became foul. He that gathered the ashes was unclean, and even the priest himself had to wash his garments. This sets forth how Christ was numbered with the transgressors, how the iniquity of His people was laid upon Him, and how the Lord, “made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” You will say, “A strange thing that those who touched the sacrifice should be made unclean.” Yes, but types, like other emblems do not run upon all fours.

Therefore you must look at it in the light intended—who was it that put Christ to death? Were they not unclean? Were not the Roman soldiers unclean? That ribald mob who shouted, “Crucify Him, crucify Him”—those eyes that gloated themselves with the agonies of His tortured body? And are not you and I, who helped to put Him to death—are not we ourselves unclean? No, I go farther. If I today gather the ashes and bring them before you—if I seek today to be as the man who sprinkled that purifying water, am I not unclean? Do I not feel that even when I am speaking best of my Master, I am sinning still, for I cannot speak of Him as I would?

And, my Brothers and Sisters, what makes you feel so unclean as contact with Christ? Is it not true that the very same Christ who takes your sins away, first makes you feel your sins? “They shall look on Him whom they have pierced and they shall weep and mourn for their sins.” The same Savior who takes tears away when we look to Him by faith, first brings those tears to our eyes when we look and see Him die. It was right, therefore, that He should first make those unclean who touched Him and then afterwards should make them clean through another touch of His purifying power.

When the whole was fully burnt, or while burning, we find the priest threw in cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet. What was this? According to Maimonides, the cedar wood was taken in logs and bound round with hyssop and then afterwards the whole enveloped in scarlet. So what was seen by the people was the scarlet which was at once the emblem of sin and its punishment—“Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Everything you see still continues of the red color, to set forth atonement for sin.

Inside this scarlet there is the hyssop of faith, which gives efficacy to the offering in each individual. And within this is the cedar wood that sent forth a sweet and fragrant smell, a perfect righteousness, giving acceptance to the whole. One delights to think of this—in connection with Christ—that, as there is a daily witness of our defilement, so there is a daily imputation of His perfect righteousness to us. So that we stand every day accepted in the Beloved by a daily imputation, by which not only is daily sin covered, but daily righteousness given to us. We are, therefore, every day as much accepted as we shall be in that last great day when He shall receive us to His glory everlasting.

The essence of the matter lies in the last act, with the remains of the red cow. The cinders of the wood, the ashes of the bones and dung and flesh of the heifer, were all gathered together and carried away and laid by in a clean place. According to the Jews there was not another heifer killed for this purpose for a thousand years. They say, but then we have no reason to believe them, that there have never been but nine red heifers offered at all. One in the days of Moses, the next in Ezra’s time, and the other seven afterwards, and that when Messiah comes He is to offer the tenth, by which they let out the secret that they do look upon the Messiah as coming in His own time to complete the type.

Our own belief is that a red heifer was always found when ashes were wanted, and as there were hundreds and thousands of persons defiling themselves, the place where the ashes were kept was much frequented and much of the purifying matter required. The ashes were to be put in a vessel with running water and the water was sprinkled over the unclean person who touched a body or a bone. By this process the ashes would require to be renewed much oftener than once in a thousand years, in order that everyone might have his portion. Does not this storing up suggest that there is a store of merit in Christ Jesus? There was not only enough to make us free from sin by justification, but there is a store of merit laid up that daily defilement may be removed as often as it comes—

*“Here’s pardon for transgressions past,  
It matters not how black their cast;  
And, O my soul, with wonder view,  
For sins to come here’s pardon too.”*

From all the sins I shall ever commit there is a purification laid by to cleanse me. The seven times sprinkled blood has put these sins away before the Judgment Seat of God and the ashes which are laid by shall put my sin away from my conscience, purging it from dead works.

The ashes were to be put with running water. Running water is ever the sweet picture of the Holy Spirit—“He leads me beside still waters.” The Holy Spirit must take of the things of Christ and reveal them unto us. Purification is made in Heaven by the finger of Christ—seven times He sprinkled His own blood—but on earth, in our conscience, it is made by the Holy Spirit. The Holly Spirit must make Christ precious and efficacious to us. What is Christ on the Cross? What is Christ in the grave? Nothing to any man till the Holy Spirit makes Him Christ in the heart. You will hear many complain that there is no beauty in Christ that they should desire Him—it is to them dull work to hear of Jesus. Ah, Beloved and well it may be—but when the running water comes, when the Spirit of God gives quickening and cleansing to the heart and makes us love things Divine, then there is nothing so precious, so inexpressibly desirable as the ashes of a slaughtered Savior.

Observe that it was applied by hyssop. The hyssop was dipped in water, and then the unclean was sprinkled. Hyssop is always a type of faith. “Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.” Our faith, like a little sprig of hyssop, is dipped into the blood, or dipped into this cleansing water which flowed from the side of Jesus, and so the remedy is applied. Brothers and

Sisters, believe in Jesus more fully than you have done and you will feel the power of His propitiation. He is God. He became Man. He suffered— those sufferings are able to take away sin. You need have no guilt on your conscience, but be clean, rejoicing in Him and accepted in the Beloved. May the Lord give us to know more fully the mysteries of this red heifer and the joy of pardoned sin.

I will close by remarking that if there is any Believer here who has fallen into sin, if there is one who has lost the Presence of the Lord—if you have grown cold and dead, if you are conscious of having backslidden, if you have begun to doubt whether you are a child of God at all—here is in Christ just what you want. Ah, but you say, you have fallen so often, sinned so constantly. Yes, but here are ashes for every day, cleansing for every hour, for every moment. Look upon your Lord and Savior. God is intending to forgive you not once only, but to cleanse you every day. He has taught you to forgive your brother not seven times, but seventy times seven—and do you think He will not do what He tells you to do? Ah, He will forgive you a countless number of times, yes, every day.

If you will seek daily cleansing in Christ, you shall have communion with Him. You shall stand in His presence and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This is no privilege reserved for the few, for all of us have—every child of God has—an interest in this. Let us come, therefore, boldly and pray the Master now to apply again this purification of Christ, that we may again live near to God and delight ourselves in His society.

And as for you that have never believed in Jesus, let me remind you that this is not for you. You need to be washed for the first time in the blood. O Soul! What a loathsome being you are out of Christ! Why, you are all over black from head to foot and black within as well as without. What you need first is washing in the blood. You shall have the washing of water, of which we speak, another day. The blood of Jesus can cleanse you from all sin. Trust to Him and He shall save you. Trust Him now. Come now. May the Spirit help you to come that you may be saved, both now and forever. Amen.

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TWO WILDERNESS INCIDENTS  
NO. 3214

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1910.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JULY 30, 1863.

**“And when king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south, heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies; then he fought against Israel, and took some of them prisoners. And Israel vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities. And the LORD hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities: and He called the name of the place Hormah. And they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom; and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spoke against God, and against Moses, Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, neither is there any water and our soul loathes this light bread. And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many people of Israel died.” Numbers 21:1-6.**

OUR text is a long one, but we must have it all in order to get the sense of the passage, so as to contrast the two wilderness incidents which are here mentioned and to learn how we may use them to our own spiritual profit.

I. So, in the first place, LET US CONTRAST THESE TWO WILDERNESS INCIDENTS.  
First of all, let us examine the details of the first incident. We learn, from this part of the narrative, that the children of Israel were in real danger. They were attacked by a ferocious foe who, being probably aware that he was doomed to destruction, determined to anticipate the contest by fighting against the Israelites while they were unprepared, and so injuring them as much as he could. Arad appears to have been a king of some considerable power and his skill in warfare is proved by the fact that he was at least partially successful against the Israelites, for he, “took some of them prisoners.” So that the people were in real danger. And have you not noticed, dear Friends, that God’s people often behave best when they are in their worst case? Usually, when they are in imminent peril, they cry to their God to deliver them, and so they soon obtain relief—but when they make trouble for themselves by a willful fretfulness of spirit—then it is that they lose their confidence in God and, instead of playing the man, they play the fool!  
You must have noticed how often accidents happen to people when they are engaged in play rather than when they are at work. I always warn our friends to be especially careful when they are leaving for a holiday, for I have observed how frequently they come back with signs of having suffered injuries of one kind or another, though they have been perfectly well while occupied with their usual avocations. It is very much the same in spiritual things. While we are hard at work for the Lord, watching against temptation, striving against sin, or bravely enduring trial, we behave ourselves well. But full often when we are engaged in what ought to be mere child’s play, getting rid of self-inverted and unreasonable fears, we stumble and fall and bring disgrace upon ourselves and upon our Christian profession. I think that if a Christian is to grow to the full stature of a man in Christ, he must be subjected to the strong winds of trial and temptation. The dross must be separated from the gold by the fierce heat of the furnace. I have heard such a remark as this many a time, “I never knew what a Christian, So-and-So was until he lost his property, or his wife, or his children, or until he was stretched upon the bed of sickness and death.” There is something in the keen wintry air that braces us and strengthens us for work—but the soft summer zephyrs make us feel faint and languid and unfit for vigorous exertion. So, in a spiritual sense, the summer zephyr of ease often weakens us, while the sharp, stern trials of our seasons of adversity make us strong to endure in the time of testing—  
*“Often the clouds of deepest woe  
So sweet a message bear.  
Dark though they seem, ‘twere hard to find A frown of anger there.  
It needs our hearts be weaned from earth, It needs that we be driven,  
By loss of every earthly stay,  
To seek our joys in Heaven.”*  
It was, therefore, for good rather than for evil that the Israelites were allowed by the Lord to be placed in circumstances of real danger. Notice what they did—they resorted to their God by simple faith. They did not depend upon their own prowess in war. God had enabled them to rout the Amalekites and to defeat many other adversaries. But when this new foe appeared, they did not rely upon their own swords, or spears, or bows—they went at once to the Lord and spread their case before Him. In humble, earnest prayer, they sought His aid and then they registered their solemn vow that if God would give them the victory over these Canaanites, they would execute His judgments upon them and utterly destroy their cities. This is still the right way for the Believer to go to God in times of real peril and trial! And this is the way in which he does go when the Spirit of God guides him. He comes to God, no longer resting in any carnal confidence, or depending upon his own wit or strength, but realizing that, “blessed is the man that trusts in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.” Like Hezekiah, when he spread Sennacherib’s letter before the Lord, the Believer pleads with God for His name’s sake, for His Son’s sake, for His promise’s sake, to deliver him out of all his troubles. And it may be that he is moved to add a solemn vow unto the Lord, for although vows are never to be made wantonly or wickedly, there are times when a vow may be incumbent upon us. Many an important step which I have taken, and which God has blessed, has been taken because of a vow that I have made to Him when my soul was in trouble. And I sometimes think that trouble is, in my own case, always a preparation for entering upon some new path of duty, or beginning some new enterprise for my dear Lord and Master. Should it not be so with all of us who are, indeed, children of God by faith in Jesus Christ? Let us, each one, say, “Lord, if You will deliver me out of this trial, then, whatever service I may have rendered to You in the past, I will add something more to it in the future. I will seek to add a few more acres to the fields which I have, up to now, attempted to plow, sow and reap for You. Or, if I cannot increase my sphere of service, I will try to serve You better in it than I have ever done before.” You are not to make such vows as these as though they were a sort of bribe to the Most High, for you know that your best resolutions are only empty words unless His Grace enables you to follow them with corresponding deeds. Still, if you do it in humble dependence upon Him and in sincere gratitude for anticipated favors which your faith causes to be present to you, you may make such vows and expect God’s blessing upon them!  
So you see, dear Friends, that the Israelites were in real peril, but they took their case to the Lord and, therefore, He gave them speedy and complete deliverance! “The Lord hearkened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites.” They seem to have marched straight out to meet their foes and to have routed them at once. So, Beloved, put your case in the hands of God and your difficulties will soon be over. Or if the trial is not removed, you will receive Grace and strength to bear it. The word, “impossibility,” seems to block your road, but there are no impossibilities with God! With Him all things are possible. A man left to himself would break his back under the crushing burden that rests upon him, but that would not have happened to him if he had cast his burden upon the Lord. Many have lost their reason because they tried to carry their cares, themselves, instead of casting all their care upon Him who could easily have carried them. Brother, Sister, is it night with you? Then wait God’s time to make the sun to rise again upon you. Is it ebb-tide with you? Wait a little while and God will again bring the silver streams up from the sea till the mud and filth are covered by the rising waters. What is there that He cannot do? If there is anything that you can do, work as if everything depended upon you—and then trust in God remembering that everything really depends upon Him!  
The action of the Israelites, in appealing to the Lord, not only brought them prompt deliverance, but it also advanced them in the path of duty. They were brought out of Egypt on purpose to smite and exterminate these Canaanites—a race upon which God’s long-suffering could no longer be exercised—and the Israelites, as the Lord’s executioners, “utterly destroyed them and their cities.” Ah, my dear Friends, our troubles will help us to advance in the path of duty if we will but take those troubles to God! There is much to be learned in the furnace of affliction. There are some of God’s writings that can only be read by light from a furnace. God has been pleased to write some of His promises in sympathetic ink which can only become visible as it is held close to the fire! You can see the stars in the daytime if you go to the bottom of a deep well—and you can see many a starry promise shining brightly when you are at the bottom of the well of trouble! The Lord sends trials to bring us to Himself, as Joseph sent the rumbling wagons to bring Jacob and all that he had to him in Egypt. And if we only know how to use them aright, we shall find that—  
*“Trials make the promise sweet,  
Trials give new life to prayer!  
Trials bring us to God’s feet,  
Lay us low, and keep us there.”*  
This, then, is the first of the two wilderness incidents. Now, turning to the second, I want you to note that there was no real cause for distress whatever. “The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way,” but there was nothing that need have discouraged them if they had looked upon the way with the eye of faith. It is true that God had led them a long way roundabout, but then that was because of their unbelief. And it is also true that God had “led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.” It is true that the sun was hot, but then the cloudy pillar always shielded them in the daytime. It is true that they had to wander in the wilderness, but then God gave them bread from Heaven to eat and water out of the Rock to quench their thirst. It is true that they had no means of buying new clothes and new shoes, but then Moses was able to say to the whole nation before he left them, “Your raiment waxed not old upon you, neither did your feet swell, these forty years.” It is true that many trials befell them in the wilderness, mostly through their own sin, yet were they the most highly-favored people upon the face of the earth! As Balaam “saw Israel abiding in his tents, he took up his parable and said, How goodly are your tents, O Jacob, and your tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are, they spread forth, as gardens by the river’s side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord has planted and as cedar trees beside the waters.” Yet, with all these privileges, “the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.” It is true, dear Friends, that there are many troubles in the world, but probably the worst are those that we make for ourselves—or that we only imagine when there really are none! Last week I saw my dear old grandfather who is about 87 years of age, and I said to him, “I suppose, Grandfather, you have had many troubles in your long life.” And he replied “Well, I have had none too many, except those that I have made for myself.” And I expect that is true of the most of us! We have a little (or big) trouble factory somewhere in our home, or we carry it about with us wherever we go, and the suits we make there last as long as a suit in Chancery—they seem as if they would never wear out! And those home-made suits fit us very badly and are most uncomfortable. But if we would only leave ourselves in God’s hands, we would be much more free from anxiety and trouble—  
*“Eternal God, we look to You,  
To You for help we fly.  
Your eyes, alone, our needs can see,  
Your hands, alone, supply.”*  
When the Israelites became discouraged because of the way, did they take their trouble to God as they had done with the former one? Oh, no! It would have been a far happier thing for them if they had done so, but they, “spoke against God, and against Moses,” saying, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, neither is there any water, and our soul loathes this light bread.” Often, when professors of religion fancy they are in trouble, they begin to rail at God—and at what they imagine to be the second causes of their troubles, as the Israelites “spoke against God, and against Moses.” They say, “If my father had been a more prudent man,” or, “if So-and-So had given me wiser advice,” or, “if my husband were not such a spendthrift, I would not have been in such trouble.” These Israelites sinned doubly in speaking against God and against Moses, for the Lord had delivered them with a high hand and with a stretched-out arm. And Moses, also, had done them real service. He had taken the iron yoke from their necks and led them out of the house of bondage. Yet they talked as if he had been their enemy, or had deceived them! They said, “We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic. But now our soul is dried away. There is nothing at all, but this manna before our eyes.” Thus do men often murmur against their best friends and frequently the murmuring against man is only a covert way of murmuring against God! Some grumble at the minister when they really mean that they do not like the Gospel that he preaches! Talking against Moses, it was not surprising that the Israelites also “spoke against God.”  
Further, these people were in such a sad state that they ignored the mercies they were then enjoying. They said, “There is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loathes this light bread.” So there was bread, after all! That bread of which the Psalmist afterwards wrote, “Man did eat angels’ food”—the best possible food for them in the wilderness! And there was water continually gushing out from the Rock that followed them. We, too,

eet with many who can talk glibly enough of their miseries, but who are silent concerning their mercies! I daresay some of you know old Mrs. Complaint. If you ever go to see her, the moment you sit down she beams to tell you how she has been tormented all the week with rheumatism and then she says troubles never come alone, for that son of hers gives her constant anxiety and her neighbors are continually slandering her—and so on, and so on! You give her some relief and others give her relief, but she is never satisfied. When I have visited such a person, I have usually thought it well to say to her, “Well, Sister, you have told me about your troubles, now let us hear about your mercies! Surely you have some mercies for which you desire to praise the Lord.” If you will talk thus to those who complain to you, it may be that after a little while, the conversation will take a more profitable turn. There are other grumblers beside that miserable old woman. There are other friends, in business, who try to persuade us that they are always losing money, yet they appear to live in considerable comfort—and we would like to have for the Lord’s work some of the money that they spend upon luxuries of various kinds. So, when they complain of the hard times, and the keen competition in business, and the losses they are continually making, we are not greatly impressed by the sad story with which we are now fairly familiar! Then there are our farming friends who are far too often found in the ranks of the grumblers. If they do not actually speak against God, they frequently complain of the weather which He sends! It is either too wet or too dry, too hot or too cold! When crops are plentiful, prices are low—there is generally something or other which gives them an excuse for complaining, and so they sin against the Most High as the Israelites did in the wilderness!  
What did those people get as the result of their murmuring? Did the way become any shorter because their soul was much discouraged? Did the sharp stones become any smoother? Did the thorns and thistles of the wilderness become changed into vines and olive trees? Did their adversaries all sheathe their swords and flee from them in terror? No, the way was just as long as ever, the stones just as sharp, the brambles just as plentiful, their enemies just as fierce and each day was just as wearying as all those that had gone before! And now, in addition to all their previous troubles, “the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, and many people of Israel died.” They complained when they had no reason for complaining—but now they had good ground for complaint or something to make them truly sorrowful! Their discontent, like a fire which never has sufficient fuel, was as a burning fever within them, so now fiery serpents set their veins aflame with their deadly poison! They were, indeed, rightly punished. They would not be content with the mercies which the Lord showered so abundantly upon them, so they were made to smart for their ingratitude! And our experience will be similar to theirs if we act as they did. We shall not be delivered from our troubles as the result of our complaining, but the Lord will chastise us with His rod of correction until He brings us humbly to confess our sins and to seek, for the future, to walk in His ways.  
So you see, dear Friends, the contrast between these two wilderness incidents. In the first case, real trouble carried to God in prayer was turned into an advantage. And in the second case, foolish and wicked discontent, for which there was no reason, was allowed to spend itself in murmuring against the Most High—and so brought down upon the people fiery serpents which bit them until many of them died.  
II. Now, secondly, LET US LEARN HOW WE MAY USE THESE TWO INCIDENTS TO OUR OWN SPIRITUAL PROFIT.  
Fellow Believer in Christ, you may do one or other of these two things—you may either cast your burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain you—or you may be like the bullock that is unaccustomed to the yoke and that kicks against the sharp goad and so angers his master and injures himself! Remember that true faith is a holy thing, but murmuring is sin. Do not think that it is a light thing to murmur against God, or to complain of His Providential dealings with you. No, it is really setting up your fallible judgment or your self-will against the Infinite Wisdom of the Most High! It is high treason against the King of kings to seek to— *“Snatch from His hands the balance and the rod, Rejudge His judgments, be the god of God.”*Are you, poor feeble mortal, able to drive the chariot of the sun? Can you control the whirlwind and put a bit into the mouth of the storm when it is raging in all its fury? You know that it is God, alone, who can say to the mighty ocean, “To here shall you come, but no further: and here shall your proud waves be stayed.” How dare you, then, set up your feebleness against His Omnipotence, and your ignorance against His Omniscience, and your folly against His consummate Wisdom? Bow down in the dust before Him lest your murmuring should bring upon you His righteous wrath and He should send upon you, if not fiery serpents, some other punishment that shall make you wring your hands in agony for many a day to come!  
Further, to trust in the Lord is both helpful and pleasant. It is said that if a man would lie quite still in the water, he would float—that it is his kicking and struggling that causes him to drown. Whether it is literally so, I cannot tell, but I know that it is most delightful and most blessed— *“To lie passive in God’s hands  
And know no will but His.”*  
It is the kicking and struggling against the will of God that bring us trouble and increased suffering! God would use the knife very gently upon us, but we dash ourselves against the sharp instrument and then there is a great gash which need never have been made if it had not been for our own folly! Who are the happiest men in the whole world? Are they not those who tell the Lord all their trouble, and cast all their cares upon Him, knowing that He cares for them? And who are the most miserable people in the world? Are they not those who are constantly complaining of their miseries and who never seem to realize how many mercies they have received? If you need to make yourself miserable, you will not have much difficulty in doing so! He who is looking for sorrow will probably not have to look far before he finds it, but it is a great pity that he is not rather looking for sings and tokens of God’s Providential care and of His forgiving mercy! Happy is he who can sing with Faber—  
*“I bow to Your will, O God,  
And all Your ways adore.  
And every day I live I’ll seek  
To please You more and more!  
I have no cares, O blessed Lord,  
For all my cares are Thine—  
I live in triumph, too, for You  
Have made Your triumphs mine.”*  
Again, dear Friends, I think you can easily make a wise choice if I remind you that to trust in the Lord honors Him. For a child of God to repose in Him in full confidence must be pleasing in His sight. But for any child of His to be fretting, worrying, complaining, questioning must be dishonoring to Him. How would you feel if it were the case of one of your own children? If you heard him complaining that he did not know whether he would have any breakfast tomorrow morning, or where he would get any new clothes when his were worn out, you would say, “Trust me, my Child, and I will provide for you.” But when your child says, “I know that my father will provide for me—no care about that matter ever crosses my mind,” he is honoring you by his confidence! And it is the Christian who trusts God most who honors Him most.  
Remember, also, that it is to your own honor to trust in the Lord. This was the Master’s own words to His disciples, “Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or, What shall we drink, or, How shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek). For your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. But seek you first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” Any worldling can fret and fume about food, drink and clothing—but will you, a child of God, thus misbehave yourself? Why should you be groveling in the dust with the children of this world, when you should be soaring upward like the eagle, far above the mists and clouds of earth? Rise, Believer, to the dignity of your new-born nature, and cast all your care upon your God, who cares for you!  
Besides that, believing in Jesus will be likely to make you more useful. We are hardly likely to bring sinners to Christ if we carry about with us a long and care-worn countenance! That will not be the way to recommend the Gospel to others. There are some professors who seem to think that the more wretched they can be, the more communion will they have with Christ, but they are greatly mistaken if they do! They appear to aim at being altogether unbearable in society and to be utterly miserable in retirement. If they imagine that in leading such a life as that, they are reflecting credit upon their Master, nothing could be more erroneous! You would not like your servant—I will go further than that and say—you would not like your horse or dog to be so lean that you could count his bones! It would be no credit to you to have such a servant, or horse, or dog—people who saw them would think they must have a sorry kind of master! The God of Love no more wishes to have miserable servants and followers than we do! Many of His servants have good reasons for being sad, but no true servant of God who is in his right senses, thinks it is his duty to make himself sad! Paul was Inspired when he wrote to the Philippians, “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice.” And I believe it is the cheerful Christian, and especially the Christian who can be happy in sickness, patient under adversity and joyous even in the hour of death who will win fresh adherents for the Lord Jesus Christ!  
For all these reasons, then, I would have you follow the example of the children of Israel in the first of the two wilderness incidents we have been considering—but not in the second.  
But, Beloved, suppose and alas, we need not put it as a supposition, for it is only too true—some of us have been murmuring and God has sent a fiery serpent to bite us? We were discontented because of some fancied trouble and now we have a real trouble—what then? You remember how the narrative continues. “Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against you; pray unto the Lord, that He take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make you a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole, and it shall come to pass, that everyone that is bitten, when he looks upon it, shall live.” So, when they sincerely repented of their sin in murmuring against the Lord and prayed to him through Moses as their representative and mediator, He revealed the remedy by which they could be healed. You remember when you first looked to Him of whom that bronze serpent was a type, and how you were immediately healed? So you must again look unto Him and He will cure the suffering which you have brought upon yourself by your murmuring! God loves you too well to let you perish despite your ingratitude and unbelief! He abides faithful and before our eyes He holds up, once again, His well-beloved and only-begotten Son, and bids you look unto Him even as you did at the first! Happy is the Christian who is always “looking unto Jesus.” Believer, if you have lost your evidences. If through your murmuring against God you have been so sorely chastened that you cry out in agony! And if you are now walking in darkness and can see no light, remember that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever! So still look to Him! Say to Him, “Just as I am, as once I came to You, O Jesus, my Lord and Savior, I come to You again! Though stained once more with my own wanton wickedness in murmuring against You when Your many mercies ought to have comforted me and made me rejoice, I still come to You and I believe that You can pardon, and relieve, and succor, and save, and sanctify me, now, even as You did at the first.”—  
*“Just as you are, without one trace  
Of love, or joy, or inward Grace,  
Or meetness for the heavenly place,  
O guilty Sinner, come!  
‘The Spirit and the Bride say, Come.’  
Rejoicing saints re-echo, Come!  
Who faints, who thirsts, who will, may come! Your Savior bids you come.”*  
If any of you have never come to Jesus, come now! If you have never looked to Him who hung upon the Cross, sin-bitten Sinner, look to Him, now, and you shall be saved at once! If you have looked to Him, before, look again, now, and never take your eyes off Him until they are closed in death! And even then, the eyes of your soul shall still continue looking unto Jesus—only they shall look upon Jesus sitting upon the Throne of God as now, by faith, you look upon Him hanging on the Cross!  
May the Lord add His blessing, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **NUMBERS 21:1-9; JOHN 3:1-15.**

Numbers 21:1-4. And when king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south, heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies; then he fought against Israel, and took some of them prisoners. And Israel vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities. And the LORD hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities: and He called the name of the place Hormah. And they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. They were not allowed to go through the land of Edom. They had, therefore, to turn around and go right away from the land where they one day hoped to dwell. And the road was a particularly trying one, over hot and burning sand, “and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.” Sometimes God’s own people, when they find that they are not so far advanced in the Divine Life as they thought they were, when they find old sins reviving and when troubles multiply upon them, get “discouraged because of the way.” If this is our experience, let us not fall into the sin into which these Israelites fell, but even in our discouragement let us turn to our God.

5. And the people spoke against God, and against Moses, Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loathes this light bread. One gets tired, in reading of the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness, of this parrot cry, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt?” For nearly 40 years, this was their cry whenever they met with any sort of difficulty. How weary God must have been of their cry—and of them, too! And now it was raised because they had been fed with “angels’ food” which they called “light bread.” It was easy of digestion, healthful and the very best kind of food for them in the wilderness—but they wanted something more substantial, something that had a coarser flavor about it, more of earth and less of Heaven! There is no satisfying an unregenerate heart. If we had all the blessings of this life, we would still be vying for more.

6. And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against you; pray unto the LORD, that He take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. Like a true mediator, he was always ready—even when they had most insulted him and grieved his meek and quiet spirit—still to bow the knee and intercede with the Lord on their behalf. The people implored him to ask that the serpents might be taken away from them, but apparently they still continued to trouble them. However, if God does not answer prayer in one way, He does in another. The fervent prayer of a righteous man may not prevail in the particular direction in which it is offered, but it “avails much” in some direction or other! Just as when the mists ascend, they may not fall upon the very spot from which they rose, but they fall somewhere. And true prayer is never lost—it comes back in blessing, if not according to our mind, yet according to Another mind that is kinder and wiser than our own!

8, 9. And the LORD said unto Moses, Make you a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that everyone that is bitten, when he looks upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived. [See Sermons #285, Volume 5—MAN’S

RUIN AND GOD’S REMEDY and #1500, Volume 25—NUMBER 1500—OR, “LIFTING UP THE BRONZE SERPENT”—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

John 3:1-3. There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that You do, except God is with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a man is born-again, he

cannot see the Kingdom of God. [See Sermon #130, Volume 3—REGENERATION— Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] There must

be a new birth because a new nature is absolutely necessary for the discernment of spiritual things. The natural man cannot comprehend spiritual things—they must be spiritually discerned. The new birth is therefore necessary that we may have a Spirit within us which can see or understand the Kingdom of God. But until a man is born-again, “he cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

4, 5. Nicodemus said unto Him, how can a man be born when he is old, can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. We understand the passage to mean, “Water, that is, the Spirit,” but it may refer to the purifying influence of the Word as symbolized by water. I do not think that Baptism is referred to here at all.

6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. Parents may be the most devout people who ever lived, but that which is born of them is only flesh.  
6. And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. It is only then, as we are born of the Spirit of God that there is any spiritual life in us whatever.  
7, 8. Marvel not that I said unto you, You must be born-again. The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell from where it comes and where it goes: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.

[See Sermon #1356, Volume 23—THE HEAVENLY WIND—Read/download the entire sermon, free of

charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] He undergoes a mysterious change. He becomes a new man and he enters into a new life which others cannot comprehend. Though they hear the sound of it, they cannot tell from where this man’s new life comes, or where it goes. He has become a spiritual person, not comprehended of natural men.

9-10. Nicodemus answered and said unto Him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Are you a master of Israel, and know not these things? “So learned in the Law of God, are you ignorant of the Spirit of God? Have you read the Law so many times and yet not found out that natural births and outward washings are of no use in spiritual things?”

11, 12. Verily, verily I say unto you, We speak what We know, and testify what We have seen; and you receive not Our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things? “If, at the very entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven, you say, ‘How can these things be?’ what will you say if I take you into the central metropolis of the Truth of God and introduce you to the great King, Himself?”

13-15. And no man has ascended up to Heaven, but He that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man which is in Heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal

life. [See Sermon #153, Volume 3—THE MYSTERIES OF THE BRONZE SERPENT—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]  
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A SONG AT THE WELLHEAD

NO. 776

**DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 10, 1867, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And from there they went to Beer, which is the well where the Lord said to Moses, ‘Gather the people together, and I will give them water.’ Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well! All of you sing to it—The princes dug the well, the nobles of the people dug it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves.” Numbers 21:16-18.**

WE have remarked in our reading that the children of Israel were continually changing their places and that there was usually a great difference between one station and the next. So, also, we are constantly varying in our experience, and the variations are sometimes exceedingly remarkable. You observe, in the neighborhood of the text, that the people pitched their tents at one time by the brooks of Arnon. There appears to have been an exceedingly abundance of water where they then were, but nevertheless they removed into the wilderness where there was not a single drop to quench their thirst.

So is it with us. At one time we are abounding in every good thing, rejoicing “with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” And at another time we discover how great our weakness is—faith is at a very low ebb—and joy seems as though the frost of doubt had nipped its root. But, great as the changes of our experience certainly are, our necessities never change. Whether they found water or not, the people always needed water. The great camp must always have a supply, or perish for the lack of it. So, at all hours, and in all places, Believers need the Divine Grace which only their Lord can give them. They carry no stores with them—they are daily dependent upon their God. “All my springs are in You,” said David, and every heir of Heaven must experimentally learn this Truth of God.

Now there is one thing certain, that although our experiences vary and our necessities remain the same, yet there is something that does not change, namely, the supply which God has provided for our needs. Our experience may be high or low, bright or dark, but JEHOVAH-JIREH is still the name of our God. In the mountain of the Lord it shall be seen, and in the valley, too, that the Lord will provide. As our day, so shall our strength be. If great our needs, great shall be our supplies!

Israel found it so, for when they came to this particular place where there was no natural water, they soon discovered a supernatural supply. They arrived at a spot that was all arid sand, but that was the very place of which God had spoken, “Gather the people together, and I will give them water.” Believer, your supplies shall never vary, and your greatest necessities shall only illustrate the fullness of the Lord your God! Be not afraid, but go forward. Though it is dark and dreary in the prospect, yet if God bids you advance, tarry not, for He has surely taken care to provide your necessities when they arise.

The particular text before us has four things in it which I think may be instructive to us. These people needed supplies just as we need Grace. There was, first, a promise concerning the supply. Secondly, there was a song. That song viewed in another light, was, in the third place, a prayer. And when this promise, song, and prayer were attended by the effort, then the blessing came.

I. To begin, then, these people required water as we greatly need Divine Grace and there was A PROMISE GIVEN CONCERNING THE SUPPLY. “The Lord said to Moses, ‘Gather the people together, and I will give them water.’ ” Beloved, we have a promise. A promise? No, a thousand promises! God’s people were never in any plight whatever but what there was a promise to meet that condition. There is not a single lock of which God has not the key. You shall never be placed in a difficulty without some provision being made for that difficulty which God foresaw, and for which His heavenly wisdom had devised a way of escape.

Now, the supply promised here was a Divine supply: “I will give them water.” Who else could satisfy those flocks and herds? By what mechanism or by what human toil could all those multitudes of people have received enough to drink? “I will give them water.” God can do it and He will. Beloved, the supply of Grace that you are to receive in your time of need is a Divine supply! You are not to look to man for Grace. God forbid that we should ever fall into the superstitions of some idiots in these modern days who suppose that God has given His Grace only to bishops and to priests—the most graceless of all men if they profess to have any grace to give away—for if they had true Grace at all they would not act after that fashion.

If you want Divine Grace, Beloved, you must go to God for it. You shall get it there, and nowhere else. As for even the ablest of God’s sent ministers—they are but broken cisterns if we trust in them. They shall have Grace enough to get to Heaven themselves, but they will be to themselves great wonders when they arrive there. Wise virgins always say to the foolish ones who apply to them for oil, “Not so, lest there is not enough for us and you: but go you rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.”

There is a Divine supply for you, Christian! Therefore, knowing the attributes of God, you will understand that however much you may require there will be an all-sufficient supply! However long you may require it, there will be an everlasting supply! At whatever hours you may want it, there will be an available supply. It is not possible for your needs to outlast that which will be treasured up for you. “I will give them water.” And, you thirsty ones, go and drink, for there is no fear of exhausting this wellhead!

As it was a Divine supply, so, also, it was a suitable one. The people were thirsty and the promise was. “I will give them water.” At another time He had given them bread. He had also given them flesh to eat. But water was what they just now required and water was what they received. We do not always get that form of Grace which we think we need. We sometimes fancy that we require comfort, when rebuke would be much more healthful for us. And it is the rebuke which we obtain, and not the comfort. God is not to be dictated to by our whims and wishes. Like a father, He understands His children better than His children understand themselves. And He gives, not according to their foolish guesses of what they need, but according to His wise apprehension of what they require. “I will give them water.”

What do you want tonight? Go and lay open your needs before the Lord. Tell Him what it is you require, if you know, and then add to your prayer, “And what I know not that I need, yet give me, for You are able to do exceeding abundantly above all that I can ask or even think—not according to my apprehension of my necessities, but according to Your perception of my needs, deal with Your servant, O Lord, and grant me that which is most suitable to my case.” “Gather the people together, and I will give them water.”

Observe, too, that the supply promised was an abundant supply. The Lord did not mock the people by sending them just enough to moisten their tongues but not to quench their thirst. We cannot be sure how many people there were, but it is probable and almost certain, that there were nearly three million of them, and yet, when God said, “I will give them water,” He did not say, “I will give some of them water. The princes shall have a supply but the poorer ones must go without.” Oh, not so! “I will give them water.”

It included every child of Israel, every babe that needed it as well as every strong man that thirsted after it. Hear this, child of God? “I will give them water.” Whatever you need, you who are the most obscure in the world, you who have the least faith, you who stand in the back of the crowd not able to push to the place where you hear that the water flows— here is provision for you! It shall be with Divine Grace as it was of old with the manna—there shall be enough for all that go out to gather it—he that gathers much shall have nothing over and he that gathers little shall have no lack. There shall be—

*“Enough for all, enough for each,  
Enough forevermore.”*  
No child of God shall be left to perish for lack of the necessary supplies— *“I will give them water.”*

I may observe, once more, that it was a Divine supply, a suitable supply and an abundant supply. And also it was a sure supply. “I will give them water.” It is not, “I may, perhaps, do it. Possibly there shall be refreshment for them.” No, “I will give them water.” Oh, the splendor of the Lord’s “shalls” and “wills!” They never fail. “Has He said, and shall He not do it? Or has He spoken and shall He not make it good?” Search the Book of the Lord and read and see if any of His words have fallen to the ground—if one of His promises has lacked its mate! You will have to say, Believer, as Joshua did, “There failed not anything of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel—all came to pass.”

We do not go forward upon the strength of “ifs,” and “buts,” and “perhapses.” We advance confidently, invigorated and inflamed as to our courage, by “wills” and “shalls.” God must un-deify Himself before He can break His promises. He would lose His Character, and that can never be! His honor is the bright jewel of His crown and He will keep His promise to all His people. “I will give them water.”

I thought, as I was coming up to this house once again to have the unspeakable pleasure of addressing you, “What am I that there should be any supply for the people when they are gathered together?” And this text seemed to come to me—you “gather the people together, and I will give them water.” It is my business to be here, occupying my place, and it is your business to be gathered here at the time set apart for prayer, “and I will give them water.” The lad may have only his barley loaves and a few small fishes, but the Master will multiply them! There may seem to be little enough in our hand, only perhaps a cruse of water, not enough for one—but He who formed the sea and holds it in the hollow of His hands can give enough to all the thirsty ones!

You are now gathered together, Beloved, and I pray the Master to be as good as His promise, “Gather the people together, and I will give them water.” Here is the promise! A blessed thing to work upon, this. We shall build well enough upon so good a foundation!

II. And now, secondly, observe THE SONG. These people had not been singing for years. Ever since the day when they had sung at the Red Sea, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously,” the minstrelsy of Israel had been hushed—save and except when they danced before the calf of gold. But for their God they had had little or no music. But now they come together to the digging of the well, and the children of Israel sang this song, “Spring up, O well! All of you sing to it.”

Observe, then, that this song may be looked upon, in the first place, as the voice of cheerfulness. There was no water but they were still in good spirits. Supplies were short but their courage was still great. It is very easy to be happy and cheerful in heart when you have all that heart can wish. It is not very difficult for us to maintain our spirits when all things go just as we would have them go. But it is rather difficult to begin to sing when the mouth is dry and the lips are parched, and the tongue almost refuses to do its duty! Cheerfulness in need, cheerfulness upon the bed of pain, cheerfulness under slander—singing like the nightingale, in the night, praising God when the thorn is at the breast—this is a high Christian attainment which we should seek after and not be content without.

I like, too, the look of these children of Israel, singing to the Lord before the water came, praising Him while they were yet thirsty! They were living, for a little while, upon the recollections of the past. They were believing that He who smote the rock and the waters gushed out, and who gave them bread from Heaven would surely supply their needs. Let us pitch a tune and join with them, however low our estate may be!—

*“Begone, unbelief, my Savior is near,  
And for my relief will surely appear!  
By prayer let me wrestle, and He will perform. With Christ in the vessel, I smile at the storm.”*

Note again that this song was the voice not so much of natural cheerfulness as of cheerfulness sustained by faith. They believed the promise, “Gather the people together, and I will give them water.” They sang the song of expectation. I think this is one of the peculiar enjoyments of faith, to be the substance of things hoped for. The joy of hope—who shall measure it? Those who are strangers to it are certainly strangers to the sweetest matter in spiritual life. With the exception of present communion with Christ, the joy of a Believer in this present state must be mainly the joy of hope. “It does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is.”

We thank God that we shall be satisfied when we wake up in the likeness of Jesus! The anticipation of Heaven makes earth become endurable! And the sorrows of time lose their weight when we think of the “far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.” Sing before the well begins to spring! Sing confidently, “Spring up, O well!” You cannot make it spring, but sing as if you could, for God is with you! Say, “Down with my sin.” You cannot cast it down, but God can, and therefore speak as one who speaks in God’s name! Say, “Begone, unbelief!” You cannot make it go, but God’s Spirit can, and therefore sing as knowing God is with you! “Spring up, O well!” Make that your song! Sing of the mercy yet to come which your faith can see, although as yet you have not received it!

This song, also, was no doubt greatly increased in its volume and more elevated in its tone when the water did begin to spring. After the elders of the people had dug for awhile, the flowing crystal began to leap into the air. They saw it run over the margin of the well—the multitude pressed around to quench their thirst, and then they sang, “Spring up, O well! Flow on, flow on, perennial fount! Flow on, you wondrous stream Divinely given! Flow on and let the praises of those who drink flow also! Sing unto it, and you that drink lift up your songs, and you that mark your neighbors as their eyes flash with delight as they receive the needed refreshment, let your song increase as you see the joy of others.”

All you who have received anything of Divine Grace, sing unto it! Bless God by singing and praising His name while you are receiving His favors. I think we would be more conscious of God’s blessing coming to us if we were more ready to praise Him. Brethren, we receive so many of God’s mercies at the backdoor—we ought to stand at the door and take them in ourselves. Presents from a great king ought not to be unacknowledged, stowed away in the dark, forgotten in unthankfulness. Let us magnify the name of the Lord! But I must not detain you longer upon this point.

There was a promise and then the children of Israel made a song out of the promise before it was accomplished. Then, as it was fulfilled to their delight and joy, they made the song yet more sweet and more loud. So let our hearts sing of the promises of God! You are very poor, yet still sing, “Your place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: your bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure.” And when the mercies come, then lift the song yet higher. “Bless the Lord who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” “Spring up, O well! All of you sing to it!”

III. But we remark in the third place, that the song was A PRAYER. “Spring up, O well,” was virtually a prayer to God that He would make the well spring up—only it was faith’s way of singing her prayer. We would remark of this prayer that it went at once to work and sought for that which was required. What was needed? Not a well, but water! Not merely digging in the sand, but the obtaining and the drinking of the water. Beloved Believer, let me remind you that it is very easy for us to forget what it is that we need and to be satisfied with something short of it.

Now what we need is not the means of Divine Grace, but the Grace of the means! The means of Grace are excellent when they bring us Grace, but the means of Grace are not the ultimata. It is not these that we seek, but Divine Grace itself. To show you what I mean—“Spring up, O well,” was the prayer—it did not ask for the well, but for the well to spring up. So tonight, or some other evening, when you are retired for your private devotions and you have opened the Bible and begun to read, do not be satisfied with merely reading through a chapter.

Some good people read through two or three chapters—stupid people, as stupid as they are good for doing such a thing! It is always better to read a little and digest it than it is to read much and then think you have done a good thing by merely reading the letter of the Word. For profit you might as well read the A B C backwards and forwards, as read a chapter of Scripture unless you meditate upon it and seek to comprehend its meaning. Words are nothing: the letter kills. The business of the Believer with his Bible open is to pray, “Here is the well: spring up, O well! Lord, give me the meaning and spirit of Your Word while it lies open before me. Apply Your Word with power to my soul—threat or promise, doctrine or precept, whatever it may be—lead me into the soul and marrow of Your Word.” The Rabbis say that whole worlds of meaning hang upon every word of Scripture, but only he will find out the meaning who waits upon God with the prayer, “Spring up, O well!”

Or, perhaps you are about to kneel down to pray. I beseech you, do not be satisfied with getting through 50 or 100 choice sentences which look as if they were devout. That prayer has not benefited you which is not the prayer of the soul. You have need to say, “Spring up, O well! Lord, give me the spirit of prayer. Help me to feel my need deeply, to perceive Your Promise clearly, to exercise faith upon that promise, and then, by wrestling importunity to hold You fast, and say, ‘I will not let You go except You bless me.’ ” It is not the form of prayer, it is the spirit of prayer that shall truly benefit your souls. In vain might you open a book and read through 10,000 prayers—the best that were ever composed—it would be no benefit to you.

“Spring up, O well!” Come, Holy Spirit, come and help my infirmities, for I know not what to pray for as I ought! You make intercession for me with groans that cannot be uttered. You need in prayer not the well so much as the springing up of the well. And it is just the same when you go to the ordinances. For instance, Baptism can be of no service to the Believer unless he devoutly perceives the meaning of it. He must know what it is to be dead with Christ, buried with Christ, risen with Christ, and before he comes to the ordinance this should be his prayer, “Spring up, O well! Lord, give me to enjoy that which the outward emblem teaches me. Give me true fellowship with Christ!”

And so at the Lord’s table—of what good is it to eat bread and drink wine? Oh, but when Jesus comes, and your soul feeds upon Him, and He makes you aware of it, like the chariots of Amminadib when the well springs up—oh then the table is better than the banquets of kings! And is it not the same when you come to the public assembly? The Prayer Meeting may be dull enough, unless the Spirit, the Comforter, is poured out upon us. We have been singing just now—how many were singing? Some were making melody with their lips, but not with their hearts. But, oh, when the hymn breaks out in richest blessings, like living waters—when you get through the shell of the hymn and get at the soul and life of it— then, blessed be God, what a wellspring we often get in sacred songs!

And further, with regard to the preaching of the Truth of God—often and often does my soul groan out to God that He would give me liberty in the ministry—that He would lead me into the essence of His Truth. O Brothers and Sisters, I sometimes feel, in preaching, like the butcher who cuts off meat for others but does not get a mouthful for himself—it is hard work, indeed! I dare say you very often sit and hear God’s Word but it has lost its savor. You cannot enjoy it—you do not seem to get into it. The babe at home in the cradle, or that ledger, or that bad debt, or something that has occurred in the family before you came here distracts you. You cannot get into the spirit of worship.

“Spring up, O well!” This is what we want. So let our prayer be like the song of the text—direct and to the point. Lord, do not put me off with the husks of ordinances and means of Grace. Give me Yourself! I had rather be a doorkeeper and really be in Your House, than sit in the seats of the Pharisees in the synagogue and yet not see my Master. Strive after vital godliness, real soul-work, the life-giving operation of the Spirit of God in your hearts, or else, Beloved, you may have the well, but you will not have any springing from it. Remember, then, it went direct to the point.

And notice, also, that this prayer was the prayer of faith, like the song. Now “without faith it is impossible to please God.” This is emphatically true with regard to prayer. He who pleads with God in unbelief really insults Him, and will get no blessing. Faith gives wings to our prayers so that they fly Heaven-high! But unbelief clogs and chains our prayers to earth. Many prayers never go beyond the ceiling of the room in which they were uttered because there was no faith mingled with them. Oh, how lacking our prayers are in this one essential element! If we had more faith what large blessings would come down to the Church!

When I listen to some prayers, I cannot help thinking, “Well, what is there left to pray for after that? Everything has been included in the petition that one could well conceive of. Now if we could but get the answer.” We ought to do so! And if we did, what a different state of affairs we should have! We need, indeed, more faith to make our poor words real genuine wrestling with God so as to prevail with Him, and come off more than conquerors. God is not slack concerning His promises. We never yet put Him to the test and found Him lacking. The history of the Church speaks through all ages with but one voice on this point—all things conspire to urge us to faith in God in connection with prayer to Him in time of need. If you want, then, some wells to spring up to supply the needs of yourself or your family, pray in faith! The rock, if needs be, shall flow with rivers of water. The driest wilderness shall send forth floods of refreshment. Have faith in God and call upon His name. “Pray without ceasing.” “Spring up, O well!”

You will please notice, further, that it was united prayer. All the people prayed, “Spring up, O well!” I dare say that was a Prayer Meeting at which everybody prayed for they were all thirsty! And therefore they all said, “Spring up, O well!” What blessed meetings those are when the souls of all present are in it! I hope we shall have some noble enquirers’ meetings in the Tabernacle during the next month and for many more afterwards. Mr. Nivens was asked by someone whether he had had any enquirers’ meetings. “No,” he said “we have not had any lately, for I do not think we have many enquiring saints among us!” “What?” said the other, “I never heard of that.”

“Oh, but,” Mr. Nivens said, “we must always have enquiring saints before we shall have enquiring sinners. ‘For this will I be enquired of by the house of Israel.’ You see, saints must enquire, and then God will do it for them. And as soon as ever the saints begin to enquire, ‘Will you not revive us again?’ then sinners begin to enquire, ‘What must we do to be saved?’ Oh, if we could have a meeting where all should be enquirers—the saints enquiring—‘When will You save my wife? When will You bless my husband? When will You look in Grace on my children? When will You convert my neighbor?’ And the sinners enquiring—‘Lord, when will You meet with us and give us to taste of Your salvation?’ ”

I say the prayer was a unanimous one—“Spring up, O well!” Brothers and Sisters, may God touch you all with the heavenly fire so that you may all be unanimous in the one great desire that God would visit us, make our wells to spring up, and cause the whole Church to be revived and sinners to be saved!

IV. I cannot, however, tarry here but must now conclude with the fourth head, which is this—they began with a promise—they turned the promise into a song and into a prayer, and they did not stop there but THEN THEY WENT TO WORK. “God helps them that help themselves,” is an old proverb and it is true with God’s people as well as true of Providence. If we want to have God’s blessing we must not expect to receive it by lying passive. The first blessings of Divine Grace come to passive sinners, but when the Lord quickens His people He makes them active.

So here in this place. “I will give them water.” But “the princes dug the well, the nobles of the people dug it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves.” Here was effort used, reminding us of a parallel passage in that famous song, “Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also fills the pools.” They must dig the wells! The water does not come from below—it comes from above—the rain fills the pools. God fills the pools, but we must dig them. And, observe that when God intends to bless a people, effort is always esteemed to be honorable. “The princes dug the well, the nobles of the people dug it.”

They were not ashamed of the work. And when God shall bless a Church and people, they must all feel that it is a very great honor to do anything in the service of God. No matter though they may be very learned, they must feel it an honor to teach a class in a Sunday school for Christ. They may be rich, but they must feel it an honor to open the pewdoors, or the place-doors, or do anything for the Master. They may be very famous and very much esteemed, but they must feel it to be an honor to wait upon the most humble enquiring soul. And what an honor it really is! Why, princes are not so honored as those are who are allowed by God to be “workers together” with Him in the economy of Divine Grace!

Brothers and Sisters, covet earnestly the best gifts in this matter. Seek after usefulness as hunters seek after their game and as miners hunt after their treasure. Seek to serve God! You will be princes in this way. They are the princes who dig the wells! They are the true nobles who use their staves in the Master’s service! Before man sinned he worked for God. Adam was put into the garden to till it and to dress it. He was not made to lead an idle, useless life. His state of innocence was one of service to his Maker. When men shall be once more in a state of purity, their highest honor will be—“His servants shall serve Him.” Heaven is a place where they serve Him day and night in His temple.

Idleness is sin and shame to us. It is our duty to labor and our highest dignity is to be servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember, the princes of old and the nobles helped to dig the well. It was effort which they all felt to be honorable. Well has our poet put it—

*“All may of You partake.  
Nothing so small can be,  
But draws when acted for Your sake,  
Greatness and worth from You.  
If done beneath Your laws,  
Even servile labors shine.  
Hallowed is toil, if this the cause,*

*The meanest work, Divine.”*  
But it was also effort which was accomplished by very feeble means. They dug the well and they dug it with their staves—not very first-class tools. Would not the mattock and the spade have been better? Yes, but they did as they were told. They dug with their staves. These, I suppose, were simply their rods, which, like the sheiks in the East, they carried in their hands as an emblem of government—somewhat similar to the crook of the shepherd. These they used as they were commanded.

Well, dear Friends, we must dig with our staves! We must dig as we can. We must use what abilities we have. It is every Christian’s duty to try to know as much and get as much talent as he can. And if you have but one talent, use that one talent. Go to trade for Christ with it. If you cannot do what you wish you could, do what you can, remembering that the Lord saves not by the mighty, and works not His greatest things by the mighty ones! He has chosen the “base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are.” I should look very much like a fool if I went a well-digging with a stick—and yet if God told me to do so—then I should be wise in doing it. Go, Christian, with such talent as God has given you, and God will bless you and make your lamps and trumpets to be as mighty for the overthrow of Midian as they were in the hands of Gideon of old!

Here was honorable effort with feeble means. And, observe, it was effort in God’s order. They dug the well “by the direction of the lawgiver.” We must not serve God according to our fancies. The Westminster Assembly’s Catechism well lays down idolatry to be “not only the worship of a false god, but the worship of God, the true God, in a way which He has not prescribed.” Consequently, all ceremonies that are not commanded in Scripture are flat idolatry—it matters not what they are! Every mode of worshipping God which is not commanded by God is neither more nor less than flat idolatry.

The children of Israel, in their apostasy, did not set up another god. It is clear to every reader of the story of the golden calf that they did not worship another god when they fell down before it. They worshipped Jehovah under the form of that golden calf, but it was a way of worship which God had never ordained, for He said He allowed no similitude nor likeness of Himself to be attempted to be made and therefore it was idolatry. And, mark you, when men adore pieces of bread as they are fools enough to do nowadays—even though they tell you they worship Christ under the form of that bread—it is idolatry! It is a glaring breaking of the Second Commandment and we doubt not will bring destruction upon those who fall into it.

We must not forget in everything we do for God to go to work in God’s way. I hold that in revivalism I have no right to adopt anything which I cannot go before God with, and justify at the Throne of God. I must not adopt a mode of procedure which I may think suits the place or is adapted to the times. Is it right? Let it be done. Is it wrong? Let it not be so much as thought of among the saints. We are never to “do evil that good may come,” nor to run over and above, or counter to the current of Scripture in order to work some doubtful good. We must dig the well according to the direction of the lawgiver. “To the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.” Let us keep close to the good old paths which are laid down in Holy Writ, and, digging the well we shall get the water.

And then, in the last place, it was effort made in faith. They dug the well, but as they dug it they felt so certain that the water would come that they sang at the work, “Spring up, O well!” Brethren, this is the true way to work if we would get a blessing. We must preach in faith believing that the Word cannot return unto our Master void. We must teach in the Sunday school in faith believing that the children will be led to seek Christ early, and to find Him. We must distribute tracts in faith believing that if we cast our bread upon the waters we shall find it after many days. You must take care that you have this faith.

You must not ask from God a blessing upon your work in a spirit of doubt, for he that wavers is like a wave of the sea, driven of the wind and tossed—let not that man expect to receive anything of the Lord—but believe the promise, believe that God will bless you if you seek His glory, and go about His work in His way, and you shall see the blessing—so great a blessing that when you have proved your God, you shall not have room enough to receive it! I want all the dear members of this Church, especially, to join with me in breathing the prayer, day by day, and hour by hour, that the well would spring up in our midst.

Conversion work is not pausing, I hope. I have been so long removed from you, now, that I am longing to see some great work done by the Master! O that He would now make bare His arms! We have seen what the Gospel can do in the salvation of souls and in making God’s people cleave close to Him. Let us ask for a renewal of those blessed seasons and the continuance of our long prosperity. Let us pray for ourselves that our religion and our piety may spring up like a well, “a well of living water springing up into everlasting life.” And let us pray that the ministry may be greatly blessed among us, and for all our works—in the classes of the Sunday school, and everywhere else. “Spring up, O well,” and God give us all to drink of the living waters till He leads us to the mount of God where we shall feed on the green pastures and lie down by the river of life forever and ever.

There have been some things said, I trust, which may be blessed to you who do not know the Lord. I pray they may. Remember, trust in Christ is that which saves you. Rest alone in Jesus. It is the mount of Calvary that is the mount of your hope. Fly to the Savior, and you are saved. God bless you, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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THE FIRST SETTING UP OF THE BRONZE SERPENT  
NO. 1722

**DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 10, 1883, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spoke against God, and  
against Moses, ‘Why have you brought us  
up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?  
For there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loathes this light bread.’ And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people,  
and they bit the people; and many people  
of Israel died. Therefore the people came  
to Moses and said, ‘We have sinned, for  
we have spoken against the Lord, and against you; pray unto the Lord, that He take away  
the serpents from us.’ And Moses prayed  
for the people. And the Lord said unto  
Moses, ‘Make you a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that everyone that is bitten, when he looks upon it, shall  
live.’ And Moses made a serpent of brass,  
and put it upon a pole, and it came to  
pass, that if a serpent had bitten any  
man, when he beheld the serpent  
of brass, he lived.”  
Numbers 21:4-9.**

I HAVE frequently expounded to you the type of the bronze serpent as our Lord interprets it in the third of John. I thought it meet, tonight, to take that type in its connection and look at the original circumstances which led to the setting of it up—for while the general doctrine of looking for salvation to Christ as the bronze serpent is always to be preached and is most usefully set forth in the midst of the unconverted—yet I take it that its original institution teaches us much which ought not to be overlooked. It is very clear that this type has its first voice to the people of God, for it was among Israel—among the nominal people of God—that this bronze serpent was first needed and first set up. And while the instruction which it gives is wide as the universe, for whoever looks shall live, nevertheless it has an inner circle to which it, first of all, addresses itself—the professed members of the Church of God.

The Book of Numbers might be called, without any impropriety, “Moses’ Pilgrim’s Progress.” It contains a full account of the progress of the pilgrims through the wilderness until they came to the promised land. And, like Bunyan’s “Pilgrim’s Progress,” it is not only a history of any one person or nation, but it is the picture of the life of all God’s people. Probably no one among us will pass through all the troubles of the Israelites, so as to become in one person an epitome of all wilderness experience, and yet even this may be, for so it was with David, and so it has been with others by whom the Lord would instruct His Church. This, however, is exceptional. But, take the whole of us together as the Church of God, and you will find that our lives are mirrored, pictured and foreseen in the travels of God’s chosen people from the land of Egypt to Canaan.

I am afraid that many of us can see ourselves even in the passage before us. Yes, not only those of us who are young and raw in spiritual things, but certain of us who have been, for many years, following in the Divine track, and are hoping, by-and-by, to enjoy our portion in the better country. If even Moses and Aaron erred on the road, I fear there are very few of us who can read the story without crying, “I remember my faults this day!” The passage before us occurred almost at the end of Israel’s wanderings. They had been, now, for 40 years in the wilderness, and they had come within sight of the Promised Land. They had only to cross the mountains of Edom and to get through the passes of Seir, and they would have been at once in the land which flows with milk and honey!

But the Edomites would not permit them the privilege of passing along the highway and so, as Israel must not fight his brother Esau, they were called upon to go around his border and to come down to an arm of the Red Sea by a long and weary march, when they seemed to be on the border of their covenanted inheritance! If this happened at the end of their marches, let none of us presume upon our experience and knowledge. May the Holy Spirit help us while we learn caution from this Inspired history, for these things happened to them for our instruction.

I. I call your attention, first of all, to their DISCOURAGEMENT—“The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.” Assuredly there are times when God’s servants become discouraged. To their shame, let us say it. To our shame let us confess it. It is by faith that we live, but as discouragement is the opposite of faith, it does not help our life. It is generally the fruit of unbelief and so, by discouragement, we cease to live a healthy and vigorous life—and we begin to faint. Even those of God’s children who have had much experience in the Divine way, at times, give way to discouragement.

The reason may be found in various things. Occasionally it springs out of disappointment. It was a serious disappointment to the Israelites to see the land over there within a day’s march, or less, and yet for Edom to say, “I will come out against you with the sword. You shall not pass through my border.” It seemed like having the cup at the lips and being denied a drink! It was a grievous trial, after all those years, to have come so close, and then to be forced to march back to the Red Sea! How tantalizing to see the land, as through a wall of crystal, and yet to be unable to put foot upon it! It was a bitter disappointment and there may be like trials in store for us.

Possibly some of my Master’s servants have entertained the notion that they have made amazing progress in the Divine life and, just then, an event has occurred which showed them their weakness—and they have been forced to weep in secret places and upbraid themselves, saying, “After all this, am I no better than to be cast down about a trifle? Have I suffered so much, and yet is my progress so small?”—

*“I thought that in some favored hour,  
My Lord would answer my request,  
And, by His love’s subduing power  
Would slay my sins and give me rest.  
Instead of this, He made me feel  
The hidden evils of my heart,  
And let the angry powers of Hell  
Assault my soul in every part.”*

We ask to have our waters purified and lo, we are stirred till all the mud which was quiet in the bottom of our soul is made visible and pollution appears everywhere! Yet may not this be the nearest and surest way to purity? This making us see the secret depravity of our hearts?

Yet what a disappointment! I thought I was something and now I perceive that I am nothing! I had half hoped that I was perfect and now I see my secret imperfections and lusts more clearly than ever—

*“The truth is easy to repeat;  
But when my faith is sharply tried  
I find myself a learner yet,  
Unstable, weak, and apt to slide.”*

We thought that we were climbing into full assurance, and lo, we descend into the valley of humiliation! Yes, we did taste of the honey of bold confidence, and we said, “I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day.” But now we hardly know whether we are the people of God at all! We have, with trembling, to repeat our first step and turn our eyes to the bleeding Savior, hoping, as poor sinners, to find salvation in Him!

This need of progress is a dreadful thing, and yet it has happened to many till they have dropped all idea of boasting, and have said with the Apostle, “Not as though I had already attained.” They have felt like men beginning a race, although they have been running that race for many a patient year! Such disappointment often costs the child of God much discouragement because of the way. It was not, however, merely disappointment—it was much more. It was the unfriendliness of those who ought to have been most brotherly. Surely Edom ought to have granted his brother, Israel, the small privilege of passing through the country, seeing it was the nearest way to Canaan.

It would not have cost Esau anything. Israel promised to pay if they even drank of the water of his wells. But, no, they must submit to this unkindness. I have known people of God much discouraged by the unfriendliness of those whom they thought to be their Brothers and Sisters in Christ. They went to them for sympathy and they received rebuffs! They looked to them for help in the time of depression and it was denied them. They said, “Surely, my Brethren will comfort me,” but they cried in the end, like Job, “Miserable comforters are you all.” Then have they sighed, “It was not an enemy, then I could have borne it; but it was one who was my equal, my acquaintance. We went to the house of God in company.”

You know the story of David’s desertion by his friends and of our Lord’s betrayal by Judas. And you are well aware how often heartbreak has come to the best of men through the unfriendliness of those whom they looked upon as sure to render them kindness. The people were much discouraged because of the way, for it was blocked up by an unbrotherly brother. May the Lord’s people learn great tenderness to one another, for sometimes we may say thoughtlessly that which will inflict a ragged wound. Let us be loving and tender as a nurse with a child, remembering the gentleness of the Father and the tenderness of Jesus, and the compassion of the Holy Spirit. Alas, that it should be often true that the souls of the people of God may be much discouraged because of the absence of Christian love! Resolve that it shall not be your fault.

Undoubtedly, however, the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the length of the way. The nation had been on the march 40 years! They had stopped for considerable periods at different encampments, but still, they never knew how long they would be in one spot. They were like swallows, always on the wing. It is true their life was full of mercy, but at the time mentioned in our text they were not in the humor to notice mercy—they were more inclined to notice discomfort and to complain that the way was so long that they were downright weary of it. They had hoped, years before, to have reached the goodly land, and now they must change their direction and go all round the Edomite country! This was tiresome and tried their patience till it quite failed.

To certain of God’s people, old age has brought much of heaviness by reason of its infirmities and afflictions. They often sigh, “Why are His chariots so long in coming?” They are willing, in the spirit, to abide the Master’s will, but the flesh is weak and they wonder whether the Lord has quite forgotten them. Why has He not taken them Home? Why does He keep them lingering in this banishment, so far off from the dear Father’s house? Do you not hear them mournfully sing—

*“O when shall we at once go up,  
Nor this side Jordan longer stop  
But the good land possess?  
When shall we end our lingering years,  
Our sorrows, sins, and doubts, and fears— A howling wilderness”?*

Oh, my dear Brothers and Sisters, if your length of years has become a burden, God grant that you many not be discouraged! May you be “such an one as Paul the Aged,” and bear up under all the growing weaknesses of your years, bringing forth fruit in your old age. Be not cast down, for the Master will come, and will not tarry. He has not forgotten His servants! He will give them their penny at sundown. The ripe sheaf shall not be left in the field too long. Your Lord will come and receive you unto Himself, that where He is you may also be. Quietly hope and patiently wait for the salvation of God. And yet, no doubt, the length of the way has discouraged full many a true pilgrim.

Then, there was the fatigue of the way, for journeying through that wilderness was by no means an easy business, especially along the shore of the gulf. Very rugged to this day is the pathway there. The road is full of hills and valleys, and rugged ravines and sharp stones, and weary sands. Traveling there is as bad as traveling can be. To some of God’s own children life is no parade upon a level lawn, but rough marching and deep wading. They have to take the bleak side of the hill; the wind blows upon them and the sleet is driven in their eyes, and their home is but a cold harbor to them. Even their bed seems to have a stone for its pillow. We know certain of God’s people who, what with poverty and ill-health, with ungenerous relations, with persecution, with hard labor and with short commons, find, from day to day, that the pathway to Heaven lies through briars and thorns, over dark mountains and through black forests.

Do you marvel that their souls are discouraged because of the way? I think I hear somebody saying, “Well, now, I don’t like all this. I do not get discouraged and I do not find the road to be rough.” Dear Brother, be thankful that you do not, but let me warn you not to judge others. If you are like great bullocks, full of strength, do not get to pushing with horn and shoulder those who happen to be the weak cattle, for the Lord takes note of haughty looks and proud words. When any of His saints grow so strong and stomach-full that they despise the tried ones, they are likely, themselves, to smart for it. The rule of our God and King is this—“He has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich He has sent away empty.” This I know both by observation and experience—that there are many true pilgrims who will enter the King’s country triumphantly at the last, who, nevertheless, are occasionally much discouraged because of the way.

And yet, Brothers and Sisters, I am not going to make any excuse for discouragement in myself, nor would I try to make it for you. You do not want to have any excuse made for you, do you? After all, these Israelites were a highly favored people. What if they were driven to wind around the land of Edom? Yet the Lord went before them and is not that man happy who marches where Jehovah leads? Tell us that God has chosen the way and we do not want to know more about it. “He led them forth by a right way.” Depend upon that! There could be no mistake where infinite Wisdom led the van.

Now, Brother, you are discouraged, you say, because of the way, but whose way is it? Have you chosen your own way and willfully run against your duty and against the Providence of God? Well, then, I say nothing about the consequences of such conduct, for they must be terrible! But if you have endeavored to follow the Lord fully and if you have tried to keep the path of His statutes, then it must be well with you. Why are you discouraged? Judge not by the sight of the eyes, nor by the hearing of the ears—let Faith sit on the judgment seat and I am sure she will give forth this verdict— “If the Lord wills it, it is well. If Jehovah leads the way, the road must be right.”

Besides that, not only did God lead them, but God carried them. He says, Himself, that He bore them on eagle’s wings, for though the way was often rough, yet it is wonderful to remember that their feet did not swell, neither did their garments wax old upon them, all those 40 years! Though it was a wilderness, yet their bread was daily given them and though it was a land of drought, yet the smitten Rock with its waters followed them, and they knew nothing of drought. How could they be better off than to have Heaven for their granary, the rocks for their wine cellars, and God, Himself, for their Provider?

They were gentlemen commoners upon the bounty of Jehovah! They were honorable pensioners of the King of kings! What could they desire which He had not supplied? What city was lit up at night with a pillar of fire, as their great canvas city was enlightened? With what other people did God dwell? Where else did He walk in the midst of their abodes and manifest Himself as He did to Israel? Instead of being discouraged, they had every cause to be doubly grateful and glad. Led of God, fed of God, taught of God, guarded of God—what better lot could they imagine? Besides, dear Friends, though they were so very long in getting to Canaan, yet they would get there if they would only believe their God. God would surely bring them in. To every faithful one He would say, “You shall stand in your lot in the end of the days.”

Though the unbelievers among them perished and their carcasses fell in the wilderness, yet even to such of them as repented, there was this sweet thought, that though nothing more than God’s work might appear unto His servants, yet His glory would be seen by their children—and the next generation should surely enter into the land. Come, let us be of good comfort, then, for the same reasons! We, also, shall reach our Father’s house in due time! We shall get home and our homecoming shall not be too late for the marriage supper of the Lamb! The Lord knows the way of the righteous. He is steering us from day to day by Infallible Wisdom and, despite these stormy seas, we shall yet cast anchor in the fair havens where our Lord has gone.

“So shall we be forever with the Lord! Comfort one another with these words.” The Lord is doing us no hurt. The Lord is denying us no good. He is making even evil things to work together for good—for our good—and we have no proper ground for discouragement. Apparent ground for fear there is in plenty, but real ground there is none—

*“Your harps, you trembling saints,  
Down from the willows take!  
Loud to the praise of Love Divine—  
Bid every string awake.”*

II. In the case of the Israelites this discouragement came to a great head, for it led to COMPLAINT—and that is our second point. “And the people spoke against God, and against Moses, Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, neither any water; and our soul loathes this light bread.” This was a bitter and wicked complaint! We are in a sad case, dear Brothers and Sisters, when our discouragements reach such a point that we begin to complain against God, for the complaints that come at these times are such as God is not likely to bear with! When God’s people are in real trouble, He is long-suffering and tender towards His afflicted—but with the obstinate He shows Himself obstinate.

When the people complained of thirst, the Lord sweetened the waters of Marah for them. When they were hungry, He gave them bread from Heaven. But when, having nothing justly to complain of, they merely grumbled because they were discouraged, He dealt with them severely and sent the fiery serpents among them which bit many of them, so that much people of Israel died. Beware of a murmuring spirit! God will pity our needs, but He will punish our whims. Some of us have need to be cautioned against letting the spirit of discouragement hurry us on to quarrelling with God and questioning His love. It is evil for a saint to strive with His Savior!

When these people made their first complaint, it was an amazing one! It was a complaint about having been brought out of Egypt. “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?” Well, but first of all, they ought not to complain of being brought up out of Egypt, for that was a land of bondage where their male children had to perish in the river and where they, themselves, longed to die, for life had become intolerable! And yet, you see, they are complaining that they were brought up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness, as they said. Is it not possible that our rebellious hearts may even complain of God’s mercy? For lack of something to murmur about, discouraged ones will pick holes in the goodness of God! What a pity that it should be so!

Brothers and Sisters, if we are Believers in Christ, we have been redeemed from bondage! We have been brought into a separated condition and made to be the people of God! Shall we ever complain of that? Suppose it brings upon us derision, loneliness, unkindness? Suppose it entails upon us loss and self-denial? Suppose it involves us in many difficulties—are we going to flinch because of these? God forbid! Did we not count the cost when first we started out from Egypt? And having counted the cost, will we now draw back from the fight? No, but in the name of God we will struggle until we have won the victory! And it shall never be a complaint against God that He brought us up out of Egypt. He will not let us die in the wilderness. We cannot believe it, and we will not let our soul say so!—

*“Determined to save,  
He watched over my path  
When, Satan’s blind slave,  
I sported with death!  
And can He have taught me to trust in His name,*

*And thus far have brought me to put me to shame?”*I cannot believe it. Lie down, O dog of doubt! Lie down, O cur of unbelief! If you have no better bark than this, be quiet! Oh, for God’s Grace to stop complaining at once! Our God never forgave a soul to let that soul fall from Grace. Christ never bought a soul with His blood to make it one of His and then to let it slip through His fingers into Hell! The Lord has never led us through so many trials and temptations to suffer us, after all, to be shipwrecked and cast away! If He had meant to destroy us, He would not have showed us such things as these. Let us not become so peevish as to talk about dying in the wilderness when, in fact, the Lord is making signs and wonders of us by causing us to live in the wilderness!

Next, look at their complaint of having no food—“There is no bread, neither is there any water.” It was a great lie! There was bread—they had to admit that fact in the next breath—but then they did not call the manna, “bread.” They called it by an ugly name in the Hebrew. The water, too, was not muddy and thick like the water of the Nile—it was bright, clear, pure water from the Rock and, therefore, they would not call it water. They wanted water with substance in it which would leave grit between their teeth—and as the stream which leaped from the flinty Rock was pure crystal they would not call it water. Have you not known people to whom God has given great mercy, and yet they have talked as if they were quite deserted?

Unbelief is blind just as surely as faith is far seeing. Unbelief enjoys nothing, just as faith rejoices in everything. He that believes, finds sweetness in the manna—“the taste thereof was as wafers made with honey.” But he that has no faith finds nothing pleasant even in “the corn of Heaven,” but says, “there is no bread.” Only think of anybody saying, “Our soul loathes this light bread”! It was a diet that was very easy to digest and kept them in good health—and yet they pined for heavy, lumpy food! They began to wish for leeks, garlic and onions—something rank and strong—and less refined than “angels’ food.” They sighed for the meat that they ate in Egypt! They hankered after a coarse and dangerous diet!

God knew that it was not proper food for them in the blazing desert and He gave them, instead, the best possible nourishment! And now they cry, “Oh, there is nothing substantial in it. It does not make you feel as if you were full.” They found fault with that which they ought to have commended. Men really need that which is sufficient, that which will sustain the frame, that which will enable them to continue in health and strength—but these grumblers remembered the rough stuff they used to eat among the brick kilns and they wished to feel full and overblown as they had now and then felt in Egypt. Thus they fell to complaining against God without excuse! Are there any here in that state? Are you so discouraged that you do not want to live by faith any longer—it seems too unsubstantial? Are you tired of praying, “Give us day by day our daily bread”?

You would like a nice lump sum in the bank, instead, and plenty of the cares and snares of wealth! And is it so that you are no longer content with the old Gospel? It is so easy of digestion that you pine for a hard morsel—a piece of cast-iron philosophy to lie on your mind for years to come. You want a bit of indigestible modern thought that will remain within you like the cucumbers of Egypt which were not so soon gone as the manna of Heaven! You crave for leeks, garlic and onions—something sensational, remarkable, though by no means comfortable to the pure taste of those who are born of the Spirit of God!

Is it not strange how men who call themselves Christians run after that kind of meat? And of the real good Gospel, which is able to save the soul, and to build it up, they begin to say, “It is worn out! We have heard this one thing so often. You see it is just the same old-fashioned manna! We need more variety. We demand that which is novel, which will commend itself to our advanced intellectual condition by its metaphysical subtlety.” That is the style! I see the spirit everywhere, and it comes across us all in some form or other—complaining of what God provides in Providence, complaining of what God provides in the Bible, complaining of what the Holy Spirit provides in His Divine operations! We look out, like the Athenians, for some new thing—we do not know what we want.

When the grumbling humor is on us, we complain of anything and everything, as did these Israelites! They complained of God; they complained of Moses; they complained of the manna. They would have been ready to complain of Aaron, but, fortunately for him, he had been dead a month or so, and so they poured the more gall upon Moses! To men in this state, nothing is right—nothing can be right, The whole world is turned upside down and if it were again turned the other way it would be just as wrong—perhaps more wrong than ever! You smile, I see, at this. Well, you may smile if you like, Brothers and Sisters, but it is a thing to weep over, for I remember a text that says, “The Lord heard their murmuring.”

That is the solemn point in the matter. We are pleased that God should hear our prayers. It is that which we long for—but is it not terrible that God should hear our murmuring? There are two things that God always hears. Mark this! The first is the voice of faith and the second is the voice of unbelief! For, as much as God loves faith, so as much does He loathe unbelief! When we are strong in faith, the Lord can do anything with us and for us, and He can make us equal to all difficulties, so that we can say with the Apostle, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.” But when we give way to unbelief, Christ Himself can do nothing with us, as it is written—“He could not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.”

Do you not feel sorry, then, that you ever murmured and complained, since your God heard it all? What is more, as the Lord usually answers the prayers of faith, so He often answers the prayers of incredulity. I have heard a Brother cry out because of his small and bearable trouble. And I have known the Lord answer his impatience with great trials. If children cry for nothing, they ought to have something to cry for! And, if we get discouraged when there really is no reason for it, we shall probably be answered with astonishing tribulations! If we begin complaining when we ought to be singing, it is likely enough that we shall have grave cause for crying out, for is it not written concerning the Lord, “With the froward You will show Yourself froward”?

When we walk tenderly, submissively and quietly—and when we say with David, “My soul is even as a weaned child,” then the Lord walks very gently and comfortably toward us and our path is smoothed by His love. But the Lord has said, “If you walk contrary to Me, I will walk contrary to you.” Why, Brothers and Sisters, if we are discouraged in any way, let us pray that we may not venture further in that evil way, nor begin to rail against the Lord and His Providence! May we go back to confidence and joy and faith—and not go on till we fall into the ditch of murmuring—and be waiting there for yet worse things.

III. The Lord, before long, sends upon murmurers, PUNISHMENT. This is our third head. We read that as soon as the people found fault with Moses, and with God, and with the manna, “the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died.” Fiery serpents were ready at the Divine call—the Lord never lacks means of chastisement. There was no interval between the sin and the suffering, for the fault was wanton and inexcusable. Will God send fiery serpents among His own people? These were the tribes that ate of the manna, and the people that “drank of the Rock that followed them, which Rock was Christ.” These were the Lord’s visible Church in the wilderness, and though not all spiritually His children, yet they were types of His chosen, representatives of the whole believing family.

Well, Brothers and Sisters, the Lord, in fatherly anger, may send fiery serpents among a doubting and quarrelsome people, and so those who bite with fault-finding may find themselves bitten! These fiery serpents come in different forms. Sometimes they may be new trials. The Israelites, as far as I know, had never seen these seraphs, or burning ones, before. They seemed to fly up out of the sand and bite them before they were aware of it! And then the venom entered into their blood and made it scald them till they seemed to be a mass of fire from head to foot, burning with fierce pain and ready to die. It was dreadful to be marching through the midst of fiery flying serpents! The Lord deliver us from that.

But He may send to us, if we grow peevish, a fresh and novel affliction, a crooked trial which will twist and wriggle about us—a sudden grief which will poison the fountain of our life—and this may hastily fly at us, as a chastisement for not having believed in God under much happier circumstances. In some Christians these fiery serpents may be the uprisings of their own corruptions. I have known the corruptions of a child of God to be quiet and still for a long period. They have been there, but they have been forced to hide away like thieves that dare not come out in daylight and, the child of God has, therefore, enjoyed rest.

But the good man has been discouraged and has fallen to complaining—and then these inward corruptions have broken forth upon him and compassed him about like bees—innumerable and quick to sting! Some of us know what this means. We have been put to a dead stand with our lively inbred sins which we thought were dead—suddenly they have revived within us and we had to fight against them for dear life! Or, it may be that God will let Satan loose upon us if we disbelieve. Truly we cannot want any worse fiery serpents than the suggestions and insinuations of the devil! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, if you have ever met Satan and fought him foot to foot, you know by your scars what a terrible adversary he is!

Why, he will insinuate thoughts into our breasts which never came from our own minds and never would have come—blasphemous thoughts of an infernal kind—and these he would have us accept as ours! He will throw his bombs into our souls and then tell us that these are of our own making! He will make us doubt the existence of God, the Inspiration of Scripture, the Deity of Christ, the Truth of the Gospel, the fact of the Resurrection—in fact, he will make us doubt doctrines for which we would lay down our lives! These are his impieties and not our own thoughts at all— but, like serpents of fire, their sting is terrible! All the while our enemy will beat the great Hell drum concerning our past sins and try, if he can, to drown the voice of mercy and of that precious blood which “speaks better things than that of Abel.” Thus he would drive us to despair.

Ah, these fiery serpents! Brothers and Sisters, it is much better to be tried with poverty and pain than to be molested by the infernal thoughts that come from Satan! It were better for us to lie down crushed like the very dust beneath our feet and every particle a pain, than to be filled with the desperate thoughts that Satan is able to inject into the mind! Beware, I pray you, of complaining, you that are getting to be at all discouraged! Return to your child-like faith. “Cast not away your confidence which has great recompense of reward,” lest you slide, by your unbelief, down into complaining and then by your complaining hatch fiery serpents out of the ground on which you tread!

IV. But now, fourthly, here comes the REMEDY. What is to be done when Israel is bitten with fiery serpents? Well, the first thing is confession. They went to Moses and cried, “We have sinned.” Oh, that is a sweet art—that are of confession—it empties the bosom of most perilous stuff! Nothing seems to me to be more hideous than to confess your sins to a man like yourselves. I should think that to sit down at a priest’s ear and to pour into it all the filth of your soul, and answer every question that he may care to propound to you must be one of the most fearful ordeals through which a human mind can pass!

I know that Satan is very ingenious as to the means by which to deprave men and rob them of the last particle of modesty, so as to make them capable of every crime! But I should think that the papist “confession” is his last and darkest invention for depraving the soul beyond all common defilement! It must be the most fearful process of saturating with evil through which the mind can pass! But to confess sin into the ear of Christ is quite another thing! To get alone with Him and to tell Him all our transgressions and temptations—this is as great a blessing as the other is a curse. There is no fear that we can pollute Him—and every blessing comes of emptying out ourselves before Him who is able to take away all sin by reason of His precious blood! Our first business is to hasten away to our great High Priest and tell Him that we have sinned.

The second help was that Moses prayed for the people. So our great cure against fiery serpents—horrible thoughts and temptations—is intercession! “If any man sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.” If we have grown discouraged, and have sinned by unbelieving utterances, let us go with our poor, little, trembling faith and ask the blessed go-between, the Divine Interposer, to stand before God on our behalf and pray for us that our transgressions may be blotted out! Oh, what a sweet thing it is to have this Advocate! Come, you that are the Lord’s people and yet are transgressors, come and rejoice in this—that He makes intercession for transgressors and that He is, therefore, able to save unto the uttermost!

But now comes the great remedy. After their confession and the prayer of their mediator, the Lord bade Moses make a bronze serpent and lift it up, that they might look upon it and live. Beloved, when I first came to Christ as a poor sinner and looked to Him, I thought Him the most precious object my eyes had ever lit upon! But this night I have been looking to Him while I have been preaching to you, in remembrance of my own discouragements, my own complaining—and I find my Lord Jesus dearer than ever! I have been seriously ill and sadly depressed—I fear I have rebelled—and, therefore, I look anew to Him and I tell you that He is fairer in my eyes, tonight, than He was at first!

It is a delightful thing that there should be a Fountain open for sinners to wash in, but I will tell you something that is more charming, still— there is a Fountain for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness. That Fountain is not for outcasts, only, but for the saints, for the citizens of Jerusalem, for the house of David! “If we walk in the light as God is in the light, and have fellowship one with another”—do we still sin? Yes, that we do, even then, but—“the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” In our lowest condition this is our cleansing! In our highest condition this is still our cleansing!

The first time a poor sinner comes up out of the ditch, with his own clothes abhorring him, he is made white through Christ’s blood the moment he believes in Jesus! And mark this, when he enters Heaven and stands before the blaze of the supernal glory, it shall still be said of him and of his fellows, “They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” The bronze Serpent healed me when I first saw the Lord—and the bronze serpent heals me tonight—and shall do so till I die! “Look and live” is for saints as well as for sinners. For you, you ungodly ones—

*“There is life for a look at the Crucified One.”*

But equally true is this for you who belong to Jesus but have grieved His Holy Spirit. You that have gone aside from your faith and have begun disputing with your God and complaining of Providence—there is life for you, too, in the Savior lifted up! There are not two ways of salvation—one for sinners and another for saints. There are not two grounds on which we stand—the ground of the sinner saved and the ground of the saint saved. No, the same basis is under each foot—we each sing—

*“Rock of ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee!”*

This is the language of the man who has served his God for half a century and preached the Gospel like a Luther or a Calvin, just as certainly as it must be the language of the trembling sinner, guilty and condemned before the living God!

Do you not see where the bronze serpent fitly comes in according to Scripture? At the end of the pilgrimage, just before they are going to cross the Jordan, then Israel sees the serpent of brass! Then the people sin and then is there revealed to them in all its splendor that blessed type of Chris—“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” “Should not perish!” As if even a Believer had about him that which would make him perish if he did not, still, look to the appointed cure! Jesus is lifted up that saints might not perish, but might persevere in Grace unto everlasting life!

How is our spiritual life rendered everlasting but by the continuance of that look? We are to still be looking to Jesus as long as we live! “Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.” Always looking! Always looking! God keep us looking if we have looked, and bring us to look to Jesus if we have never looked—and to His name be praise forever and ever, Amen!

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MAN’S RUIN AND GOD’S REMEDY  
NO. 285

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, NOVEMBER 20, 1859, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“And the LORD said unto Moses, Make you a fiery serpent and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass that everyone that is bitten,  
when he looks upon it, shall live.”  
Numbers 21:8.**

I DO not propose this morning to explain again the mystery of the brazen serpent. As many of you well remember, not long ago I preached upon that subject and endeavored to expound it in all its lengths and breadths. I have a somewhat similar object at the present time, the details may indeed be different, but after all, the moral will be the same.

Man has very many wants and he should be grateful whenever the least of them is supplied. But he has one want which overtops every other—it is the want of bread. Give him raiment, house him well, decorate and adorn him—yet if you give him not bread, his body faints, he dies of hunger. Hence it is that while the earth, when it is tilled is made to bring forth many things that minister unto the comfort and luxury of men, yet man is wise enough to understand that since bread is his chief want, he must be most careful concerning corn.

He therefore sows broad acres with it and he cultivates more of this, which is the grandest necessity, than he does of anything else in his husbandry. I feel that this is the only excuse I can offer you for coming back again constantly and continually to the simple doctrine of the salvation of the sinner through Christ Jesus. There are many things which the soul wants—it needs instruction, it needs comfort, it needs knowledge of doctrine and enlightenment in its experience. But there is one grand need of the soul, which far surmounts every other—it is the want of salvation, the want of Christ.

And I do feel that I am right in repeating again and again and again, the simple announcement of the Gospel of Christ for poor perishing sinners. At any rate, I know I seldom feel more happy than when I am preaching a full Christ to empty sinners. My tongue becomes something like Anacreon’s harp—it is said of it, it resounded love alone—and so my tongue longs to resound Christ alone and give forth no other strain but Christ and His Cross. Christ uplifted, the salvation of a dying world. Christ crucified, the life of poor dead sinners. I pray that this morning many here present, who have no clear views of the plan of salvation, may now see for the first time how men are saved through the lifting up of Christ, just, as

the poor Israelites in the wilderness were saved from the fiery serpents by lifting up the brazen serpent on the pole.

Solemnly addressing you this morning, I shall need your attention to two things. First—and here, remember, I am about to speak to sinners dead in trespasses and sins—I want your attention to your ruin and next I shall want your faithful consideration of your remedy.

I. First of all, oh unregenerate Man, you who have heard the Word, but have never felt its power, let me entreat you, lend me your ears while I talk to you of a solemn subject that much concerns you. MAN, YOU ARE RUINED! The children of Israel in the wilderness were bitten with fiery serpents, whose venom soon tainted their blood and after intolerable pain, at last brought on death. You are much in the same condition. You stand there, healthy in body and comfortable in mind and I come not here to play the part of a mere alarmist. But I do beseech you, listen to me while I tell you, neither more nor less than the simple but dreadful Truth of God concerning your present estate, if you are not a Believer in Christ.

Oh Sinner! There are four things that stare you in the face and should alarm you. The first thing is your sin. I hear you say, “Yes, I know I am a sinner as well as the rest of mankind.” But I am not content with that confession, nor is God content with it, either. There are multitudes of men who make the bare confession of sinnership, the general confession that all men are fallen, but there are few men who know how to take that confession home and acknowledge it as being applicable to them.

Ah, my Hearers, you that are without God and without Christ, remember, not only is the world lost, but you are lost yourself. Not only has sin defiled the race, but you yourself are stained by sin. Come now, take the universal charge home to yourself. How many have your sins been! Count them, if you can. Stand here and wonder at them. Like the stars of midnight, or as the sands by the sea shore, innumerable are your iniquities. Twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty, perhaps more than fifty years have rolled over your head and in any one of these years your sins might out-count the drops of the sea.

How innumerable, then, have they become in ALL your life! And what if you should say they are but little ones, yet since they are so many, how great has the mountain become! Though they were but as grains of sand, yet are they so many that they might make a mountain that would soar above the stars. Pause, I beseech you, and let your conscience have play for a moment. Count over your iniquities. Turn over the pages of your history and number the blots, if you can, and count the mistakes. But no, you are committing fresh sins while you are recounting these and the denial of your innumerable sins is but the multiplication of them. You are increasing them, perhaps, even while you are counting them.

And then think how aggravated they have been. I will not venture to mention the grosser sins into which some of you have fallen. It may be that I have here those who have cursed God to His face—who have asked Him to blast their limbs and to destroy their souls. I may have those here who have ventured even to deny God’s existence, though they have been walking all their lives in the midst of His works and have even received the breath in their nostrils from Him. I may have some who have despised His Word—laughed at everything sacred—made a jest of the Bible, made a mockery of God’s ministers and of His servants.

Recall, I beseech you, these things to your remembrance, for though you have forgotten them, God has not. You have written them in the sand but He has engraved them as in eternal brass and there they stand against you. Every crime that you have done is as fresh in the memory of the Most High as though it were committed yesterday. And though you think that the repentance of your gray old age might almost suffice to blot out the enormities of your youth—be not deceived—sin is not so easily put away. It needs a greater ransom than a few expressions of regret or a few empty tears. Oh recall, you great Sinners, recall to your remembrance, the enormities you have committed against God! Let your chambers speak, let your beds bear witness against you and let the days of your feasting and your hours of midnight rioting—let these things rise up to your remembrance.

Let your oaths roll back from the sky against which they have smitten and let them return into your bosom, to awake your conscience and bestir you to repentance. But what am I saying? I have been talking of some men who have committed great iniquity. Ah, Sinner, be you whosoever you may, I charge you with great sin. Brought up in the midst of holy influences, nurtured in God’s House, it may be that some of my unregenerate hearers this morning may not be able to remember a single instance of blasphemy against God. It may be that you have never outwardly done despite to any sacred thing.

Ah, my Hearer, remember, your sin may be even greater than that of the profligate, or the debaucher, for you have sinned against light and against knowledge. You have sinned against a mother’s prayers and against a father’s tears. You rebelled against God’s Law, knowing the Law. When you were sinning, conscience pricked you and yet you did sin. You knew that Hell was the portion of the ungodly and yet you are ungodly still. You know the Gospel of Christ. You are no ignoramus. Your mother took you in her arms to the House of God and here you are even now. Every sin you have committed receives a greater aggravation on account of the light you have received and the privileges you have enjoyed.

Oh, my Hearer, think not that you can escape in this thing. Your sin has bitten you with a terrible bite. it is no flesh wound as you dream, but the venom has entered into your veins. It is no mere scratch upon the surface, but the leprosy lies deep within. You have sinned. You have

sinned continually. You have sinned with many aggravations. Oh, may God convict you of this charge and help you to plead guilty to it. Can you not, some of you, if you are honest to yourselves, call to remembrance peculiar sins that you have committed. You remember your sick bed and your vow you made to God—where is it now? You have returned like the dog to its vomit and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

You remember that prayer that you offered in the time of your distress? You remember, too, that God graciously delivered you, but where is the thanksgiving that you promised to Him? You said you would give Him your heart. But where is it? In the black hand of the devil still! You have been a liar to God, you have deceived Him, or you have pretended at least that you would give Him your soul and you have not done so. And think, too, of certain special sins you have committed after receiving special warning. Do you not remember going out from the House of God with a tender conscience and then running into sin to harden it again? Do you not remember, some of you, how after being alarmed and startled, you have gone your way and gone to your evil companions and laughed away the impressions that you have received?

This is no mean sin—to strive against the striving Spirit and to resist the influence that was drawing you to the right path. I beseech you, call to remembrance your sins. Come, don’t be cowards. Don’t shut up the book—open it! Look and see what you have been and if you have been that which you are ashamed of, I beseech you look it in the face and acknowledgment and confess it. There is nothing to be gotten by hiding your sins. They’ll spring up, Man. If you dig deep as Hell to hide them, they’ll spring up. Why not now be honest and look at them today, for they’ll look at you by-and-by, when Christ shall come in the clouds of judgment. If you look not at them, they’ll stare you in the face with a look that will wither your soul and blast it into infinite torment and unutterable woe. Your sin, your sin, should make you tremble and feel alarmed.

But I go further. Sinner, you have not only your sin to trouble you, but there is a second thing—there is the sentence of condemnation gone out against you. I have heard some ministers talk of men being in a state of probation. No such thing—no man has a state of probation at all. You are condemned already. You are not today, my unregenerate Hearers, prisoners at the bar about to be tried for your lives. No, your trial is over, your sentence is past already and you are now this day condemned. What though no officer has arrested you, though death has not laid his cold hand upon you, yet Scripture said, “He that believes not is condemned already because he believe not on the Son of God.”

Man, the black cap is on the judge’s head. He even now declares you lost. No, more than this—if you would rightly know your own estate, you are standing—mark that, my careless Hearer—you are standing under the gallows, with the rope on your neck and you have but to be cast off from the ladder by the hand of death and you are swinging in eternity lost and ruined. If you only knew your position, you would discover that you are criminals with your necks on the block this morning and the bright axe of justice is gleaming in this morning’s sunlight.

God alone knows how long it is before it shall fall, or rather how soon you shall feel its keen edge and its edge shall be stained with your blood. You are condemned already. Take that home, Man. Your sentence is signed in Heaven and sealed and stamped and the only reason why it is not carried out is because God in mercy respites you. But you are condemned and this world is your condemned cell from which you shall soon be taken to a terrible execution.

Now you do not believe this. You think that God is putting you on your trial and that if you behave as well as you can, you will get off. You think that in some future day you may yet blot out your sin. But when the criminal is condemned, there is no room left for good behavior to alter the sentence. When a capital sentence is passed upon him that sentence is not to be moved by anything that he can do. And your sentence is passed—passed by the Judge of all the earth—and nothing you can do can alter that sentence. The Law leaves no room for repentance. Condemned you are and condemned you must be, unless that one way of escape, that I am forthwith about to explain, shall be opened to you by God’s rich grace—you are condemned already.

Now let me ask you one question before I leave this point. Sinner, you are condemned today. I ask you this, whether you do not deserve it? If you are what you should be and what I hope the Lord will make you, you will say, “Deserve it, yes, that I do!” If I never committed another sin, my past sins would fully justify the Lord in permitting me to go down afire into the pit. The first sin you ever committed condemned you beyond all hope of self-salvation—but all the sins you have committed since then have aggravated your guilt and surely now the sentence is not only just—but more than just. You will have one day, if you repent not, to put your finger on your lips and stand in solemn silence, when God shall ask you whether you have anything to plead—why the sentence should not be carried into execution. You will be compelled to feel that God condemns you to nothing more than you deserve, that His sentence is just—a proper one on such a sinner as you have been.

Now, these two things are enough to make any man tremble, if he did but feel them—his sin and his condemnation. But I have a third to mention. Sinner, there is this to aggravate your ease and increase your alarm—your helplessness, your utter inability to do anything to save yourself—even if God should offer you the chance. You are today, Sinner, not only condemned, but you are dead in trespasses and sins. Talk of performing good works—why, Man, you cannot. It is as impossible for you to

do a good work while you are what you are, as it would be for a horse to fly up to the stars.

But you say, “I will repent.” No, you cannot. Repentance is not possible to you as you are, unless God gives it to you. You might force a few tears, but what are those? Judas might do that and yet go out and hang himself and go to his own place. You cannot repent of yourself. No, if I had to preach this morning salvation by faith apart from the Person of Christ, you would be in as bad a condition as if there were no Gospel whatever. Remember, Sinner, you are so lost, so ruined, so undone, that you can do nothing to save yourself. Your wound is so bad that it cannot be cured by any mortal hand. Your inability is so great that unless God pulls you up out of the pit into which you have fallen, you must lie there and rot for all eternity. You are so undone that you can neither stir hand, nor foot, nor lip, nor hearts, unless grace help you.

Oh, what a fearful thing it is to be charged, tried, condemned and then, moreover, to be bereft of all power! You are today as much in the hand of God’s justice as a little moth beneath your own fingers. He can save you if He will, He can destroy you if He pleases, but you, yourself are unable to escape from Him. There is no door of mercy left for you by the Law and even by the Gospel there is no door of mercy which you have power to enter—apart from the help which Christ affords you. If you think you can do anything, you have yet to unlearn that foolish conceit. If you fancy that you have some strength left, you have not yet come where the Spirit will bring you—for he will empty you of all creature pretension and lay you low and dash you in pieces and bring you in a mortar and pound you—till you feel that you are weak and without strength and can do nothing.

Now have I not indeed described a horrible position for a sinner to be in? But there is something more remaining, a fourth thing. Sinner, you are not only guilty of past sin and condemned for it, you are unable—and even if you were able—you are so bad that you would never be willing to do anything that could save yourself. And even if you had no sins in the past, yet are you lost, Man, for you would go on to commit sin for the future. For this know—your nature is totally depraved. You love that which is evil and not that which is good. “No,” says one, “I love that which is good.” Then you love it for a bad motive. “I love honesty,” says one. Yes, because it is the best policy. But do you love God? Do you love your neighbor as yourself? No, and you cannot do this, for your nature is too vile.

Why, Man, you would be as bad as the devil, if God were to withdraw all restraint and let you alone. Were He but to take the bit out of your mouth and the bridle from your jaws, there is no sin that you would not commit. Do you deny this? Do you say, “I am willing. I am willing to be holy and to be saved.” Then God has you so. For if not, you would never be so by nature. If you should go out of this hall and say, “I hate such preaching as that.” I should but reply, “I knew you did.” Though one should say, “I will never believe that I am so lost as that,” I should say, “I did not think you ever would—you are too bad to believe the Truth of God.” And if you should say, “I will never be saved by Christ. I will never bow so low as to sue for mercy and accept grace through Him,” I should not be surprised, for I know your nature. You are so desperately bad that you hate your own mercy.

You despise the grace that is offered to you—you hate the Savior that died for you, for if not, why do not you turn now, Man? If you are not so bad as I say you are, why not now down on your knees and cry for pardon? Why not now believe in Christ? Why not now surrender yourself to Him? But if you should do this, then I would say, “This is God’s work, He has made you do it for if He had not done it you would not have been humble enough to bow yourself to Christ.” Let Arminianism go to the winds. Let it be scattered forever from off the face of the earth—man is totally unable to feel his misery or seek relief—if he were able, he is totally unwilling.

The sinner could not help the Holy Spirit, even if the Holy Spirit wanted the help of man to perfect His own operations. What? Can it be possible that any man will say the creature is to help the Creator—that an insect of an hour is to be yoked with the Ancient of Days—the Eternal—that the clay is to help the potter in its own formation? Why, even if we grant the power, where would be the sympathy or the willing hand? Man hates to be saved. He loves darkness and if he has the light, it is because the light thrusts itself upon him. He loves death with a fatal infatuation and if he is made alive, it is because the Spirit of God quickens him, converts his wicked heart, makes him willing in the day of His power and turns him unto God.

Have I not now this morning made a most awful indictment against you? Mark, I mean it for every living man, woman and child in this Hall who has not faith in Christ. You may be fine gentlemen or grand ladies. You may be respectable tradesmen and very upright in your business, but I charge you before Almighty God with being sinners, condemned sinners, sinners that cannot save yourselves and sinners, moreover, that would not save yourselves if you could, unless grace made you willing. You are sinners unwilling to be saved. What a fearful indictment is this read in the face of high Heaven! May some sinner as he hears it be compelled to say, “It is true, it is true, it is true of me. O Lord, have mercy upon me!”

II. Having thus set before you the hard part of the subject—THE SINNER’S RUIN—I now come to preach of HIS REMEDY.  
A certain school of physicians tell us that “like cures like.” Whether it is true or not in medicine, I know it is true enough in theology—like cures like. When the Israelites were bitten with the fiery serpents, it was a serpent that made them whole. And so, you lost and ruined creatures, are bid now to look to Christ suffering and dying and you will see in Him the counterpart of what you see in yourselves. While you are looking to Him, may God fulfill His promise and give you life. A remedy to be worth anything must reach the entire disease.  
Now Christ on the Cross comes to man as man is. Not as he may be made, but as he is. And it does this in the four several respects which I have already described. I charge you with sin. Now in Christ Jesus behold the sinner’s Substitute—the sin-offering. Do you see yonder Man hanging on the Cross? He dies an awful death. In Him prophecy receives a terrible accomplishment—of Him Almighty vengeance makes a tremendous example. Jehovah has cast off and abhorred Him. He has been angry with his Anointed. The terrors of the Lord are heavy on His soul. And why does that Man, Christ Jesus, die?—not as Himself a sinner, but as numbered with transgressors.  
O soul if you would know the terrors of the Law, behold Him who was made the curse of the Law. If you would see the venom of the fiery serpent’s bite, look to yonder brazen serpent. And if you would see sin in all its deadliness look to a dying Savior. What makes Christ die? Sin! Though not His own. What makes His body sweat drops of blood? Sin! What nails His hands? What rends His side? Sin! Sin does it all. And if you are saved it must be through yonder sin-offering, yon dying, bleeding Lamb. “But,” says one, “my sins are too many to be forgiven.” Stop awhile. Turn your eye to Christ. Sometimes when I think of my sin I think it is too great to be washed away, but when I think of Christ’s blood, oh I think there can be no sin great enough for that to fail in cleansing it every whit.  
I seem to think, when I see the costly price, Christ paid a very heavy ransom. When I look at myself I think it would need much to redeem me, but when I see Christ dying I think He could redeem me if I were a million times as bad as I am. Now remember, Christ not only paid barely enough for us, He paid more than enough. The Apostle Paul says, “His grace abounded—“superabounded,” says the Greek. It ran over. There was enough to fill the empty vessel and there was enough to flood the world besides. Christ’s redemption was so plenteous, that had God willed it, if all the stars of Heaven had been peopled with sinners, Christ need not have suffered another pang to redeem them all—there was a boundless value in His precious blood. And, Sinner, if there were so much as this, surely there is enough for you.  
And then again, if you are not satisfied with Christ’s sin-offering, just think a moment—God is satisfied—God the Father is content and must not you be? The Judge says, “I am satisfied. Let the sinner go free, for I have punished the Surety in his stead.” And if the Judge is satisfied, surely the criminal may be. Oh, come, poor Sinner, come and see if there is enough to appease the wrath of God there must be enough to answer all the requirements of man. “No, no,” says one, “but my sin is such a terrible one that I cannot see in the substitution of Christ that which is like to meet it.” What is your sin? “Blasphemy.” Why, Christ died for blasphemy—this was the very charge which man imputed to Him and therefore you may be quite sure that God laid it on Him if men did.  
“No, no,” says one, “but I have been worse than that. I have been a liar.” It is just what men said of Him. They declared that He lied when He said, “If this temple is destroyed I will build it in three days.” See in Christ a liar’s Savior as well as a blasphemer’s Savior. “But,” says one, “I have been in league with Beelzebub.” Just what they said of Christ. They said that He cast out devils through Beelzebub. So man laid that sin on Him and man did unwittingly what God would have him do. I tell you, even that sin was laid on Christ. Come, Sinner, there is not a sin in the world with one exception which Jesus did not bear in His own body on the tree.  
“Ah, but,” says one, “when I sinned, I sinned very greedily. I did it with all my might. I took a delight in it.” Ah, Soul and so did Christ take a delight in being your Substitute. He said, “I have a Baptism to be baptized with and how am I straitened until it is accomplished”! Let Christ’s willingness respond to the suggestion that your greediness in sin can make it too heinous to be forgiven. “Ah,” cries another, “but, Sir, I acted ever with such a bad heart—my heart was worse than my actions. If I could have been worse, I would. Among all my companions in vice there was not one who was so greedy of it and black in it as I.” Yes, but, my dear Hearer, if you have sinned in your heart, remember, Christ suffered in His heart. His heart-sufferings were the heart and soul of His sufferings. Look and see that heart all pierced and the blood and water flowing there from and believe that He is able to take away even your heart of sin, however black it may be.  
“Yes,” I hear another self-condemned one exclaim, “but I sinned without any temptation. I did it deliberately in cold blood. I had become such a wicked, beastly sinner, that I used to sit down and gloat over my sin before I committed it.” Ah, but Sinner, remember before Christ died He thought of it. Yes, from all eternity He meditated on becoming your Substitute. It was a matter of premeditation with Him and, therefore let His forethought put aside your forethought. Let the greatness of His previous thought upon His sacrifice, put away the grievousness of your sin, on account of its having been committed in cold blood.  
Does there yet come up some sobbing voice—“I have been worse than all the rest, for I did my sin by reason of a covenant which I made with Satan. I said, ‘If I could have a short life and a merry one, I would be content.’ I made a covenant with death and I made a league with Hell.” And what if I am commissioned to tell you that even this bite is not incurable? Remember, Jesus the Son of God made a covenant on your account. It was a greater covenant than yours, not made with death and Hell, but made with His Father on the behalf of sinners. I want, if I can, to bring out the fact that whatever there is in your sins there is its counterpart in Christ. Just as when the serpent bit the people, it was a serpent that healed them, so if you are bitten by sin, it is, as it were, your sin’s Substitute. It is your sin laid on Christ that heals you. Oh, turn your eyes, then, to Calvary and see the guilt of sin laid upon Christ’s shoulders and say, “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows,” and looking to Him you shall live.  
Secondly, here is a remedy for the condemnation. I said, you were not only sinners, but condemned sinners. Yes, and Christ is not only your Substitute for sin, but Se is your condemned Substitute, too. See Him. He stands at Pilate’s bar, is condemned before Herod and Caiaphas and is found guilty. No, He stands before the awful bar of God and though there is no sin of His own put upon Him, yet inasmuch as His people’s sins were laid on Him, Justice views Him as a sinner and it cries, “Let the sword be bathed in His blood.” Christ was condemned for sinners that they might not be condemned.  
Look up, look away from the sentence that has gone out against you, to the sentence that went out against Him. Are you cursed?—so was He. “Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” Are you condemned?—so was He and there was one point in which He excelled you. He was executed, and that you never shall be, if you look to Him now and believe that He is able to save you and if put your trust in Him.  
In regard to the third particular. Our utter helplessness is such, that as I told you, we are unable to do anything. Yes, and I want you to look at Christ—was not He unable, too? You, in your father, Adam, were once strong, but you lost your strength. Christ, too, was strong, but He laid aside all His omnipotence. See Him. The hand that poises the world hangs on a nail. See Him. The shoulders that supported the skies are drooping over the Cross. Look at Him! The eyes whose glances light up the sun are sealed in darkness. Look at Him! The feet that trod the billows and that shaped the spheres are nailed with rude iron to the accursed tree. Look away from your own weakness to His weakness and remember that in His weakness He is strong and in His weakness you are strong, too.  
Go see His hands. They are weak, but in their weakness they are stretched out to save you. Come view His heart. It is rent, but in its cleft you may hide yourself. Look at His eyes. They are closing in death, but from them comes the ray of light that shall kindle your dark spirit. Unable though you are, go to Him who Himself was crucified through weakness, and remember that NOW, “He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.” I told you—you could not repent, but if you go to Christ He can melt your heart into contrition, though it is as hard as iron. I said you could not believe, but if you sit down and look at Christ, a sight of Christ will make you believe, for He is exalted on high to give repentance and remission of sins.  
And then the fourth thing. “Oh,” cries one, “you said we were too estranged to be even willing to come to Christ.” I know you are. And therefore it is He who comes down to you. You would not come to Him, but He comes to you this morning and though you are very evil, He comes with sacred magic in His arms to change your heart. Sinner, you are unwilling—but guilty Sinner—Christ stands before you this morning, He that was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, a Man and a Brother born for adversity. And He puts His hand today in your hand and He says, “Sinner, will you be saved? Then trust in Me.”  
Ah, if I preach the Gospel, you will reject it! But if He preaches it, you cannot. Methinks I see the Crucified One finding His way in that thick crowd under the gallery and going between the ranks seated here, and above, and everywhere—and as He goes along, He stops at each brokenhearted sinner and says, “Sinner, will you trust Me? See, here I am, the Son of God, yet I am Man. Look at My wounds. See, still, the nail marks and the prints of the crown of thorns. Sinner, will you trust Me?” And while He says it, He graciously works in you the grace of faith.  
But are there any who, looking Him in the face, can reply, “You Crucified One we cannot trust You, our sins are too great to be forgiven”? Oh, nothing can grieve Him so much as to tell Him that! You think that you are humble saying it—you are proud. You are despising Christ while you think you are despising yourself. And is there one in all this great assembly who says, “This is all twaddle, I care not to hear such preaching as this”? No I do not ask you to care for what I speak.  
But Jesus, the Crucified One, is standing by your side and He asks you, “Sinner, have I ever done anything to offend you? Have I ever done you a displeasure? What hurt have you ever suffered at My hands? Then why do you persecute your wife for loving Me—then why hate your child for loving One that did you no hurt? Besides,” says He and He takes the veil from His face, “did you ever see a face like this? It was marred by suffering for men—for men that hate Me, but whom I love. I need not have suffered. I was in My Father’s house, happy and glorious—love made me come down and die. Love nailed me to the tree and now will you spit in My face after all that?”  
“No,” says a young man to me this last week, “I found it hard to love Christ, but,” said he, “once upon a time I thought ‘Well, if Christ never died for me and never loved me, yet I must love Him for His goodness in dying for other people.’ ” And methinks if you did but know Christ, you must love Him. You would say to Him, “You dear, You suffering Man, did You endure all this for those that did hate You? Did You die for those that murdered You? Did You shed Your blood for those that drew it from Your veins with cursed iron? Did You dive into the depths of the grave that You might lift out rebellious ones who scorned You and would have none of You? Then dissolved by Your goodness I fall before Your feet and I weep. My soul repents of sin—I weep—Lord accept me, Lord have mercy upon me.”  
Did you think I had run away from my point? So I had, but I have brought you back to it. You know I was to show that Christ could overcome our depravity. And He has done it in some of you while I have been speaking. You hated Him, but you do not hate Him now. It may be you said you would never trust Him, but you trust Him now. And if God has done this in your heart, this is the true end of preaching. The best way of keeping to the subject is for the subject to be brought home to the heart.  
Ah, dear Hearers, I wish I had a better voice this morning. I wish I had more earnest tones and a more loving heart, for I do feel when I am preaching about Christ, that I am a poor dauber. When I want to paint Him so beautifully, I am afraid you will say of Him, He is not lovely! No, no. It is my bad picture of Him. But He is lovely. Oh, He is a loving Lord. He has a heart of compassion. He has a heart overflowing with the most tender affection. And He bids me tell you—and I do tell you—He bids me say, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief.”  
And He bids me add His kind invitation, “Come unto Me all you that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart and you shall find rest to your souls.” Do not believe what the devil tells you. He says that Christ is not ready to forgive. Oh, He is more willing to forgive then you are to be forgiven. Do not believe your heart, when it says that Christ will shut you out and will not pardon you. Come and try Him, come and try Him!  
And the first one that is shut out, I will agree to be shut out with him. The first soul that Christ rejects after it has put its trust in Him—I risk my soul’s salvation with that man. It cannot be. He never was hardhearted yet and He never will be. Only believe and may He Himself help you to believe. Only look to Him and may He Himself open your eyes and enable you to look and this shall be a happy morning. For though I may have spoken feebly, as I am too conscious I have, God will have worked powerfully. And unto Him shall be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

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*END OF VOLUME FIVE*Sermon #1500 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

NUMBER 1500—OR, “LIFTING UP THE BRONZE SERPENT”  
NO. 1500

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 19, 1879, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.”  
Numbers 21:9.**

THIS discourse, when it shall be printed, will make 1,500 of my sermons which have been published regularly, week after week. This is certainly a remarkable fact. I do not know of any instance in modern times in which 1,500 sermons have thus followed each other from the press from one person and have continued to command a large circle of readers. I desire to utter most hearty thanksgivings to God for Divine help in thinking out and uttering these sermons, sermons which have not merely been printed, but have been read with eagerness and have also been translated into foreign tongues. These sermons are publicly being read on this very Sabbath in hundreds of places where a minister cannot be found. These sermons God has blessed to the conversion of multitudes of souls.

I may and I must joy and rejoice in this great blessing which I most heartily ascribe to the undeserved favor of the Lord! I thought the best way in which I could express my thankfulness would be to preach Jesus Christ, again, and set Him forth in a sermon in which the simple Gospel should be made as clear as a child’s alphabet. I hope that in closing the list of 1,500 discourses, the Lord will give me words which will be blessed more than any which have preceded them, to the conversion of those who hear it or read it. May those who sit in darkness because they do not understand the freeness of salvation and the easy method by which it may be obtained be brought into the light by discovering the way of peace through believing in Christ Jesus! Forgive this prelude. My thankfulness would not permit me to withhold it.

Concerning our text and the serpent of brass. If you turn to John’s Gospel you will notice that its commencement contains a sort of orderly list of types taken from Holy Scripture. It begins with the creation. God said, “Let there be light” and John begins by declaring that Jesus, the eternal Word, is “the true light, which lights every man that comes into the world.” Before he closes his first chapter, John has introduced a type supplied by Abel, for when the Baptist saw Jesus coming to him, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world.” Nor is the first chapter finished before we are reminded of Jacob’s ladder, for we find our Lord declaring to Nathanael, “Hereafter you shall see Heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

By the time we have reached the third chapter we have come as far as Israel in the wilderness and we read the joyful words, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” We are going to speak of this act of Moses this morning, that we may, all of us, behold the bronze serpent and find the promise true, “everyone that is bitten, when he looks upon the bronze serpent, shall live.”

It may be that you who have looked before will derive fresh benefit from looking again, while some who have never turned their eyes in that direction may gaze upon the lifted up Savior and, this morning, be saved from the burning venom of the serpent, that deadly poison of sin which now lurks in their nature and breeds death to their souls. May the Holy Spirit make the word effectual to that gracious end!

I. I shall invite you to consider the subject, first, by noticing THE PERSON IN MORTAL PERIL for whom the bronze serpent was made and lifted up. Our text says, “It came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.” Let us notice that the fiery serpents, first of all, came among the people because they had despised God’s way and God’s bread. “The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.” It was God’s way—He had chosen it for them and He had chosen it in wisdom and mercy—but they murmured at

it. As an old Divine says, “It was lonesome and loathsome,” but, still, it

was God’s way and, therefore, it ought not to have been loathsome—His pillar of fire and cloud went before them and His servants, Moses and Aaron, led them like a flock—and they ought to have followed cheerfully. Every step of their previous journey had been rightly ordered and they ought to have been quite sure that this compassing of the land of Edom was rightly ordered, too. But no, they quarreled with God’s way and wanted to have their own way. This is one of the great standing follies of men—they cannot be content to wait on the Lord and keep His way—they prefer a will and way of their own.

The people, also, quarreled with God’s food. He gave them the best of the best, for “men did eat angels’ food,” but they called the manna by an opprobrious title, which in the Hebrew has a sound of ridicule about it and, even in our translation, conveys the idea of contempt. They said, “Our soul loathes this light bread,” as if they thought it unsubstantial and only fit to puff them up because it was easy of digestion and did not breed in them that heat of blood and tendency to disease which a heavier diet would have brought with it. Being discontented with their God, they quarreled with the bread which He set upon their table, though it surpassed any that mortal man has ever eaten before or since.

This is another of man’s follies—his heart refuses to feed upon God’s Word or believe God’s Truth. He craves for the flesh-meat of carnal reason, the leeks and the garlic of superstitious tradition and the cucumbers of speculation! He cannot bring his mind down to believe the Word of God, or to accept a Truth of God so simple, so fitted to the capacity of a child. Many demand something deeper than the Divine, more profound than the infinite, more liberal than Free Grace. They quarrel with God’s way and with God’s bread and, therefore, there comes among them the fiery serpents of evil lusts, pride and sin.

I may be speaking to some who have, up to this moment, quarreled with the precepts and the doctrines of the Lord and I would affectionately warn them that their disobedience and presumption will lead to sin and misery. Rebels against God are apt to wax worse and worse. The world’s fashions and modes of thought lead on to the world’s vices and crimes. If we long for the fruits of Egypt, we shall soon feel the serpents of Egypt! The natural consequence of turning against God like serpents is to find serpents waylaying our path. If we forsake the Lord in spirit, or in doctrine, temptation will lurk in our path and sin will sting our feet.

I beg you carefully to observe, concerning those persons for whom the bronze serpent was specially lifted up, that they had been actually bitten by the serpents. The Lord sent fiery serpents among them, but it was not the serpents being among them that involved the lifting up of a bronze serpent—it was the serpents having actually poisoned them which led to the provision of a remedy. “It shall come to pass that everyone that is bitten, when he looks upon it, shall live.” The only people who looked and derived benefit from the wonderful cure lifted up in the midst of the camp were those who had been stung by the vipers.

The common notion is that salvation is for good people; salvation is for those who fight against temptation and salvation is for the spiritually healthy. But how different is God’s Word! God’s medicine is for the sick and His healing is for the diseased! The Grace of God, through the Atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, is for men who are actually and really guilty. We do not preach a sentimental salvation from fancied guilt, but real and true pardon for actual offenses! I care nothing for sham sinners—you who never did anything wrong, you who are so good in yourselves that you are all right, I leave you—for I am sent to preach Christ to those who are full of sin and worthy of eternal wrath!

The serpent of brass was a remedy for those who had been bitten. What an awful thing it is to be bitten by a serpent! I dare say some of you remember the case of Gurling, one of the keepers of the reptiles in the Zoological Gardens. It happened in October, 1852, and therefore some of you will remember it. This unhappy man was about to part with a friend who was going to Australia and, according to the account of many, he had a few drinks with him. He drank considerable quantities of gin and though he would probably have been in a great passion if anyone had called him drunk, yet reason and common sense had evidently become overpowered.

He went back to his post at the gardens in an inebriated state. He had, some months before, seen an exhibition of snake-charming, and this was on his poor muddled brain. He must emulate the Egyptians and play with serpents! First he took out of its cage a Morocco venom-snake, put it round his neck, twisted it about and whirled it round about him. Happily for him it did not arouse it so as to bite. The assistant keeper cried out, “For God’s sake put the snake back,” but the foolish man replied, “I am inspired.” Putting back the venom-snake, he exclaimed, “Now for the cobra.”

This deadly serpent was somewhat torpid with the cold of the previous night and, therefore, the rash man placed it in his bosom till it revived and glided downward till its head appeared below the back of his waistcoat. He took it by the body, about a foot from the head, and then seized it lower down with his other hand, intending to hold it by the tail and swing it round his head. He held it for an instant opposite to his face and like a flash of lightning the serpent struck him between the eyes. The blood streamed down his face and he called for help, but his companion fled in horror!

And, as he told the jury, he did not know how long he was gone, for he was “in a maze.” When assistance arrived, Gurling was sitting on a chair, having restored the cobra to its place. He said, “I am a dead man.” They put him in a cab and took him to the hospital. First his speech went—he could only point to his poor throat and moan. Then his vision failed him and lastly his hearing. His pulse gradually sank and in one hour from the time at which he had been struck, he was a corpse. There was only a little mark upon the bridge of his nose, but the poison spread over his body and he was a dead man.

I tell you that story that you may use it as a parable and learn never to play with sin and also, in order to bring vividly before you what it is to be bitten by a serpent. Suppose that Gurling could have been cured by looking at a piece of brass—would it not have been good news for him? There was no remedy for that poor infatuated creature, but there is a remedy for you! For men who have been bitten by the fiery serpents of sin, Jesus Christ is lifted up—not only for you who are, as yet, playing with the serpent; not only for you who have warmed it in your bosom and felt it creeping over your flesh—but for you who are actually bitten and are mortally wounded! If any man were bitten so that he has become diseased with sin and feels the deadly venom in his blood, it is for him that Jesus is set forth today. Though he may think himself to be an extreme case, it is for such that Sovereign Grace provides a remedy!

The bite of the serpent was painful . We are told in the text that these serpents were “fiery,” a word which may, perhaps, refer to their color, but more probably has reference to the burning effects of their venom. It heated and inflamed the blood so that every vein became a boiling river, swollen with anguish. In some men that poison of asps which we call sin has inflamed their minds. They are restless, discontented and full of fear and anguish. They write their own damnation—they are sure that they are lost—they refuse all tidings of hope. You cannot get them to give a cool and sober hearing to the message of Grace. Sin works in them such terror that they give themselves over as dead men. They are in their own apprehension, as David says, “free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom God remembers no more.”

It was for men bitten by the fiery serpents that the bronze serpent was lifted up and it is for men actually envenomed by sin that Jesus is preached. Jesus died for such as are at their wits’ end—for such as cannot think straight, for those who are tumbled up and down in their minds, for those who are condemned already—for such was the Son of Man lifted up upon the Cross! What a joyful thing that we are able to tell you this. The bite of these serpents was, as I have told you, mortal. The

Israelites could have no question about that, because in their own presence, “much people of Israel died.” They saw their own friends die of the snakebite and they helped to bury them. They knew why they died and were sure that it was because the venom of the fiery serpents was in their veins. They were left without an excuse for imagining that they could be bitten and yet live.

Now, we know that many have perished as the result of sin. We are not in doubt as to what sin will do, for we are told by the Infallible Word that, “the wages of sin is death,” and, yet again, “Sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.” We know, also, that this death is endless misery, for the Scripture describes the lost as being cast into outer darkness, “where their worm dies not and their fire is not quenched.” Our Lord Jesus speaks of the condemned going away into everlasting punishment where there shall be weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. We ought to have no doubt about this! But most of those who profess to doubt it are those who fear that it will be their own portion—they know that they are going down to eternal woe themselves and, therefore, they try to shut their eyes to their inevitable doom.

Alas, that they should find flatterers in the pulpit who pander to their love of sin by piping to the same tune. We are not of their order! We believe in what the Lord has said in all its solemnity of dread and, knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men to escape from them. But it was for men who had endured the mortal bite, for men upon whose pallid faces death began to set his seal, for men whose veins were burning with the awful poison of the serpent within them—for them it was that God said to Moses, “Make you a fiery serpent and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that everyone that is bitten, when he looks upon it shall live.”

There is no limit set to the stage of poisoning. However far gone, the remedy still had power! If a person had been bitten a moment before, though he only saw a few drops of blood oozing forth and only felt a little smart, he might look and live! And if he had waited, unhappily waited, even for half an hour and speech failed him and the pulse grew feeble, yet if he could but look he would live at once! No boundary was set to the virtue of this Divinely ordained remedy, or to the freedom of its application to those who needed it. The promise had no qualifying clause, “It shall come to pass that everyone that is bitten, when he looks upon it, shall live.”

And our text tells us that God’s promise came to pass in every case, without exception, for we read—“It came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.” Thus I have described the person who was in mortal peril.

II. Secondly, let us consider THE REMEDY PROVIDED FOR HIM. This was as singular as it was effectual. It was purely of Divine origin and it is clear that the invention of it and the putting of power into it was entirely of God. Men have prescribed several medicines, decoctions and operations for serpent bites—I do not know how far any of them may be depended upon, but this I know—I would rather not be bitten in order to try any of them, even those that are most in vogue! For the bites of the fiery serpents in the wilderness there was no remedy whatever, except this which God had provided and, at first sight, that remedy must have seemed to be a very unlikely one.

A simple look to the figure of a serpent on a pole? How unlikely to be a cure! How and by what means could a cure be worked through merely looking at twisted brass? It seemed, indeed, to be almost a mockery to bid men look at the very thing which had caused their misery. Shall the bite of a serpent be cured by looking at a serpent? Shall that which brings death also bring life? But herein lay the excellency of the remedy, that it was of Divine origin—for when God ordains a cure He is, by that very fact, bound to put potency into it. He will not devise a failure, nor prescribe a mockery! It should always be enough for us to know that God ordains a way of blessing us, for if He ordains, it must accomplish the promised result.

We need not know how it will work, it is quite sufficient for us that God’s mighty Grace is pledged to make it bring forth good to our souls. This particular remedy of a serpent lifted on a pole was exceedingly instructive, though I do not suppose that Israel understood it. We have been taught by our Lord and know the meaning. It was a serpent impaled upon a pole. As you would take a sharp pole and drive it through a serpent’s head to kill it, so this bronze serpent was exhibited as killed and hung up as dead before all eyes. It was the image of a dead snake. Wonder of wonders that our Lord Jesus should condescend to be symbolized by a dead serpent!

The instruction to us, after reading John’s Gospel, is this—our Lord Jesus Christ, in infinite humiliation, deigned to come into the world and to be made a curse for us. The bronze serpent had no venom of itself, but it took the form of a fiery serpent. Christ is no sinner and in Him is no sin. But the bronze serpent was in the form of a serpent and so was Jesus sent forth by God, “in the likeness of sinful flesh.” He came under the Law and sin was imputed to Him and, therefore, He came under the wrath and curse of God for our sakes. In Christ Jesus, if you will look at Him upon the Cross, you will see that sin is slain and hung up as a dead serpent—there, too, is death put to death, for, “He has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light”—and there is also the curse forever ended because He has endured it, being “made a curse for us, as it is written, cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.”

Thus are these serpents hung up upon the cross as a spectacle to all beholders, all slain by our dying Lord. Sin, death, and the curse are as dead serpents now. Oh, what a sight! If you can see it, what joy it will give you! Had the Hebrews understood it, that dead serpent dangling from a pole would have prophesied to them the glorious sight which this day our faith gazes upon Jesus slain and sin, death and Hell slain in Him! The remedy, then, to be looked to, was exceedingly instructive and we know the instruction it was intended to convey to us.

Please remember that in all the camp of Israel there was but one remedy for a serpent bite and that was the bronze serpent—and there was but one bronze serpent, not two. Israel might not make another. If they had made a second, it would have had no effect. There was one and only one—and that was lifted high in the center of the camp, that if any man was bitten by a serpent he might look to it and live. There is one Savior and only one! There is no other name given under Heaven among men whereby we must be saved. All Grace is concentrated in Jesus, of whom we read, “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.”

Christ’s bearing the curse and ending the curse; Christ’s being slain by sin and destroying sin; Christ bruised as to His heel by the old serpent, but breaking the serpent’s head—it is Christ alone that we must look to if we would live. O Sinner, look to Jesus on the Cross, for He is the one remedy for all forms of sin’s poisoned wounds! There was but one healing serpent and that one was bright and lustrous. It was a serpent of brass and brass is a shining metal. This was newly-made brass and, therefore, not dull, and whenever the sun shone on it, there flashed forth a brightness from this bronze serpent. It might have been a serpent of wood or of any other metal if God had so ordained, but He commanded that it must be of brass, that it might have brightness about it.

What brightness there is about our Lord Jesus Christ! If we do but exhibit Him in His own true metal He is lustrous in the eyes of men. If we will but preach the Gospel simply and never think to adorn it with our philosophical thoughts, there is enough brightness in Christ to catch a sinner’s eye—yes, and it does catch the eyes of thousands! From afar the everlasting Gospel gleams in the Person of Christ. As the bronze standard reflected the beams of the sun, so Jesus reflects the love of God to sinners and, seeing it, they look by faith and live!

Once more, this remedy was an enduring one. It was a serpent of brass and I suppose it remained in the midst of the camp from that day forward. There was no use for it after Israel entered Canaan, but, as long as they were in the wilderness, it was probably exhibited in the center of the camp, hard by the tabernacle door, upon a lofty standard. Aloft and open to the gaze of all hung this image of a dead snake—the perpetual cure for serpent venom! Had it been made of other materials it might have been broken, or have decayed—but a serpent of brass would last as long as fiery serpents pestered the desert camp. As long as there was a man bitten, there was the serpent of brass to heal him.

What a comfort is this, that Jesus is still able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him, seeing He always lives to make intercession for them. The dying thief beheld the brightness of that serpent of brass as he saw Jesus hanging at his side and it saved him! And so may you and I look and live, for He is “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.”—

*“Faint my head, and sick my heart,  
Wounded, bruised, in every part.  
Satan’s fiery sting I feel  
Poisoned with the pride of Hell.  
But if at the point to die,  
Upward I direct my eye,  
Jesus lifted up I see,  
I live by Him who died for me.”*

I hope I do not overlay my subject by these figures. I wish not to do so, but to make it very plain to you. All you that are really guilty, all you who are bitten by the serpent, the sure remedy for you is to look to Jesus Christ who took our sin upon Himself and died in the sinner’s stead, “being made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Your only remedy lies in Christ and nowhere else. Look unto Him and be you saved!

III. This brings us, in the third place, to consider THE APPLICATION OF THE REMEDY, or the link between the serpent-bitten man and the brass serpent which was to heal him. What was the link? It was of the most simple kind imaginable. The bronze serpent might have been, if God had so ordered it, carried into the house where the sick man was, but it was not so. It might have been applied to him by rubbing—he might have been expected to repeat a certain form of prayer, or to have a priest present to perform a ceremony. But there was nothing of the kind. He had only to look!

It was well that the cure was so simple for the danger was so frequent. Bites of the serpent came in many ways. A man might be gathering sticks, or merely walking along and be bitten. Even now in the desert serpents are a danger. Mr. Sibree says that on one occasion he saw what he thought to be a round stone, beautifully marked. He put forth his hand to take it up, when, to his horror, he discovered that it was a coiled living serpent! All day long, when fiery serpents were sent among them, the Israelites must have been in danger. In their beds and at their meals; in their houses and when they went abroad they were in danger.

These serpents are called by Isaiah, “flying serpents,” not because they fly, but because they contract themselves and then suddenly spring up so as to reach to a considerable height. A man might be well off his tent floor and yet not be beyond the reach of one of these malignant reptiles. What was a man to do? He had nothing to do but to stand outside his tent door and look to the place where gleamed afar the brightness of the serpent of brass! And the moment he looked, he was healed! He had nothing to do but to look! No priest was needed, no holy water, no hocuspocus, no mass-book—nothing but a look!

A Romish bishop said to one of the early Reformers, when he preached salvation by simple faith, “O Mr. Doctor, open that gap to the people and we are undone!” And so, indeed, they are, for the business and trade of priestcraft are ended forever if men may simply trust Jesus and live. Yet it is even so! Believe in Him, you sinners—for this is the spiritual meaning of looking—and at once your sin is forgiven! And what, perhaps, is more, its deadly power ceases to operate within your spirit. There is life in a look at Jesus! Is not this simple enough?

But please notice how very personal it was. A man could not be cured by anything anybody else could do for him. If he had been bitten by the serpent and had refused to look to the serpent of brass and had gone to his bed, no physician could help him. A pious mother might kneel down and pray for him, but it would be of no use. Sisters might come in and plead; ministers might be called in to pray that the man might live; but he must die in spite of their prayers if he did not look. There was only one hope for his life—he must look to that serpent of brass!

It is just so with you. Some of you have written to me begging me to pray for you. And so I have, but it means nothing unless you, yourselves, believe in Jesus Christ. There is not beneath Heaven, nor in Heaven, any hope for any one of you unless you will believe in Jesus Christ! Whoever you may be, however much bitten of the serpent and however near to die, if you will look to the Savior you shall live! But if you will not do this, you must be damned, as surely as you live. At the Last Great Day I must bear witness against you that I have told you this straight out and plainly—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved: he that believes not shall be damned.”

There is no help for it. You may do what you will, join what Church you please, take the Lord’s Supper, be baptized, go through severe penance, or give all your goods to feed the poor—but you are a lost man unless you look to Jesus, for this is the only remedy! And even Jesus Christ Himself cannot, will not, save you unless you look to Him. There is nothing in His death to save you. There is nothing in His life to save you unless you will trust Him. It has come to this—you must look—and look for yourself.

And then, again, it is very instructive. This looking, what did it mean? It meant this—self-help must be abandoned and God must be trusted. The wounded man would say, “I must not sit here and look at my wound, for that will not save me. See there where the serpent struck me? The blood is oozing forth, black with the venom! How it burns and swells! My very heart is failing. But all these reflections will not ease me. I must look away from this to the lifted up serpent of brass.” It is idle to look anywhere except to God’s one ordained remedy. The Israelites must have understood as much as this, that God required us to trust Him and to use His means of salvation. We must do as He bids us and trust in Him to work our cure—if we will not do this, we shall die eternally.

This way of curing was intended that they might magnify the love of God and attribute their healing entirely to Divine Grace. The bronze serpent was not merely a picture, as I have shown you, of God’s putting away sin by spending His wrath upon His Son, but it was a display of Divine Love. And this I know because Jesus Himself said, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up. For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son.” He was plainly saying that the death of Christ upon the Cross was an exhibition of God’s love to men and whoever looks to that grand display of God’s love to man, namely, His giving His only-begotten Son to become a curse for us, shall surely live.

Now, when a man was healed by looking at the serpent, he could not say that he healed himself, for he only looked and there is no virtue in a look. A Believer never claims merit or honor on account of his faith. Faith is a self-denying Grace and never dares to boast. Where is the great credit of simply believing the Truth of God and humbly trusting Christ to save you? Faith glorifies God and so our Lord has chosen it as the means of our salvation. If a priest had come and touched the bitten man, he might have ascribed some honor to the priest. But when there was no priest in the case; when there was nothing except looking to that bronze serpent, the man was driven to the conclusion that God’s love and power had healed him.

I am not saved by anything that I have done, but by what the Lord has done. To that conclusion God will have us all come—we must all confess that if saved, it is by His free, rich, sovereign, undeserved Grace displayed in the Person of His dear Son.

IV. Allow me one moment upon the fourth head, which is THE CURE EFFECTED. We are told in the text that, “if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.” That is to say, he was healed at once. He had not to wait five minutes, or five seconds. Dear Hearer, did you ever hear this before? If you have not, it may startle you, but it is true. If you have lived in the blackest sin that is possible up to this very moment, yet if you will now believe in Jesus Christ, you shall be saved before the clock ticks another time! It is done like a flash of lightning! Pardon is not a work of time.

Sanctification needs a lifetime, but justification needs no more than a moment. You believe, you live! You trust Christ, your sins are gone! You are a saved man the instant you believe! “Oh,” says one, “that is a wonder.” It is a wonder and will remain a wonder to all eternity. Our Lord’s miracles, when He was on earth, were mostly instantaneous. He touched them and the fevered ones were able to sit up and minister to Him. No doctor can cure a fever in that fashion, for there is a resultant weakness left after the heat of the fever is abated. Jesus works perfect cures and whoever believes in Him, though he has only believed one minute, is justified from all his sins. Oh the matchless Grace of God!

This remedy healed again and again . Very possibly, after a man had been healed, he might go back to his work and be attacked by a second serpent, for there were broods of them about. What had he to do? Why, to look again! And if he was wounded a thousand times, he must look a thousand times! You, dear child of God, if you have sin on your conscience, look to Jesus! The healthiest way of living where serpents swarm is never to take your eyes off the bronze serpent at all. Ah, you vipers, you may bite if you will, but as long as my eyes are upon the bronze serpent, I defy your fangs and poison, for I have a continual remedy at work within me! Temptation is overcome by the blood of Jesus! “This is the victory which overcomes the world, even our faith.”

This cure was of universal efficacy to all who used it . There was not one case, in all the camp, of a man that looked to the serpent of brass and yet died. And there never will be a case of a man that looks to Jesus who remains under condemnation! The Believer must be saved. Some of the people had to look from a long distance. The pole could not be equally near to everybody, but so long as they could see the serpent it healed those that were afar off as well as those who were near. Nor did it matter if their eyes were feeble. All eyes were not alike keen. Some may have had to squint, or had dimness of vision, or only one eye—but if they did but look, they lived!

Perhaps the man could hardly make out the shape of the serpent as he looked. “Ah,” he said to himself, “I cannot discern the coils of the bronze snake, but I can see the shining of the brass.” And he lived! Oh, poor Soul, if you cannot see the whole of Christ nor all His beauties, nor all the riches of His Grace, yet if you can but see Him who was made sin for us, you shall live! If you say, “Lord, I believe; help You my unbelief,” your faith will save you! A little faith will give you a great Christ and you shall find eternal life in Him.

Thus I have tried to describe the cure. Oh that the Lord would work that cure in every sinner here at this moment. I do pray He may! It is a pleasant thought that if they looked to that bronze serpent by any kind of light they lived. Many beheld it in the glare of noon and saw its shining coils and lived. But I should not wonder that some were bitten at night and by the moonlight they drew near and looked up and lived. Perhaps it was a dark and stormy night and not a star was visible. The tempest crashed overhead and from the murky cloud out flashed the lightning, cleaving the rocks asunder. By the glare of that sudden flame the dying man made out the bronze serpent and though he saw but for a moment yet he lived.

So, Sinner, if your soul is wrapped in tempest and if from out the clouds there comes but one single flash of light, look to Jesus Christ by it and you shall live!

V. I close with this last matter of consideration—here is A LESSON FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THEIR LORD. What ought we to do? We should imitate Moses, whose business it was to set the bronze serpent upon a pole. It is your business and mine to lift up the Gospel of Christ Jesus so that all may see it! All Moses had to do was to hang up the bronze serpent in the sight of all. He did not say, “Aaron, bring your censer and bring with you a score of priests and make a perfumed cloud.” Nor did he say, “I myself will go forth in my robes as Law-Giver and stand there.”

No, he had nothing to do that was pompous or ceremonial! He had but to exhibit the brass serpent and leave it naked and open to the gaze of all. He did not say, “Aaron, bring here a cloth of gold, wrap up the serpent in blue and scarlet and fine linen.” Such an act would have been clean contrary to his orders. He was to keep the serpent unveiled. Its power lay in itself—not in its surroundings. The Lord did not tell him to paint the pole, or to deck it with the colors of the rainbow. Oh, no! Any pole would do!

The dying ones did not need to see the pole—they only needed to behold the serpent. I dare say he would make a neat pole, for God’s work should be done decently, but still the serpent was the only thing to look at. This is what we have to do with our Lord. We must preach Him, teach Him and make Him visible to all! We must not conceal Him by our attempts at eloquence and learning. We must have done with the polished lancewood pole of fine speech and those bits of scarlet and blue in the form of grand sentences and poetic periods. Everything must be done that Christ may be seen and nothing must be allowed which hides Him. Moses may go home and go to bed when the serpent is once lifted up. All that is needed is that the bronze serpent should be within view both day and night. The preacher may hide himself so that nobody may know who he is, for if he has set forth Christ, he is best out of the way.

Now, you teachers, teach your children Jesus. Show them Christ Crucified! Keep Christ before them. You young men that try to preach, do not attempt to do it grandly. The true grandeur of preaching is for Christ to be grandly displayed in it. No other grandeur is needed! Keep self in the background and set forth Jesus Christ among the people, evidently crucified among them. None but Jesus, none but Jesus! Let Him be the sum and substance of all your teaching. Some of you have looked to the bronze serpent, I know, and you have been healed. But what have you done with the bronze serpent since? You have not come forward to confess your faith and join the Church. You have not spoken to any one about his soul. You put the bronze serpent into a chest and hide it away. Is this right?

Bring it out and set it on a pole! Publish Christ and His salvation! He was never meant to be treated as a curiosity in a museum. He is intended to be exhibited in the highways that those who are sin-bitten may look at Him. “But I have no proper pole,” says one. The best sort of pole to exhibit Christ upon is a high one so that He may be seen the further. Exalt Jesus! Speak well of His name. I do not know any other virtue that there can be in the pole but its height. The more you can speak in your Lord’s praise, the higher you can lift Him up, the better! But for all other styles of speech there is nothing to be said. Lift Christ UP!

“Oh,” says one, “but I have not a long standard.” Then lift Him up on such as you have, for there are short people about who will be able to see by your means. I think I told you once of a picture which I saw of the bronze serpent. I want the Sunday school teachers to listen to this. The artist represented all sorts of people clustering round the pole and as they looked, the horrible snakes dropped off their arms and they lived! There was such a crowd around the pole that a mother could not get near it. She carried a little babe, which a serpent had bitten. You could see the blue marks of the venom. As she could get no nearer, the mother held her child aloft and turned its little head that it might gaze with its infant eyes upon the bronze serpent and live.

Do this with your little children, you Sunday school teachers! Even while they are yet little, pray that they may look to Jesus Christ and live, for there is no boundary set to their age. Old men, snake-bitten, came hobbling on their crutches. “Eighty years old am I,” says one, “but I have looked to the bronze serpent and I am healed.” Little boys were brought out by their mothers, though as yet they could hardly speak plainly, and they cried in child language, “I look at the great snake and it blesses me.” All ranks, sexes, characters and dispositions looked and lived! Who will look to Jesus at this good hour? O dear Souls, will you have life or not? Will you despise Christ and perish? If so, your blood be on your own head! I have told you God’s way of salvation! Lay hold on it. Look to Jesus at once! May His Spirit gently lead you to do so. Amen.

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NUMBER 1500, OR LIFTING UP THE BRONZE SERPENT  
NO. 1500

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 19, 1879, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.”  
Numbers 21:9.**

THIS discourse, when it shall be printed, will make 1,500 of my sermons which have been published regularly, week after week. This is certainly a remarkable fact. I do not know of any instance in modern times in which 1,500 sermons have thus followed each other from the press from one person and have continued to command a large circle of readers. I desire to utter most hearty thanksgivings to God for Divine help in thinking out and uttering these sermons, sermons which have not merely been printed, but have been read with eagerness and have also been translated into foreign tongues. These sermons are publicly being read on this very Sabbath in hundreds of places where a minister cannot be found. These sermons God has blessed to the conversion of multitudes of souls.

I may and I must joy and rejoice in this great blessing which I most heartily ascribe to the undeserved favor of the Lord! I thought the best way in which I could express my thankfulness would be to preach Jesus Christ, again, and set Him forth in a sermon in which the simple Gospel should be made as clear as a child’s alphabet. I hope that in closing the list of 1,500 discourses, the Lord will give me words which will be blessed more than any which have preceded them, to the conversion of those who hear it or read it. May those who sit in darkness because they do not understand the freeness of salvation and the easy method by which it may be obtained be brought into the light by discovering the way of peace through believing in Christ Jesus! Forgive this prelude. My thankfulness would not permit me to withhold it.

Concerning our text and the serpent of brass. If you turn to John’s Gospel you will notice that its commencement contains a sort of orderly list of types taken from Holy Scripture. It begins with the creation. God said, “Let there be light” and John begins by declaring that Jesus, the eternal Word, is “the true light, which lights every man that comes into the world.” Before he closes his first chapter, John has introduced a type supplied by Abel, for when the Baptist saw Jesus coming to him, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world.” Nor is the first chapter finished before we are reminded of Jacob’s ladder, for we find our Lord declaring to Nathanael, “Hereafter you shall see Heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”  
By the time we have reached the third chapter we have come as far as

Israel in the wilderness and we read the joyful words, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” We are going to speak of this act of Moses this morning, that we may, all of us, behold the bronze serpent and find the promise true, “everyone that is bitten, when he looks upon the bronze serpent, shall live.”

It may be that you who have looked before will derive fresh benefit from looking again, while some who have never turned their eyes in that direction may gaze upon the lifted up Savior and, this morning, be saved from the burning venom of the serpent, that deadly poison of sin which now lurks in their nature and breeds death to their souls. May the Holy Spirit make the word effectual to that gracious end!

I. I shall invite you to consider the subject, first, by noticing THE PERSON IN MORTAL PERIL for whom the bronze serpent was made and lifted up. Our text says, “It came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.” Let us notice that the fiery serpents, first of all, came among the people because they had despised God’s way and God’s bread. “The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.” It was God’s way—He had chosen it for them and He had chosen it in wisdom and mercy—but they murmured at it.

As an old Divine says, “It was lonesome and loathsome,” but, still, it was God’s way and, therefore, it ought not to have been loathsome—His pillar of fire and cloud went before them and His servants, Moses and Aaron, led them like a flock—and they ought to have followed cheerfully. Every step of their previous journey had been rightly ordered and they ought to have been quite sure that this compassing of the land of Edom was rightly ordered, too. But no, they quarreled with God’s way and wanted to have their own way. This is one of the great standing follies of men—they cannot be content to wait on the Lord and keep His way—they prefer a will and way of their own.

The people, also, quarreled with God’s food. He gave them the best of the best, for “men did eat angels’ food,” but they called the manna by an opprobrious title, which in the Hebrew has a sound of ridicule about it and, even in our translation, conveys the idea of contempt. They said, “Our soul loathes this light bread,” as if they thought it unsubstantial and only fit to puff them up because it was easy of digestion and did not breed in them that heat of blood and tendency to disease which a heavier diet would have brought with it. Being discontented with their God, they quarreled with the bread which He set upon their table, though it surpassed any that mortal man has ever eaten before or since.

This is another of man’s follies—his heart refuses to feed upon God’s Word or believe God’s Truth. He craves for the flesh-meat of carnal reason, the leeks and the garlic of superstitious tradition and the cucumbers of speculation! He cannot bring his mind down to believe the Word of God, or to accept a Truth of God so simple, so fitted to the capacity of a child. Many demand something deeper than the Divine, more profound than the infinite, more liberal than Free Grace. They quarrel with God’s way and with God’s bread and, therefore, there comes among them the fiery serpents of evil lusts, pride and sin.

I may be speaking to some who have, up to this moment, quarreled with the precepts and the doctrines of the Lord and I would affectionately warn them that their disobedience and presumption will lead to sin and misery. Rebels against God are apt to wax worse and worse. The world’s fashions and modes of thought lead on to the world’s vices and crimes. If we long for the fruits of Egypt, we shall soon feel the serpents of Egypt! The natural consequence of turning against God like serpents is to find serpents waylaying our path. If we forsake the Lord in spirit, or in doctrine, temptation will lurk in our path and sin will sting our feet.

I beg you carefully to observe, concerning those persons for whom the bronze serpent was specially lifted up, that they had been actually bitten by the serpents. The Lord sent fiery serpents among them, but it was not the serpents being among them that involved the lifting up of a bronze serpent—it was the serpents having actually poisoned them which led to the provision of a remedy. “It shall come to pass that everyone that is bitten, when he looks upon it, shall live.” The only people who looked and derived benefit from the wonderful cure lifted up in the midst of the camp were those who had been stung by the vipers.

The common notion is that salvation is for good people; salvation is for those who fight against temptation and salvation is for the spiritually healthy. But how different is God’s Word! God’s medicine is for the sick and His healing is for the diseased! The Grace of God, through the Atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, is for men who are actually and really guilty. We do not preach a sentimental salvation from fancied guilt, but real and true pardon for actual offenses! I care nothing for sham sinners— you who never did anything wrong, you who are so good in yourselves that you are all right, I leave you—for I am sent to preach Christ to those who are full of sin and worthy of eternal wrath!

The serpent of brass was a remedy for those who had been bitten. What an awful thing it is to be bitten by a serpent! I dare say some of you remember the case of Gurling, one of the keepers of the reptiles in the Zoological Gardens. It happened in October, 1852, and therefore some of you will remember it. This unhappy man was about to part with a friend who was going to Australia and, according to the account of many, he had a few drinks with him. He drank considerable quantities of gin and though he would probably have been in a great passion if anyone had called him drunk, yet reason and common sense had evidently become overpowered.

He went back to his post at the gardens in an inebriated state. He had, some months before, seen an exhibition of snake-charming, and this was on his poor muddled brain. He must emulate the Egyptians and play with serpents! First he took out of its cage a Morocco venom-snake, put it round his neck, twisted it about and whirled it round about him. Happily for him it did not arouse it so as to bite. The assistant keeper cried out, “For God’s sake put the snake back,” but the foolish man replied, “I am inspired.” Putting back the venom-snake, he exclaimed, “Now for the cobra.”

This deadly serpent was somewhat torpid with the cold of the previous night and, therefore, the rash man placed it in his bosom till it revived and glided downward till its head appeared below the back of his waistcoat. He took it by the body, about a foot from the head, and then seized it lower down with his other hand, intending to hold it by the tail and swing it round his head. He held it for an instant opposite to his face and like a flash of lightning the serpent struck him between the eyes. The blood streamed down his face and he called for help, but his companion fled in horror!

And, as he told the jury, he did not know how long he was gone, for he was “in a maze.” When assistance arrived, Gurling was sitting on a chair, having restored the cobra to its place. He said, “I am a dead man.” They put him in a cab and took him to the hospital. First his speech went—he could only point to his poor throat and moan. Then his vision failed him and lastly his hearing. His pulse gradually sank and in one hour from the time at which he had been struck, he was a corpse. There was only a little mark upon the bridge of his nose, but the poison spread over his body and he was a dead man.

I tell you that story that you may use it as a parable and learn never to play with sin and also, in order to bring vividly before you what it is to be bitten by a serpent. Suppose that Gurling could have been cured by looking at a piece of brass—would it not have been good news for him? There was no remedy for that poor infatuated creature, but there is a remedy for you! For men who have been bitten by the fiery serpents of sin, Jesus Christ is lifted up—not only for you who are, as yet, playing with the serpent; not only for you who have warmed it in your bosom and felt it creeping over your flesh—but for you who are actually bitten and are mortally wounded! If any man were bitten so that he has become diseased with sin and feels the deadly venom in his blood, it is for him that Jesus is set forth today. Though he may think himself to be an extreme case, it is for such that Sovereign Grace provides a remedy!

The bite of the serpent was painful . We are told in the text that these serpents were “fiery,” a word which may, perhaps, refer to their color, but more probably has reference to the burning effects of their venom. It heated and inflamed the blood so that every vein became a boiling river, swollen with anguish. In some men that poison of asps which we call sin has inflamed their minds. They are restless, discontented and full of fear and anguish. They write their own damnation—they are sure that they are lost—they refuse all tidings of hope. You cannot get them to give a cool and sober hearing to the message of Grace. Sin works in them such terror that they give themselves over as dead men. They are in their own apprehension, as David says, “free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom God remembers no more.”

It was for men bitten by the fiery serpents that the bronze serpent was lifted up and it is for men actually envenomed by sin that Jesus is preached. Jesus died for such as are at their wits’ end—for such as cannot think straight, for those who are tumbled up and down in their minds, for those who are condemned already—for such was the Son of Man lifted up upon the Cross! What a joyful thing that we are able to tell you this.

The bite of these serpents was, as I have told you, mortal . The Israelites could have no question about that, because in their own presence, “much people of Israel died.” They saw their own friends die of the snakebite and they helped to bury them. They knew why they died and were sure that it was because the venom of the fiery serpents was in their veins. They were left without an excuse for imagining that they could be bitten and yet live.

Now, we know that many have perished as the result of sin. We are not in doubt as to what sin will do, for we are told by the Infallible Word that, “the wages of sin is death,” and, yet again, “Sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.” We know, also, that this death is endless misery, for the Scripture describes the lost as being cast into outer darkness, “where their worm dies not and their fire is not quenched.” Our Lord Jesus speaks of the condemned going away into everlasting punishment where there shall be weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. We ought to have no doubt about this! But most of those who profess to doubt it are those who fear that it will be their own portion—they know that they are going down to eternal woe themselves and, therefore, they try to shut their eyes to their inevitable doom.

Alas, that they should find flatterers in the pulpit who pander to their love of sin by piping to the same tune. We are not of their order! We believe in what the Lord has said in all its solemnity of dread and, knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men to escape from them. But it was for men who had endured the mortal bite, for men upon whose pallid faces death began to set his seal, for men whose veins were burning with the awful poison of the serpent within them—for them it was that God said to Moses, “Make you a fiery serpent and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that everyone that is bitten, when he looks upon it shall live.”

There is no limit set to the stage of poisoning. However far gone, the remedy still had power! If a person had been bitten a moment before, though he only saw a few drops of blood oozing forth and only felt a little smart, he might look and live! And if he had waited, unhappily waited, even for half an hour and speech failed him and the pulse grew feeble, yet if he could but look he would live at once! No boundary was set to the virtue of this Divinely ordained remedy, or to the freedom of its application to those who needed it. The promise had no qualifying clause, “It shall come to pass that everyone that is bitten, when he looks upon it, shall live.”

And our text tells us that God’s promise came to pass in every case, without exception, for we read—“It came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.” Thus I have described the person who was in mortal peril.

II. Secondly, let us consider THE REMEDY PROVIDED FOR HIM. This was as singular as it was effectual. It was purely of Divine origin and it is clear that the invention of it and the putting of power into it was entirely of God. Men have prescribed several medicines, decoctions and operations for serpent bites—I do not know how far any of them may be depended upon, but this I know—I would rather not be bitten in order to try any of them, even those that are most in vogue! For the bites of the fiery serpents in the wilderness there was no remedy whatever, except this which God had provided and, at first sight, that remedy must have seemed to be a

very unlikely one.

A simple look to the figure of a serpent on a pole? How unlikely to be a cure! How and by what means could a cure be worked through merely looking at twisted brass? It seemed, indeed, to be almost a mockery to bid men look at the very thing which had caused their misery. Shall the bite of a serpent be cured by looking at a serpent? Shall that which brings death also bring life? But herein lay the excellency of the remedy, that it was of Divine origin—for when God ordains a cure He is, by that very fact, bound to put potency into it. He will not devise a failure, nor prescribe a mockery! It should always be enough for us to know that God ordains a way of blessing us, for if He ordains, it must accomplish the promised result.

We need not know how it will work, it is quite sufficient for us that God’s mighty Grace is pledged to make it bring forth good to our souls. This particular remedy of a serpent lifted on a pole was exceedingly instructive, though I do not suppose that Israel understood it. We have been taught by our Lord and know the meaning. It was a serpent impaled upon a pole. As you would take a sharp pole and drive it through a serpent’s head to kill it, so this bronze serpent was exhibited as killed and hung up as dead before all eyes. It was the image of a dead snake. Wonder of wonders that our Lord Jesus should condescend to be symbolized by a dead serpent!

The instruction to us, after reading John’s Gospel, is this—our Lord Jesus Christ, in infinite humiliation, deigned to come into the world and to be made a curse for us. The bronze serpent had no venom of itself, but it took the form of a fiery serpent. Christ is no sinner and in Him is no sin. But the bronze serpent was in the form of a serpent and so was Jesus sent forth by God, “in the likeness of sinful flesh.” He came under the Law and sin was imputed to Him and, therefore, He came under the wrath and curse of God for our sakes. In Christ Jesus, if you will look at Him upon the Cross, you will see that sin is slain and hung up as a dead serpent— there, too, is death put to death, for, “He has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light”—and there is also the curse forever ended because He has endured it, being “made a curse for us, as it is written, cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.”

Thus are these serpents hung up upon the cross as a spectacle to all beholders, all slain by our dying Lord. Sin, death, and the curse are as dead serpents now. Oh, what a sight! If you can see it, what joy it will give you! Had the Hebrews understood it, that dead serpent dangling from a pole would have prophesied to them the glorious sight which this day our faith gazes upon Jesus slain and sin, death and Hell slain in Him! The remedy, then, to be looked to, was exceedingly instructive and we know the instruction it was intended to convey to us.

Please remember that in all the camp of Israel there was but one remedy for a serpent bite and that was the bronze serpent—and there was but one bronze serpent, not two. Israel might not make another. If they had made a second, it would have had no effect. There was one and only one— and that was lifted high in the center of the camp, that if any man was bitten by a serpent he might look to it and live. There is one Savior and only one! There is no other name given under Heaven among men whereby we must be saved. All Grace is concentrated in Jesus, of whom we read, “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.”

Christ’s bearing the curse and ending the curse; Christ’s being slain by sin and destroying sin; Christ bruised as to His heel by the old serpent, but breaking the serpent’s head—it is Christ alone that we must look to if we would live. O Sinner, look to Jesus on the Cross, for He is the one remedy for all forms of sin’s poisoned wounds! There was but one healing serpent and that one was bright and lustrous. It was a serpent of brass and brass is a shining metal. This was newly-made brass and, therefore, not dull, and whenever the sun shone on it, there flashed forth a brightness from this bronze serpent. It might have been a serpent of wood or of any other metal if God had so ordained, but He commanded that it must be of brass, that it might have brightness about it.

What brightness there is about our Lord Jesus Christ! If we do but exhibit Him in His own true metal He is lustrous in the eyes of men. If we will but preach the Gospel simply and never think to adorn it with our philosophical thoughts, there is enough brightness in Christ to catch a sinner’s eye—yes, and it does catch the eyes of thousands! From afar the everlasting Gospel gleams in the Person of Christ. As the bronze standard reflected the beams of the sun, so Jesus reflects the love of God to sinners and, seeing it, they look by faith and live!

Once more, this remedy was an enduring one. It was a serpent of brass and I suppose it remained in the midst of the camp from that day forward. There was no use for it after Israel entered Canaan, but, as long as they were in the wilderness, it was probably exhibited in the center of the camp, hard by the tabernacle door, upon a lofty standard. Aloft and open to the gaze of all hung this image of a dead snake—the perpetual cure for serpent venom! Had it been made of other materials it might have been broken, or have decayed—but a serpent of brass would last as long as fiery serpents pestered the desert camp. As long as there was a man bitten, there was the serpent of brass to heal him.

What a comfort is this, that Jesus is still able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him, seeing He always lives to make intercession for them. The dying thief beheld the brightness of that serpent of brass as he saw Jesus hanging at his side and it saved him! And so may you and I look and live, for He is “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.”—

*“Faint my head, and sick my heart,  
Wounded, bruised, in every part.  
Satan’s fiery sting I feel  
Poisoned with the pride of Hell.  
But if at the point to die,  
Upward I direct my eye,  
Jesus lifted up I see,  
I live by Him who died for me.”*

I hope I do not overlay my subject by these figures. I wish not to do so, but to make it very plain to you. All you that are really guilty, all you who are bitten by the serpent, the sure remedy for you is to look to Jesus Christ who took our sin upon Himself and died in the sinner’s stead, “being made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in

Him.” Your only remedy lies in Christ and nowhere else. Look unto Him and be you saved!

III. This brings us, in the third place, to consider THE APPLICATION OF THE REMEDY, or the link between the serpent-bitten man and the brass serpent which was to heal him. What was the link? It was of the most simple kind imaginable. The bronze serpent might have been, if God had so ordered it, carried into the house where the sick man was, but it was not so. It might have been applied to him by rubbing—he might have been expected to repeat a certain form of prayer, or to have a priest present to perform a ceremony. But there was nothing of the kind. He had only to look!

It was well that the cure was so simple for the danger was so frequent. Bites of the serpent came in many ways. A man might be gathering sticks, or merely walking along and be bitten. Even now in the desert serpents are a danger. Mr. Sibree says that on one occasion he saw what he thought to be a round stone, beautifully marked. He put forth his hand to take it up, when, to his horror, he discovered that it was a coiled living serpent! All day long, when fiery serpents were sent among them, the Israelites must have been in danger. In their beds and at their meals; in their houses and when they went abroad they were in danger.

These serpents are called by Isaiah, “flying serpents,” not because they fly, but because they contract themselves and then suddenly spring up so as to reach to a considerable height. A man might be well off his tent floor and yet not be beyond the reach of one of these malignant reptiles. What was a man to do? He had nothing to do but to stand outside his tent door and look to the place where gleamed afar the brightness of the serpent of brass! And the moment he looked, he was healed! He had nothing to do but to look! No priest was needed, no holy water, no hocus-pocus, no mass-book—nothing but a look!

A Romish bishop said to one of the early Reformers, when he preached salvation by simple faith, “O Mr. Doctor, open that gap to the people and we are undone!” And so, indeed, they are, for the business and trade of priestcraft are ended forever if men may simply trust Jesus and live. Yet it is even so! Believe in Him, you sinners—for this is the spiritual meaning of looking—and at once your sin is forgiven! And what, perhaps, is more, its deadly power ceases to operate within your spirit. There is life in a look at Jesus! Is not this simple enough?

But please notice how very personal it was. A man could not be cured by anything anybody else could do for him. If he had been bitten by the serpent and had refused to look to the serpent of brass and had gone to his bed, no physician could help him. A pious mother might kneel down and pray for him, but it would be of no use. Sisters might come in and plead; ministers might be called in to pray that the man might live; but he must die in spite of their prayers if he did not look. There was only one hope for his life—he must look to that serpent of brass!

It is just so with you. Some of you have written to me begging me to pray for you. And so I have, but it means nothing unless you, yourselves, believe in Jesus Christ. There is not beneath Heaven, nor in Heaven, any hope for any one of you unless you will believe in Jesus Christ! Whoever you may be, however much bitten of the serpent and however near to die, if you will look to the Savior you shall live! But if you will not do this, you must be damned, as surely as you live. At the Last Great Day I must bear witness against you that I have told you this straight out and plainly—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved: he that believes not shall be damned.”

There is no help for it. You may do what you will, join what Church you please, take the Lord’s Supper, be baptized, go through severe penance, or give all your goods to feed the poor—but you are a lost man unless you look to Jesus, for this is the only remedy! And even Jesus Christ Himself cannot, will not, save you unless you look to Him. There is nothing in His death to save you. There is nothing in His life to save you unless you will trust Him. It has come to this—you must look—and look for yourself.

And then, again, it is very instructive. This looking, what did it mean? It meant this—self-help must be abandoned and God must be trusted. The wounded man would say, “I must not sit here and look at my wound, for that will not save me. See there where the serpent struck me? The blood is oozing forth, black with the venom! How it burns and swells! My very heart is failing. But all these reflections will not ease me. I must look away from this to the lifted up serpent of brass.” It is idle to look anywhere except to God’s one ordained remedy. The Israelites must have understood as much as this, that God required us to trust Him and to use His means of salvation. We must do as He bids us and trust in Him to work our cure—if we will not do this, we shall die eternally.

This way of curing was intended that they might magnify the love of God and attribute their healing entirely to Divine Grace. The bronze serpent was not merely a picture, as I have shown you, of God’s putting away sin by spending His wrath upon His Son, but it was a display of Divine Love. And this I know because Jesus Himself said, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up. For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son.” He was plainly saying that the death of Christ upon the Cross was an exhibition of God’s love to men and whoever looks to that grand display of God’s love to man, namely, His giving His only-begotten Son to become a curse for us, shall surely live.

Now, when a man was healed by looking at the serpent, he could not say that he healed himself, for he only looked and there is no virtue in a look. A Believer never claims merit or honor on account of his faith. Faith is a self-denying Grace and never dares to boast. Where is the great credit of simply believing the Truth of God and humbly trusting Christ to save you? Faith glorifies God and so our Lord has chosen it as the means of our salvation. If a priest had come and touched the bitten man, he might have ascribed some honor to the priest. But when there was no priest in the case; when there was nothing except looking to that bronze serpent, the man was driven to the conclusion that God’s love and power had healed him.

I am not saved by anything that I have done, but by what the Lord has done. To that conclusion God will have us all come—we must all confess that if saved, it is by His free, rich, sovereign, undeserved Grace dis

played in the Person of His dear Son.  
IV. Allow me one moment upon the fourth head, which is THE CURE  
EFFECTED. We are told in the text that, “if a serpent had bitten any man,  
when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.” That is to say, he was  
healed at once. He had not to wait five minutes, or five seconds. Dear  
Hearer, did you ever hear this before? If you have not, it may startle you,  
but it is true. If you have lived in the blackest sin that is possible up to  
this very moment, yet if you will now believe in Jesus Christ, you shall be  
saved before the clock ticks another time! It is done like a flash of lightning! Pardon is not a work of time.  
Sanctification needs a lifetime, but justification needs no more than a  
moment. You believe, you live! You trust Christ, your sins are gone! You  
are a saved man the instant you believe! “Oh,” says one, “that is a wonder.” It is a wonder and will remain a wonder to all eternity. Our Lord’s  
miracles, when He was on earth, were mostly instantaneous. He touched  
them and the fevered ones were able to sit up and minister to Him. No  
doctor can cure a fever in that fashion, for there is a resultant weakness  
left after the heat of the fever is abated. Jesus works perfect cures and  
whoever believes in Him, though he has only believed one minute, is justified from all his sins. Oh the matchless Grace of God!  
This remedy healed again and again. Very possibly, after a man had  
been healed, he might go back to his work and be attacked by a second  
serpent, for there were broods of them about. What had he to do? Why, to  
look again! And if he was wounded a thousand times, he must look a  
thousand times! You, dear child of God, if you have sin on your conscience, look to Jesus! The healthiest way of living where serpents swarm  
is never to take your eyes off the bronze serpent at all. Ah, you vipers, you  
may bite if you will, but as long as my eyes are upon the bronze serpent, I  
defy your fangs and poison, for I have a continual remedy at work within  
me! Temptation is overcome by the blood of Jesus! “This is the victory  
which overcomes the world, even our faith.”  
This cure was of universal efficacy to all who used it. There was not one  
case, in all the camp, of a man that looked to the serpent of brass and yet  
died. And there never will be a case of a man that looks to Jesus who remains under condemnation! The Believer must be saved. Some of the  
people had to look from a long distance. The pole could not be equally  
near to everybody, but so long as they could see the serpent it healed  
those that were afar off as well as those who were near. Nor did it matter if  
their eyes were feeble. All eyes were not alike keen. Some may have had to  
squint, or had dimness of vision, or only one eye—but if they did but look,  
they lived!  
Perhaps the man could hardly make out the shape of the serpent as he  
looked. “Ah,” he said to himself, “I cannot discern the coils of the bronze  
snake, but I can see the shining of the brass.” And he lived! Oh, poor  
Soul, if you cannot see the whole of Christ nor all His beauties, nor all the  
riches of His Grace, yet if you can but see Him who was made sin for us,  
you shall live! If you say, “Lord, I believe; help You my unbelief,” your faith will save you! A little faith will give you a great Christ and you shall find  
eternal life in Him.  
Thus I have tried to describe the cure. Oh that the Lord would work  
that cure in every sinner here at this moment. I do pray He may! It is a  
pleasant thought that if they looked to that bronze serpent by any kind of  
light they lived. Many beheld it in the glare of noon and saw its shining  
coils and lived. But I should not wonder that some were bitten at night  
and by the moonlight they drew near and looked up and lived. Perhaps it  
was a dark and stormy night and not a star was visible. The tempest  
crashed overhead and from the murky cloud out flashed the lightning,  
cleaving the rocks asunder. By the glare of that sudden flame the dying  
man made out the bronze serpent and though he saw but for a moment  
yet he lived.  
So, Sinner, if your soul is wrapped in tempest and if from out the  
clouds there comes but one single flash of light, look to Jesus Christ by it  
and you shall live!  
V. I close with this last matter of consideration—here is A LESSON FOR  
THOSE WHO LOVE THEIR LORD. What ought we to do? We should imitate Moses, whose business it was to set the bronze serpent upon a pole.  
It is your business and mine to lift up the Gospel of Christ Jesus so that  
all may see it! All Moses had to do was to hang up the bronze serpent in  
the sight of all. He did not say, “Aaron, bring your censer and bring with  
you a score of priests and make a perfumed cloud.” Nor did he say, “I myself will go forth in my robes as Law-Giver and stand there.” No, he had nothing to do that was pompous or ceremonial! He had but  
to exhibit the brass serpent and leave it naked and open to the gaze of all.  
He did not say, “Aaron, bring here a cloth of gold, wrap up the serpent in  
blue and scarlet and fine linen.” Such an act would have been clean contrary to his orders. He was to keep the serpent unveiled. Its power lay in  
itself—not in its surroundings. The Lord did not tell him to paint the pole,  
or to deck it with the colors of the rainbow. Oh, no! Any pole would do! The dying ones did not need to see the pole—they only needed to behold  
the serpent. I dare say he would make a neat pole, for God’s work should  
be done decently, but still the serpent was the only thing to look at. This  
is what we have to do with our Lord. We must preach Him, teach Him and  
make Him visible to all! We must not conceal Him by our attempts at eloquence and learning. We must have done with the polished lancewood  
pole of fine speech and those bits of scarlet and blue in the form of grand  
sentences and poetic periods. Everything must be done that Christ may  
be seen and nothing must be allowed which hides Him. Moses may go  
home and go to bed when the serpent is once lifted up. All that is needed  
is that the bronze serpent should be within view both day and night. The  
preacher may hide himself so that nobody may know who he is, for if he  
has set forth Christ, he is best out of the way.  
Now, you teachers, teach your children Jesus. Show them Christ Crucified! Keep Christ before them. You young men that try to preach, do not  
attempt to do it grandly. The true grandeur of preaching is for Christ to be  
grandly displayed in it. No other grandeur is needed! Keep self in the  
background and set forth Jesus Christ among the people, evidently crucified among them. None but Jesus, none but Jesus! Let Him be the sum  
and substance of all your teaching. Some of you have looked to the bronze  
serpent, I know, and you have been healed. But what have you done with  
the bronze serpent since? You have not come forward to confess your faith  
and join the Church. You have not spoken to any one about his soul. You  
put the bronze serpent into a chest and hide it away. Is this right? Bring it out and set it on a pole! Publish Christ and His salvation! He  
was never meant to be treated as a curiosity in a museum. He is intended  
to be exhibited in the highways that those who are sin-bitten may look at  
Him. “But I have no proper pole,” says one. The best sort of pole to exhibit  
Christ upon is a high one so that He may be seen the further. Exalt Jesus!  
Speak well of His name. I do not know any other virtue that there can be  
in the pole but its height. The more you can speak in your Lord’s praise,  
the higher you can lift Him up, the better! But for all other styles of  
speech there is nothing to be said. Lift Christ UP!  
“Oh,” says one, “but I have not a long standard.” Then lift Him up on  
such as you have, for there are short people about who will be able to see  
by your means. I think I told you once of a picture which I saw of the  
bronze serpent. I want the Sunday school teachers to listen to this. The  
artist represented all sorts of people clustering round the pole and as they  
looked, the horrible snakes dropped off their arms and they lived! There  
was such a crowd around the pole that a mother could not get near it. She  
carried a little babe, which a serpent had bitten. You could see the blue  
marks of the venom. As she could get no nearer, the mother held her child  
aloft and turned its little head that it might gaze with its infant eyes upon  
the bronze serpent and live.  
Do this with your little children, you Sunday school teachers! Even  
while they are yet little, pray that they may look to Jesus Christ and live,  
for there is no boundary set to their age. Old men, snake-bitten, came  
hobbling on their crutches. “Eighty years old am I,” says one, “but I have  
looked to the bronze serpent and I am healed.” Little boys were brought  
out by their mothers, though as yet they could hardly speak plainly, and  
they cried in child language, “I look at the great snake and it blesses me.”  
All ranks, sexes, characters and dispositions looked and lived! Who will  
look to Jesus at this good hour? O dear Souls, will you have life or not?  
Will you despise Christ and perish? If so, your blood be on your own head!  
I have told you God’s way of salvation! Lay hold on it. Look to Jesus at  
once! May His Spirit gently lead you to do so. Amen.

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THE END OF THE RIGHTEOUS DESIRED

NO. 746

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 21, 1867, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE AGRICULTURAL HALL, ISLINGTON.

**“Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!” Numbers 23:10.**

CARLYLE, in his “History of the French Revolution,” tells us of a Duke of Orleans who did not believe in death. And when his secretary stumbled on the words, “The late King of Spain,” he angrily demanded what he meant by it. The flattering attendant replied, “My Lord, it is a title which some of the kings of Spain have taken.”

In all this assembly I have not such a lunatic! For you unanimously believe that the entire race of men await alike the inevitable hour. We know that all our paths, wind as they may, will lead to the grave. A certain king of France believed in death, but forbade that it should ever be mentioned in his presence. “And if,” said he, “I at any time look pale, no courtier must dare, on pain of my displeasure, to mention it in my presence.” Thus imitating the foolish ostrich, which, when pursued by the hunter, and utterly unable to escape, is said to hide its head in the sand fancying that it is secure from the enemy which it cannot see.

I trust I do not address today any men so idiotic as to desire to forget the certainty of death, or to thrust the fact from their remembrance. I trust that, being sane men, you desire to look in the face the whole of your future history, both in the present world and in worlds beyond the region of sight. And, foreseeing that soul and body must part in the article of death, you are desirous to consider that event that you may be prepared for it. You desire to take death into your reckoning that it may not surprise you. He who should go upon a long journey and provide for every difficulty on the road but one, would probably find the journey a failure. If, with a rolling chariot for the solid ways, he had forgotten to find the means of crossing the last river which would divide him from the country which he sought, he would be disappointed after all his pains.

If you have provided for life, but have not also prepared for death, what better will you be, my Hearer, than such a foolish traveler? We have heard of one, who, going into a tavern, ordered according to his wildest wishes and feasted sumptuously on the best the house afforded, hour after hour. But when the host came with the bill, he told him that he had no money, and had quite forgotten the reckoning, thinking it quite enough to attend to the eating and drinking while these were the order of the day, without perplexing himself about the unknown future. Alas, my Hearer, are you living in this inn of life, forgetting the reckoning? Do you go from cup to cup, from merriment to merriment, feasting as though there were no day of account appointed for you?

If so, are you fool or knave, or both? For a man who would enjoy life, and yet shirk the account of his responsibilities with which the scene must close, is either foolish, or knavish, or both. Surely, since we must die. Since “there is no discharge in this war.” Since every man must be a conscript to the army of Death. Since whether it is tomorrow or the next day, or in a few years time, every one of us must pass through the iron gate—it behooves us, knowing the fact, to take it into our account—to be diligent in forestalling its demands and providing for its emergencies.

And yet I should not wonder if many here almost shudder at the subject which I am now introducing, so unaccustomed are they to it! Or, if they listen to it, they consider it to be especially applicable to those by whom they are surrounded, but they fail to see its application to themselves. Young’s verse is true—“All men think all men mortal but themselves.” They regard others as having death written upon their brow, but they imagine that they, at least, shall last for years to come! They will not dare admit that they are immortal, yet alas, they act as if they thought they were so. And trifling away year after year, suffer life itself to disappear without improvement.

I beseech all honest and wise hearts at this hour to reflect upon their latter end. Prepare now that you may be ready when the final summons shall be sounded, and may God grant you Divine Grace that the words of this morning may be made helpful to your preparations. Balaam, though a base man, was no fool. He had thoughts of death. He did not shut his eyes to what he did not like. He believed that he should die, and he had desires about it—and though those desires were never realized, but the reverse—yet he had wit enough to gaze upon the tents of God’s chosen Israel and to say from his heart, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!”

I shall regard this exclamation as having in it a double wish. First, a wish concerning death, and secondly, a wish concerning the after death. When these have been spoken upon as the Holy Spirit may help me, I shall try to make some practical use of the whole.

I. First, dear Friends, Balaam’s WISH CONCERNING DEATH. He anxiously desired that he might die such a death as the righteous die. Truly we commend his choice, for, in the first place, it must, at the least, be as well with the righteous man when he comes to die, as with any other man. By the righteous man we mean the man who has believed in Jesus Christ and so has been covered with Christ’s righteousness, and washed in His most precious blood, and moreover, has by the power of the Holy Spirit received a new heart, a righteous heart, so that his actions are righteous both towards God and man.  
Such a man, being righteous by faith in Jesus Christ unto perfect justification, and righteous also in act and spirit through sanctification of the Holy Spirit, is alone the truly righteous man! Such a man must be right at last, and this you will see clearly by the following story. A certain carping infidel, after having argued with a poor countryman who knew the faith, but who knew little else, said to him, “Well, Hodge, you really are so stupid that there is no use arguing with you, I cannot get you out of this absurd religion of yours.” “Ah, well,” said Hodge, “I dare say I am stupid, Master, but do you know we poor people like to have two strings to our bow?”

“Well,” said the critic, “what do you mean by that?” “Master, I’ll show you. Suppose it should all turn out as you say. Suppose there is no God, and there is no hereafter, don’t you see I am as well off as you are? Certainly, it will not be any worse for me than it will be for you if we, both of us, get annihilated. But don’t you see if it should happen to be true as I believe, what will become of you?”

Clearly in either case it must be right with the righteous, for if he should have ignorantly received a cunningly devised fable, yet, seeing according to his own experience it makes him a better and a happier man. So far so good—he is no loser here—and he will be certainly at the last in no worse a position than the man who rejected the holy and comfortable influences of what he styled a deception.

While, if the religion of Jesus should be true—ah, ghastly, if for you who doubt it!—if it should all be true, ah, then your weeping and your wailing at the discovery will be a terrible contrast to the joy and the glory which God has reserved for them that love Him! Upon the very lowest possible ground it will be well with the righteous, as well at any rate as with the best of other men. There is this to be said for the righteous man—he goes to the death chamber with a quiet conscience. It has been clearly ascertained that in the event of death the mind is frequently quickened to a high degree of activity, so that it thinks more, perhaps, in the course of five minutes than it could have done in the course of years at other times. Persons who have been rescued from drowning have said that they imagined themselves to have been weeks in the water, for the thoughts, the many views and visions, the long and detailed retrospect seemed to them to have required weeks—and yet the whole transpired in a few seconds! Frequently towards the last, the soul travels at express speed, traversing its past life as though it rode upon lightning. Ah, then how blessed is that man who, looking back upon the past, can see many things of which conscience can approve! And how accursed must that man’s deathbed be who has to look back upon a youth spent in folly, a middle life of sin, and an old age of iniquity!

What will it be, my Hearer, if, when you lie dying there should rise up before your memory those whom you led into sin, seduced to vice, or taught in profligacy! A grim assemblage must gather around some men’s beds when guilt, like a grim chamberlain, shall usher them in, one by one, and call out their names with horrible distinctness, and tell out their doings and dealings with the wretch who shivers on the brink of death accused by so many, and unable to answer one of a thousand. I picture such a man traveling over the wastes of remorse, hounded by the wolves of his past sins—rushing with desperation into a destruction still worse than his present woe—all unable to endure the horrible baying of his old sins, much less to endure their sharper fangs when they shall tear him in pieces and there shall be none to deliver!

But the righteous man knows that though his sins were as scarlet, they have been made white as wool through the precious blood of Christ! And moreover, by the power of the Holy Spirit, his life has been kept from the vices of the world and he has been enabled to serve his Lord. This surely must help to make soft his dying pillow. He remembers those holy days of sacred worship, those gatherings around the family altar, that child taught to pray, that young man won from folly and led in the paths of righteousness. Above all he remembers the love visits which the Lord Jesus has paid to his favored soul! And so, perfectly at peace, forgiving all men their offenses as he desires to be forgiven, and conscious that his Father has forgiven him, he can sleep upon his dying bed as softly as on the stillest night of his life. “Let me,” in this sense, “die the death of the righteous.”

Again, the righteous man, when he dies, does not lose his all. With every other man the sound of “earth to earth, dust to dust, and ashes to ashes,” is the end of present seeming wealth and the beginning of eternal and real need. But the Christian is not made a bankrupt by the grave— death to him is gain. “Go,” said the dying Saracen hero, Saladin, “take this winding sheet and as soon as I expire, bear it on a lance through all the streets, and let the herald cry as he holds aloft the ensign of death, ‘This is all that is left of Saladin, the conqueror of the East.’ ” He need not have so said if he had been a Christian, for the Believer’s heritage is not torn from him, but opened up to him by the rough hand of Death! The world to come and all its infinite riches and blessedness are ours in the moment of departure.

It is written upon the tomb of Cyrus, “Stranger, here lies Cyrus, who gave the empire to the Persians. Grudge him not the little earth that covers him.” But the Christian lies not there under the tombstone—he is not here, for he is risen! He has left his poor worn garments here to be washed, and cleansed, and purified—and by-and-by, when they are whiter than any fuller can make them—he will come to take his garments again. But meanwhile the Christian is not buried here, nor is the tomb his sole possession—his treasure is in Heaven, and he is gone where his wealth is stored. Who would not wish to die a death which would be a gain to him? Are you not conscious, some of you, that death would be a horrible loss to you? It would shut up forever all the outlets of your present mirth and all the sources of your present joy. Alas for you! For the day of the Lord to you will be darkness and not light!

“Let me die the death of the righteous” may well be our wish because he dies with a good hope. Peering into eternity, with eyes marvelously strengthened, the Believer frequently beholds even while he is yet below, something of the glory which is to be revealed in him. Have you ever heard the songs of dying women, and seen their glowing countenances as they thought they could hear the angels and all but see the invisible glory? Have you ever seen their beaming eyes and heard their memorable words, so rich, so original, so quaint, so wet with the dew of Heaven that they could not have borrowed them? Ignorant, unlettered persons have I heard say in their dying moments words which were worthy of the most refined poetry.

Have you ever seen the gray-headed man who, in his weakness, had come to talk as a child, suddenly clothed with patriarchal dignity, as, stretching out his bony hand he has exclaimed, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff they comfort me”? It is sweet to die with Canaan’s happy land in view—to melt into eternal bliss as the twilight of the morning melts into opening day! It must be a dreary thing to die believing in annihilation, or expecting a doom still worse! My Hearer, will this be your death? Will you hear the warning cry of the angel: “One woe is past, and, behold, there come two woes more”?

Death is past, but the Judgment and the pit are yet to come. God forbid that such horrors should freeze the genial current of my soul, but may bliss eternal be my prospect from the top of my expiring Pisgah. Let me die as the Christian whose eye is resplendent with visions of light, and whose heart is fired with the confidence of seeing his Redeemer and being made like He is, to dwell with Him world without end!

Moreover, Beloved, the Believer dies in the arms of a Friend. I do not say in the arms of a mortal friend, for it has fallen to the lot of some Christians to be burnt at the stake. And some of them have rotted to death in dungeons. But yet I will repeat it, every Believer dies in the arms of a Friend—the best of friends, the Friend that sticks closer than a brother. Precious is communion with the Son of God, and never more so than when it is enjoyed upon the verge of Heaven—

*“Jesus can make a dying bed  
Feel soft as downy pillows are,  
While on His breast I lean my head,  
And breathe my life out sweetly there.”*

Jesus is a Friend who is most practically friendly, for the righteous man, in the most calm and business-like manner, leaves his wife and his children in the hands of God and quotes the promise, “Leave your fatherless children, and let your widows trust in Me.”

He would gladly live, perhaps, to comfort the partner of his bosom a little longer, and to see the children of their mutual love brought up to riper manhood. But since he must go, how often does God enable him to forget all care, to cast it so completely into the hands of Christ, that he sings, “All is well!” I have sometimes heard from dying saints sentences like these, “My business is all settled, I never want to hear again of the stock, of the farm, or of the shop, or of the family, I have put it all away. God will provide for those I have left behind and I have nothing now to do but just to hear the summons, ‘Come up higher,’ and then to enter into my Father’s house.”

My Hearers, I am not giving you an exaggerated picture! I am not telling you some wondrous stories of remarkable departures! I am telling you what is the common way of the dying of the righteous, which I trust commends itself to your conscience as being naturally that which righteous men might expect to feel when returning to their God. The Christian dies in peace, and often in triumph. According to the state of his body, or the disease by which he may be taken off, his feelings will vary between peace and triumph. Sometimes the death scene is still as a summer’s evening, and the Christian crosses the Jordan almost dry shod. Or if there is a storm, and Jordan overflows its banks, the Believer, resting upon the everlasting arms, feels the bottom of the river and finds it good.

At times, however, God has been pleased to give to His people Divine Grace to mount to Heaven in a chariot of fiery joy, so that their dying bed has been a throne, and their chamber a palace of glory. These instances are not uncommon, they are probably the rule—but in all cases there is a strong, deep current of pure and precious peace which glides along the valley of death and makes glad the follower of the Lamb—“Let me die the death of the righteous,” for such dying is the dawn of bliss, the beginning of immortal glory!

Lastly, when the good man dies, he dies with honor. Who cares for the death of the wicked? A few mourning friends lament for a little time, but they almost feel it a relief within a day or two that such a one is gone. As for the righteous, when he dies there is weeping and mourning for him! Like Stephen, devout men carry him to the sepulcher and make great lamentation over him. See the funeral of the tares? They are hurried up in heaps, they are thrown over the garden wall, they are burned, and no one regrets them. They were no blessing in living—they are no lamentation in dying.

Did you ever see the funeral of the wheat, if such I may call it? Here come the golden sheaves! The wagon is heavy with the precious freight: on the top stands one who gives a cheery note, and all around the harvest men and village maidens dance or shout for joy as they bring home the shocks of golden corn to the garner! Let me be gathered home with the triumphant funeral of the wheat which man values—garnered by angels, housed with songs of saintly spirits—and not cast away as a reprobate and worthless thing, like the weeds of which men are thankful to be rid.

May it be yours and mine, when we depart, to be remembered by those whom we have succored in their need, whom we instructed in their ignorance, whom we comforted in their distress! May we not depart from this world shaken off from it, as Paul shook the viper from his hand, but may our ashes be gathered up as sacred dust, precious in the sight of the Lord! Let me, in that sense and every other, “die the death of the righteous.” I need not tarry long on this point. Any one of these suggestions might suffice to incite, even in such a man as Balaam, a desire to “die the death of the righteous.” Surely it will kindle in you the same longings.

II. Balaam spoke concerning the godly man, of HIS LAST END. I do not know that this wicked prophet, whose eyes were once opened, knew anything about this latter end as I shall interpret it, but you and I know, and so let us use his words, if not his thoughts. We do not believe that death is the last end of men. Those who do believe it are welcome to their belief. We certainly shall not wish to deprive them of it. When a dog has his bone, let him keep it—we envy not his enjoyment. If ungodly men delight in the thought of dying like brutes, perhaps they know their own value best and know what would be best for society if it should happen to them. So they, having made their choice, shall keep it if they will.

As for us, we believe ourselves to be immortal—that God has endowed us with a spiritual nature which shall outlive the sun, outlast the stars, and run on existing with eternity. Like the years of God’s right hand, like the days of the Most High, God has ordained the life of souls to be. Now, I can well believe that the most of us wish that our position after death may be like that of the righteous. The first consideration in death is that the spirit is disembodied. What a spirit is like without a body you and I cannot guess. It is, of course, not a thing to be seen, or heard, or touched, or handled. It is quite out of the realm of materialism and quite beyond the reach of the senses.

Yet you and I are conscious that there is an immaterial something within us infinitely more precious than these poor clay hands, and feet, and eyes of ours. This immaterial something will leave the body, and it will be naked—not a thing to be desired, for even Paul says, “Not that we would be unclothed.” He did not desire the disembodied state for its own sake, nor should we. Those disembodied saints who are now in Heaven are happy, perfectly happy as to their souls, but they, as to their manhood, are not yet made perfect. They, without us, the Apostle says, cannot be made perfect. Until we all are gathered in and the Resurrection Day comes, they are without bodies, and are, as it were, but half men.

All the powers they have are full of happiness, but they are waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body which will be at the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. But what is there desirable in the state of the Christian when his spirit is disembodied? I should desire to be like a Christian in the disembodied state, because he will not be altogether in a new and strange world. Some of you have never exercised your spirits at all about the spirit-world. You have talked with thousands of people in bodies, but you have never spoken with spiritual beings. To you the realm of spirit is all unknown, but let me tell you, Christians are in the daily habit of communing with the spirit-world, by which I mean that their souls converse with God! Their spirits are affected by the Holy Spirit. They have fellowship with angels who are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them that are the heirs of salvation.

Now, when some of you enter into the spirit-world, you will say, “I never was here before. This is a foreign land to me.” I can conceive that you will call for some companion. “Is there anyone here with whom I have had dealings?” And there will be a voice heard, “Yes, I have often spoken to you, and you to me.” “Who is that?” It is Satan or some evil spirit with whom, alone out of all spirits you have ever had communion. He will be the only friend to meet you—and what a friend! Your grim companion, your fellow sinner, and your fellow prisoner forever!

But a Christian in the disembodied state, if I may so imagine it, might cry, “Where are my friends? I have been here before! Where are those with whom aforetime I had fellowship?” And a response will come from the ministering angels, and there, above all, will be the blessed Spirit of God! There will be God Himself, and the Spirit of the ever-living Christ. All these will make up sweet company for the Believer. After the soul has left the body, we believe that it at once appears before God, and receives by anticipation what will be its final sentence. To the righteous soul there is no sleeping in the grave, no delay in “purgatory” before he enters into Heaven. “Today shall you be with Me in Paradise,” is the portion of all who trust in Jesus.

Now, think, dear Hearer, your disembodied spirit will have to appear before the fiery eyes of God! What, then, is your relation to God this morning? Why, some of you never think of Him! Some of you, I almost blush to say it, have cursed Him to His face, and have even asked Him to damn you! Ah, He will do it, except you repent! But how delightful must it be for a man to say, “I am going up to God. He is my Father. It is no more terror to me than for a child to go home from school. I am going to my God with whom I am reconciled by the precious blood of Jesus. I have known my God, He is no stranger to me. I saw Him in Christ, and I trusted Him. And all my life long I learned to see Him in the works of nature. I could say of the mountains and the valleys, ‘My Father made them all.’ I was never so happy as when thoughts of God came flowing into my spirit. My spirit has dwelt with God when in the body. It is not afraid to fly up to God now that it has left the body behind it.”

Surely, in the prospect of such a judgment, each man may say, “Let my last end be like his!” After the judgment is pronounced, the disembodied spirit dwells in Heaven. Some of you could not be happy if you were allowed to enter that Heaven. If you could be admitted between those pearly gates which forever exclude pollution, sin, and shame, you could not be happy there. Shall I tell you why? It is a land of spirit, and you have neglected your spirit! Some of you even deny that you have a spirit, and I do not wonder that you say so because I do not suppose that you have ever exercised it. But let a man who has delighted to commune with the Holy Spirit enter into the spirit-world, and he will be in his element!

Besides, the world to come is a holy world. The engagements of disembodied spirits are all pure and lovely. What will that man do who loved drunkenness, who indulged in unclean habits? He will be out of his element. If he could be in Heaven, as Whitfield used to say, he would ask God to let him out, and would run into Hell for shelter, for Heaven would be a dreadful place to an ungodly man! There is a dream which is told (I tell it not for the dream, but for the moral of it) of a young woman who imagined that she was in Heaven unconverted and thought she saw upon the pavement of transparent gold, multitudes of spirits dancing to the sweetest music.

She stood still, unhappy, motionless, silent, and when the King said to her, “Why do you not partake in the joy?” she answered, “I cannot join in the dance, for I do not know the measure. I cannot join in the song, for I do not know the tune.” Then said He in a voice of thunder, “What are you doing here?” And she thought herself cast out forever. Ah, dear Hearer! Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. If you do not learn Heaven’s language on earth you cannot learn it in the world to come! If you are not holy you cannot be with holy saints. What a misery would it be for you to be always with those who are praising and serving God if you know nothing of His love. If you have never praised Him on earth, you will not readily take to it there. You would be strangers in a strange land!

Ah, trouble not yourselves, that shall never be your portion. “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,” much less can he ever enter there. After awhile our bodies will be raised again. The soul will re-enter the body, for Christ has not only bought the souls of His people, but their bodies, too. Think of that tremendous day, when the trump shall be heard, shrill as a clarion, ringing through earth and Heaven, and Hell, “Awake, you dead! Awake, you dead! And come to judgment! Come to judgment, come away!” Then up will start the bodies of the wicked. I know not in what shapes of dread they will arise, nor how they will appear.

What forms of ghastliness they will put on or what horrors will wreathe their brows, I cannot tell. But this I know, that when the righteous shall rise they will be glorious like the Lord Jesus! They shall have all the loveliness which Heaven itself can give them. Their body here is but a shriveled grain sown in the earth. Their next body will be as much more glorious than that as the sweetest flower of spring is fairer than the shriveled seed that was cast into the mold. It will be a glorious body, raised in honor, raised in power, raised no more to die! Oh, glorious hour! “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.”

Would you not wish to rise in the image of Christ as the righteous will? Remember you must rise from the grave very much what you are when put into it. I think I see a perfect model of a city before me, containing all that is to be built. Here I see a temple of alabaster, and there a dunghill. The architect is bid to produce on the largest scale, in the purest marble, that city as modeled before him. Rest assured that he will produce the temple as a temple, only far more splendid, and the dunghill as a dunghill, only 10,000 times more loathsome! Now, which are you in that model? For this life is a model of the life to come, and it is written, “He that is filthy, let him be filthy still, and he that is holy, let him be holy still.”

Ah, my Hearer, you may well wish to be holy here that you may be holy there! To be pure here, that you may be pure there! To be godlike on earth, that you may be godlike in Heaven. “Let my last end be like that of the righteous.” Let me wave the palm of victory! Let me wear the crown of triumph! Let me be girt about with the fair white linen of immaculate perfection! Let me cast my crown before Jehovah’s feet! Let me swell the everlasting song! Let my voice make one in that eternal chorus, “Hallelujah, Hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!” Oh, how will I sing! How sweetly shall my voice be attuned to notes of gratitude! How will my heart dance with ecstasy before that throne! “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!”

III. As this is the last occasion of my preaching in this great hall I shall venture to trespass a little longer, and on the third head I shall most earnestly ask your solemn attention for a few minutes longer. We have to make A PRACTICAL USE OF THE WHOLE.

Behold the vanity of mere desires. Balaam desired to die the death of the righteous, and yet was slain in battle fighting against those righteous men whom he envied. There is an old proverb which says, “Wishers and woulders make bad housekeepers.” And another which declares, “Wishing never filled a sack.” I commend the truth of those proverbs to you now. Mere desiring to die the death of the righteous, though it may be natural, will be exceedingly unprofitable. I beseech you stop not there! Have you ever heard the old classic story of those ancient Gauls who, having once drunk the sweet wines of Italy, constantly, as they smacked their lips, said one to another, “Where is Italy?” And when their leaders pointed to the gigantic Alps crowned with snow, they said, “Cannot we cross them?” Every time they tasted the wine the questions were put, “Where is Italy? And cannot we reach it?” This was good plain sense. So they put on their war harness and marched to old Rome to fight for the wines of Italy.

So, my Brothers and Sisters, every time you hear of Heaven, I should like you, with Gothic ardor, to say, “Where is it? I gladly would go.” And happy should I be if men here would put on the harness of the Christian, and say, “Through floods and flames for such a conquest, to drink of such wines well refined, we would gladly go to the battle that we may win the victory.” Oh, the folly of those who, knowing and desiring this, yet spend their strength for nothing! The Roman Emperor fitted out a great expedition and sent it to conquer Britain. The valiant legionaries leaped ashore, and each man gathered a handful of shells, and went back to his ship again—that was all.

Some of you are equally foolish. You are fitted by God for great endeavors and lofty enterprises, and you are gathering shells! Your gold and your silver, your houses and your lands—they are mere empty shells—and Heaven and everlasting life you let go. Like Nero, you send to Alexandria for sand for your amusements and send not for wheat for your starving souls! O fools and slow of heart! When shall God, who gave you souls, give those souls wisdom that you may seek after the true treasure, the real pearl, the heavenly riches?

“Well,” cries one, “how is Heaven to be had?” It is to had only by a personal seeking after it. I have read of one who, when drowning, saw the rainbow in the heavens. Picture him as he sinks! He looks up, and there if he sees the many-colored bow, he may think to himself, “There is God’s covenant sign that the world shall never be drowned, and yet here I am drowning in this river.” So it is with you! There is the arch of God’s promise over you, “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” And yet, because you believe not in Him, you will be drowned in your sins.

“I would gladly enlist, then,” says one, “in the army of Christ, and fight for Heaven.” Come on, then, I am Christ’s enlisting officer today. “What am I to give?” says one. Give? Give nothing. “But I have many good works.” These are not to be brought as a price for Heaven. “I have my prayers and my tears of repentance.” These cannot avail meritoriously—if you want to be a Christian, you must come to Christ with empty hands! You know how the recruiting sergeant makes a soldier—not by asking the man to give him something, but by getting him to take the Queen’s shilling. Take Christ—that is God’s enlisting money—and you are enlisted! Do not bring anything, but take the water of life freely. If you will trust the Lord Jesus, and take Him to be your salvation, you are then enlisted as a soldier of Jesus. Oh, may you have Grace to do that!

But remember, all soldiers have to fight! One of the first things you will have to do, if you become a Christian, is to carry a Cross. Ah, you do not like it. “His yoke is easy, and His burden is light.” Take it upon you—and yet to carnal shoulders the Cross is very galling—and nothing but Divine Grace can make it light. You will have to give up your sins! You will have to give up your empty pleasures. You will have to, from now on, bear witness for Christ before a crooked and perverse generation. Do not expect to be Christ’s soldier and yet not wear His uniform. No, you must put on his regimentals. You must wear His crest—His crest is the Cross. You must take His shield, the shield of faith, and His sword, which is the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. And resting alone on Him, depending alone upon His merit, you shall certainly win the victory!

My Brethren, what a blessing it will be if you and I shall ever reach the land of triumph. You remember Bunyan’s picture. He says he saw a brave palace and as he looked up he could hear happy spirits singing on the top. They walked in white, clad in royal robes. And as he heard them singing, he longed to be with them. Going up to the door, he noticed that it was beset with armed men—a great host with pikes, and halberds, and swords—pushing back all who desired to come. Presently he saw a man of bold countenance, covered with armor, go up to a man who sat at a table with a writer’s ink-horn, and he heard him say, “Set down my name, Sir.” And as soon as the name was set down, the man drew his sword and began to hack and hew right and left, cutting himself a way right through the midst of his enemies.

After being covered with sweat and blood, and many wounds, he at length forced an entrance. And Bunyan says, “I did hear them sweetly sing at the top, ‘Come in! Come in! Eternal glory you shall win.’ ” I am this morning the man with the writer’s ink-horn. Is there anyone here who will say, “Set my name down, Sir”? I trust it will be so. I trust the Holy Spirit will win your hearts for Jesus! That you will rest in Him alone! But the moment your name is down, remember then the battle begins—then, with your sword drawn, you must begin to contend with your besetting sins! You must have done with your old ways, and must fight against them. You will have to cut as never soldier did, for you will have to wound yourself! It will be your own arms and eyes that will have to be given up! Your own sins that will have to be slain! But, oh, the victory will make amends for it all!

It was but the other day that on this floor men wrestled for the mastery—a dangerous sport in which few of us would like to take a share— but I do not doubt that to those who gained the victory, the victory seemed an ample compensation. Certainly to Rome’s old legionaries, when they rode through the streets, and all the people climbed to the very chimney tops to see them ride the streets of Rome, it was enough reward for all their hardships. But the triumphs of Heaven, the shouts of angels, the songs of the redeemed, the hallelujahs, the bliss forever, the glory without end! Oh, those will be an abundant recompense to the humble followers of the Lamb!

Be of good courage, my Brothers and Sisters! Follow the Captain of your salvation! Forward to the fight, to the victory, and to the crown! And may the Lord so bless you, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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THE BEST WAR CRY  
NO. 1709

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 4, 1883, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.” Numbers 23:21.**

IT was a singular spectacle to see the king of Moab and his lords climbing to the tops of the craggy rocks, accompanied by that strange being, the Eastern prophet Balaam. They are seeking to look upon Israel with the evil eye and flash down curses upon her tents in the plain beneath. You see them gazing down from the mountains upon the encampment in the wilderness below, even as vultures from aloft spy out their prey. They watch with keen and cruel eyes. Cunning and malice are in their countenances. How Balak longs to crush the nation which he fears! They are secretly endeavoring, by spell and enchantment, to bring evil upon the people whom Jehovah has chosen and led into the wilderness. You see them offering their seven bullocks and their seven rams upon the seven altars which they have set up upon Pisgah’s rocks.

Balaam retires to wait until the impulse shall come upon him and he shall be able to prophesy. In all probability Moses knew nothing about this at the time and certainly the people below knew nothing of the foul conspiracy. There lay the tribes in the valley, unaware that mischief was brewing, and quite unable to meet the dark design even if they had been aware of it. What a mercy it was for them that they were guarded by a Watcher—a Holy One whose eyes can never slumber. How true it is—“I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.” The Lord’s eyes are fixed upon Balaam the hireling, and Balak the son of Zippor—in vain do they weave the enchantment and work the divination—they shall be utterly ashamed and confounded.

They were baffled in their machinations and utterly defeated in their schemes, and that for one single reason—it is written, “JEHOVAH SHAMMAH—the Lord Is There. God’s Presence in the midst of His people is as a wall of fire round about them and a Glory in their midst. The Lord is their light and their salvation, whom shall they fear? At this present time God has a people, a remnant according to the election of Grace, who still dwell like sheep in the midst of wolves. When, as a part of the Lord’s Church, we look at our surroundings, we see much that might cause us alarm, for never, either day or night, is Satan quiet. Like a roaring lion, he goes about, seeking whom he may devour! He plots in secret his crafty devices—if it were possible he would deceive the very elect!

This Prince of Darkness has on earth many most diligent servants, compassing sea and land to make proselytes, laying out all their strength and using all their craft and cunning if, by any means, they may destroy the Kingdom of God and blot out the Truth of God from under Heaven. It is saddest of all to see certain men who know the Truth in some degree, as Balaam did, entering into league with the adversary against the true Israel. These combine their arts and use all possible means that the Gospel of the Grace of God, and the Church that holds it, may utterly be destroyed. If the Church is not destroyed, it will be no thanks to her enemies, for they would swallow her up quickly!

When we look upon the signs of the times, our heart grows heavy, for iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold, many false spirits have gone abroad in the earth and some whom we looked upon as helpers are proving themselves to be of another order. What then? Are we dismayed? By no means, for that same God who was in the midst of the Church in the wilderness is in the Church of these last days! Again shall her adversaries be defeated. Still will He defend her, for the Lord has built His Church upon a rock and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against her. The reason of her safety is this—

*“God in the midst of her does dwell;  
Nothing shall her remove;  
The Lord to her a Helper shall,  
And that right early, prove.”*

Our text declares the grand safeguard of the Church of God, ensuring her against every peril known and unknown, earthly or Satanic—“Jehovah his God is with him, and the shout of a King is among them.” May the Holy Spirit help me while I try to speak, first, upon God’s Presence with His people. Secondly, upon the results of that Presence. And thirdly, upon how, by the Grace of God, that Presence may be preserved continually among us.

I. First, let me speak a little upon GOD’S PRESENCE AMONG HIS PEOPLE. It is an extraordinary Presence, for God’s ordinary and usual Presence is everywhere. Where shall we flee from His Presence? He is in the highest Heaven and in the lowest Hell! The hand of the Lord is upon the high hills and His power is in all deep places. This knowledge is too high and wonderful for us! God is everywhere, for in Him we live and move and have our being. Still there is a peculiar Presence, for God was among His people in the wilderness as He was not among the Moabites and the Edomites, their foes. And God is in His Church as He is not in the world. It is a peculiar promise of the Covenant that God will dwell with His people and walk among them.

By the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Lord is with us and in us at this hour. He says of His Church, “Here will I dwell, for I have desired it.” This is much more than God’s being about us—it includes the favor of God towards us, His consideration of us, His working with us. An active nearness to bless is the Presence of which we speak. Here we may say with great reverence that God is with His people in the entireness of His Nature. The Father is with us, for the Father, Himself, loves us. Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him. He is near to us, supplying our needs, guiding our steps, helping us in time and tutoring us for eternity. God is where His children are, hearing every groan of their sorrow, marking every tear of their distress. The Father is in the midst of His family, acting a father’s part towards them. “Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.” He is never far from any into whose breasts He has put the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, “Abba, Father!” Come, you children of God, rejoice in this—your heavenly Father has come unto you and abides with you!

We also have the Presence of the Divine Son of God. Said He not to His Apostles, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”? Have we not this for our joy whenever we come together, that we meet in His name, and that He still says, “Peace be unto you,” and manifests Himself unto us as He does not unto the world? Many of you know most delightfully what it is to have fellowship with God, for “truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ”—and this fellowship were not ours if we were not made near by His precious blood. Very near are we to the heart of Christ—He dwells with us—yes, He is one with us!

Peculiarly this presence relates to the Holy Spirit. It is He who represents the Lord Jesus who has gone from us. We have a double portion of Christ’s Spirit because we see Him, now that He is taken up, even as Elisha had a double portion of Elijah’s spirit, according to the Prophet’s saying, “If you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so unto you.” That is, a double portion of my spirit shall rest upon you. It was expedient that our Lord and Master should go, that the Spirit might be given! That Spirit, once poured out at Pentecost, has never been withdrawn! He is still in the midst of this dispensation, working, guiding, quickening, comforting, exercising all the blessed office of the Paraclete and, being for us and in us, God’s Advocate, pleading for the Truth of God and for us.

Yes, dear Friends, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are in the midst of the true Church of God when that Church is in a right and healthy state. And if the Triune God is gone away from the Church, then her banners must trail in the dust, for her warriors have lost their strength. This is the Glory of the Church of God—to have the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit to be her never-failing benediction! What a glory to have Father, Son and Holy Spirit manifesting the Godhead in the midst of our assemblies and blessing each one of us! For God to dwell with us—what a condescending Presence this is! And will God, in very truth, dwell among men? If the Heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, will He abide among His people? He will! He will! Glory be to His name! “Know you not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit?” God dwells in us! Wonderful word!

Who can fathom the depth of this Grace? The mystery of the Incarnation is equaled by the mystery of the indwelling! That God, the Holy Spirit, should dwell in our bodies is as extraordinary as that God, the Son, should inhabit that body which was born of the blessed virgin! Strange, strange is this, that the Creator should dwell in His creatures, that the Infinite should tabernacle in finite beings! Yet so it is, for He has said, “Certainly I will be with you.” What an awe this imparts to every true Church of God! You may go in and out of certain assemblies and you may say, “Here we have beauty! Here we have adornment, musical, ecclesiastical, architectural, oratorical and the like!”

But to my mind there is no worship like that which proceeds from a man when he feels the Lord is present! What a hush comes over the soul! Here is the place for the bated breath, the unsandalled foot and the prostrate spirit! Now are we on holy ground. When the Lord descends in the majesty of His infinite love to deal with the hearts of men, then it is with us as it was in Solomon’s temple when the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the Glory that filled the place. Man is set aside, for God is there! In such a case the most fluent think it better to be silent, for there is, at times, more expressiveness in absolute silence than in the fittest words. “How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven.” Why? Because Jacob had said, “Surely the Lord is in this place.”

We regard the lowliest assemblies of the most illiterate people with solemn reverence if God is there—we regard the largest assemblies of the wealthiest and most renowned with utter indifference if God is not there. This is the one necessity of the Church—the Lord God must be in the midst of her or she is nothing! If God is there, peace will be within her walls and prosperity within her palaces—but if the Lord is not there, woe unto the men that speak in His name, for they shall cry in bitterness, “Who has believed our report?” Woe unto the waiting people, for they shall go away empty! Woe unto the sinners in a forsaken Zion, for no salvation comes to them! The Presence of God makes the Church to be a joyful, happy, solemn place! This brings glory to His name and peace to His people. But without it, all faces are pale, all hearts are heavy.

Brothers and Sisters, this Presence of God is clearly discerned by the gracious, though others may not know it. Yet I think even the ungracious, in a measure, perceive it—coming into the assembly they are struck with a secret something—they know not what. And if they do not immediately join in the worship of the present God, yet a deep impression is made upon them beyond any that could be caused by the sound of human speech, or by the grandeur of outward show. They feel awed and retire abashed. Certainly the devil knows where God is—none better than he. He hates the camp of which Jehovah is the leader against it. He doubles his enmity, multiplies his plots and exercises all his power. He knows where his kingdom finds its bravest assailants and he, therefore, attacks their headquarters, even as Balaam and Balak did of old.

Let us look at Balaam for a moment. May we never run in the way of Balaam for a reward, but let us stand in his way for a moment that he may be our beacon. This man had sold himself for gold and, though he knew God and spoke under Inspiration, yet he knew Him not in his heart, but was willing to curse God’s people for money. He was thwarted in his design because God was there. It is worth our while to see what kind of a God Jehovah is in Balaam’s estimation. He describes our God in verse 19—“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?” Balaam perceived that the God who was in the midst of His people is not a changeable god, not a false god, not one who promises and forgets, or promises and eats his words, or promises what he cannot and will not perform.

The God of Israel is faithful and true, immutable, unchanging! Every one of His promises shall be fulfilled! None of His Words shall fall to the ground. “Has He said, and shall He not do it? Has He spoken and shall it not come to pass?” What a joy it is to have such a God as this among us— a promise-making and a promise-keeping God—a God at work for His people as He has declared He would be! We have a God comforting and cheering His people—and fulfilling in their experience that which His Word has led them to expect. This God is our God forever and ever! He shall be our Guide even unto death! My dear Friends, we sometimes hear men talk of the failure of the Church. We are afraid that some churches do fail. Wherever failure occurs, the bottom of it is the absence of the Lord of Hosts, for He cannot fail.

I heard one, speaking of the district in which he lives, say, “We are a religions people. Almost all the people attend a place of worship, but,” he added, “I am bound to add that of spiritual life we have few traces. One Church has given up its Prayer Meetings; another feels that its entertainments are more important than its worship and another is notorious for worldliness.” This is a testimony as terrible as it is common! The worst thing that can be said of any Christian community is this—“You have a name to live and are dead.” “You are neither cold nor hot.” Our Lord Jesus says, “I would you were cold or hot. So, then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue you out of My mouth.”

A Church without life and zeal makes Christ sick! He cannot bear it. He can put up with downright godlessness sooner than with a profession of religion out of which the life and the power are gone, since it has cooled down into lukewarmness. This, then, we should pray for continually—the Presence of God in the midst of His people—

*“Great Shepherd of Your Israel  
Who did, between the cherubs dwell,  
And led the tribes, Your chosen sheep,  
Safe through the desert and the deep,  
Your Church is in the desert now!  
Shine from on high, and guide us through. Turn us to You, Your love restore  
We shall be saved, and sigh no more.”*

II. To whet your desire for this, let me pass on to the second head of my subject, which is briefly to describe THE RESULTS OF THIS DIVINE PRESENCE. Some of these results are mentioned in the context. One of the first is leading—“God brought them out of Egypt” (v. 22). The best critics give us another rendering—“God is bringing them out of Egypt.” When God is in the midst of His people, He is leading them, so that we may cheerfully sing that song, “He leads me, He leads me,” and go on with David to say, “He leads me beside the still waters.” We need no other Leader in the Church when we have God, for His eyes and arms will guide His people.

I am always afraid of having human rules in a Church and equally fearful of being governed by human precedents. I am afraid of power being vested in one, or two, or 20 men—the power must be in the Lord, Himself. That Church which has God in the midst of it, rules itself, and goes right without any other guidance but that which comes of the Holy Spirit’s working. Such a Church keeps together without aiming at uniformity and goes on to victory even though it makes no noise. That movement is right which is led by God—and that is sure to be all wrong which is led in the best possible way if God is absent. Organization is all very well, but I sometimes feel inclined to join with Zwingli in the battle when he said, “In the name of the Holy Trinity let all loose,” for when everybody is free, if God is present, everybody is bound to do the right thing. When each man moves according to the Divine instinct in him, there will be little need of regulations—all is order where God rules! Just as the atoms of matter obey the present power of God, so do separate Believers obey the one great impelling influence.

Oh, if God is in the Church to lead it, it shall be rightly guided! Do not fall in love with this particular system, or that, my Brothers and Sisters— do not cry up this scheme of working or that! Get the Spirit of God and almost any shape that spiritual life takes will be a form of energy suitable for the particular emergency! God never leads His people wrongly! It is for them to follow the fiery, cloudy pillar. Though it leads them through the sea, they shall traverse it dry-shod! Though it leads them through a desert, they shall be fed! Though it brings them into a thirsty land, they shall drink to the full of water from the Rock! We must have the Lord with us to guide us into our promised rest.

The next blessing is strength. “He has, as it were, the strength of an unicorn” (v. 22). It is generally agreed that the creature here meant is an extinct species of urns or ox, most nearly represented by the buffalo of the present period. This gives us the sentence—“He has, as it were, the strength of a buffalo.” When God is in a Church, what rugged strength, what massive force, what irresistible energy is sure to be there! And how untamable is the living force! You cannot yoke this buffalo to everybody’s plow—it has its own free way of living and it acts after its own style. When the Lord is with a Church, her power is not in numbers, though very speedily she will increase. Her power is not wealth, though God will take care that the money comes when it is needed. Her power lies in God—and that power becomes irresistible, untamable, unconquerable! Force and energy are with the Lord.

I fear that what many bodies of Christian people need is this force. Examine yonder religious body—it is huge, but it lacks muscle—it is a finelooking organization, but soul, sinew, backbone are lacking. Where God is, there is sure to be life-force. When the Spirit of God descended upon the first saints, they began to speak with wondrous power! And though they were persecuted, they were not subdued. No bit could be put into their mouths to hold them in, for they went everywhere preaching the Word of God! Of the true Israel it shall be said—“His strength is as the strength of the buffalo: it cannot be controlled or conquered.”

The next result is safety. “Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel.” The Presence of God quietly baffles all the attempts of the Evil One. I have noticed, dear Brothers and Sisters, in this Church where we have had God’s Presence in a great measure, that all around us people have gone off to this opinion and to the other fancy, yet, our members, as a rule, have stood firm. Persons say to me, “Do you not sometimes answer the skepticisms of the day?” I answer, No. They do not come in my way. “Do not modern opinions trouble your Church?” They have not done so. Why? Because God is there and spiritual life, in vigorous exercise, does not fall a victim to disease! A gracious atmosphere does not agree with modern doubt.

When people fall into that evil, they go where the thing is indulged, or at least where it is combated—where in some way or other they can develop their love of novelty and foster the notion of their own wisdom. Infidelity, Socinianism, and modern thought can make no headway where the Spirit is at work! Enchantment does not lie against Israel and divination does not touch Jacob. If a Church will keep to the Truth of God, keep to God, and do its own work, it can live like a lamb in the midst of wolves without being torn in pieces. Have God with you and not only the evil of doctrinal error but every other error shall be kept far from you. But still, there was, when Christ was in the Church, a Judas in the midst of it— and even in the Apostles’ days there were some that went out from them because they were not of them, for if they had been of them, doubtless they would have continued with them—therefore we may not expect to be without false brethren.

But the true safety of the Church is not a creed, not an enactment for expelling those who violate the creed—only the Presence of God can protect His people against the cunning assaults of their foes. Upon these words, “there is no enchantment against Jacob, no divination against Israel,” suffer a few sentences. There are still a few foolish people in the world who believe in witchcraft and spells, but you, Beloved, if you love the Lord, throw such nonsense to the winds! Do you not hear people talk about this being lucky and that unlucky? This notion is heathenish and unchristian! Never utter such nonsense! But even if there were such things as witchcraft and divination, if this house were full of devils and the air swarmed with invisible spirits of an evil sort, yet if we are the people of God, surely there is no enchantment against us. Divination cannot touch a child of God—the Evil One is chained!

Therefore be of good courage—if God is for us, who can be against us? Further than that, God gives to His people the next blessing, that is, of His so working among them as to make them a wonder and cause outsiders to raise enquiries about them. “According to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What has God worked?” Is not that a singular thing? Here is Balaam with his seven altars, seven bullocks and seven rams. And here is Balak. And they are all going to compass some dreadful evil against Israel! The prophet is a man of great skill in the occult arts— but what does God say? In effect, He says—“From this hour in which you try to curse them, I will bless them more than ever until I will make them say, and their enemies say, “What has God worked?”

Brethren, there is another question, “What has Israel worked?” I am glad that Israel’s work is not my subject just now, because I should make a very wretched sermon out of it! We have better music in the words, “What has God worked?” Let me tell not what I have done, but what God has done! Not what human nature is, but what God’s Nature is and what the Grace of God will work in the midst of His people. If God is within us, we shall be signs and wonders until those around us shall say, “What is this that God is doing?” Yes, in you, poor Jacob, wrestling, halting on your thigh, men shall see marvels and cry, “What has God worked?” Much more shall it be so with you, my brother, Israel, you who have prevailed and won the blessing—you are as a prince with God and you shall make men enquire, “What has God worked?”

When God is with His people, He will give them power of a destructive kind. Do not be frightened! Here is the text for it—“Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion”—that is, as a lion in the fullness of his vigor—“He shall not lie down until he eats of the prey and drinks the blood of the slain.” God has put into His Church, when He is in it, a most wonderful, destructive power against spiritual wickedness! A healthy Church kills error, and tears evil in pieces! Not so very long ago our nation tolerated slavery in our colonies. Philanthropists endeavored to destroy slavery, but when was it utterly abolished? It was when Wilberforce roused the Church of God, and when the Church of God addressed herself to the conflict—then she tore the evil thing to pieces!

I have been amused with what Wilberforce said the day after they passed the Act of Emancipation. He merrily said to a friend when it was all done, “Is there not something else we can abolish?” That was said playfully, but it shows the spirit of the Church of God! She lives in conflict and victory—her mission is to destroy everything that is bad in the land! See the fierce devil of intemperance, how it devours men! Earnest friends have been laboring against it and they have done something for which we are grateful. But if ever intemperance is put down, it will be when the entire Church of God shall arouse herself to protest against it! When the strong lion rises up, the giant of drunkenness shall fall before him. “He shall not lie down until he eats of the prey and drinks the blood of the slain.”

I predict for the world the best results from a fully awakened Church! If God is in her, there is no evil which she cannot overcome! This crowded London of ours sometimes appalls me—the iniquity which reigns and rages in the lower districts, the general indifference and the growing atheism of the people—these are something terrible, but let not the people of God be dismayed. If the Lord is in the midst of us, we shall do with this as our forefathers have done with other evils—we shall rise up in strength and not lie down till the evil is destroyed! For the destructions, mark you, of God’s people, are not the destructions of men and women—they consist in the overthrow of sin—the tearing in pieces of systems of iniquity. This it is which God shall help His Church to do, He being in the midst of her.

Once more—the results of God’s Presence are to be seen, not only in the context, but in other matters which we have personally experienced and hope to experience more fully. Note them. When God is in a Church, there is a holy awe upon the hearts of His people. There is also a childlike trustfulness, hopefulness and consequent courage and joy. When the Lord is in the midst of His people, the ordinances of His house are exceedingly sweet. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper become divinely painted pictures of our burial in Christ and of our life through Him. The preaching of the Word drops as dew and distils as the rain. The meetings for prayer are fresh and fervent—we desire to stay in them hour after hour—we feel it such a happy thing to be there! The very house in which we meet grows beautiful to us. We love the place where our Lord is accustomed to meet with us.

Then work for Christ is easy, no, delightful! God’s people never need urging, they are eager for the fray when the Lord is with them. Then, too, suffering for Christ becomes pleasant, yes, any kind of suffering is easily borne—

*“I can do all things, or can bear  
All sufferings, if my Lord is there!  
Sweet pleasures mingle with the pains,  
While His left hand my head sustains.”*

Then prayer grows abundant all over the Church, both in private and in public. Then life is made vigorous, the feeblest becomes as David, and David like the Angel of the Lord. Then love is fervent; unity is unbroken; the Truth of God is esteemed and the living of truth in the life is sought after by all the people of God! Then effort is successful; the Church enlarges the bounds of her tent, for she breaks forth on the right hand and on the left. Then her seed inherits the Gentiles and the desolate places are inhabited. Then God gives unto her the holy energy with which she vanquishes nations. When God is with her she becomes like a sheaf of fire in the midst of the stubble and consumes her adversaries round about. “Fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners,” is a Church which has God in her midst!

But now notice one thing in my text, and with that I close this description. Where God is, we are told, “The shout of a king is among them.” What is the shout of a king? When great commanders are known to have come into a camp, what a thrill of joy it causes among their trusty warriors! When the soldiers have been much dejected, it has been whispered in their tents—

*“The king has come to marshal us,*

*All in his armor dressed,”*  
and from that moment every man is cheered up. At the sight of the king, as he comes riding into the camp, the host raises a great shout. What does it mean? It is a shout of loyal love—they are glad to welcome their leader. So is it with us when we sing—“The King Himself comes near”—we are all as glad as glad can be! Those who cannot come out to see their prince, because they are lying on their sick beds in hospitals, clap their hands, while even the little children in their mothers’ arms join in the general joy. “The king is come,” they say, and his presence kindles their enthusiasm till they make the hills ring again!

You know how the stern Ironsides felt when Cromwell came along. Every man was a hero when he led the way. They were ready for any adventure, no matter how difficult, as long as their great chief was there. That enthusiasm which was inspired by Alexander, by Napoleon and by other great commanders, is the earthly image of the spiritual fervor felt by the Church when the Lord Jesus is in her midst! What next? When the king comes and they have received him with enthusiasm, he cries, “Now is the hour of battle” and at once a shout goes up from his warriors who are eager for the fight. When a clan of Highlanders was led to the battle by their chief, he had only to show them the enemy and with one tremendous shout they leaped upon them like lions!

It is so with the people of God. When God is with us, we are strong, resolute, determined. The charge of the servants of God is as the rush of a hurricane against a bowing wall and a tottering fence. In God is our confidence of victory. With God present, no man’s heart fails him; no doubt enters the host. “Be strong, and quit yourselves like men,” is the word that is passed round, for our King’s eyes make us brave and the Presence of His Majesty secures our triumph. My Brothers and Sisters, let us cry to God, entreating Him to be among us! This it is that you need in your Sunday schools, in your mission halls, in your street preaching, in your tract distributing—it is this that I need beyond everything when I have to speak to you in this vast house.

If I could hear the sound of my Master’s feet behind me, I would speak though I were lying upon the borders of the grave! But if God is gone, I am bereft of power. What is the use of words without the Spirit? We might as well mutter to the whistling winds as preach to men without the Lord! O God, if You are with us, then the shout of a King is among us, but without You, we pine away!

III. Thirdly, let us look at a very important point and a very practical one, too—What can be done for THE SECURING AND PRESERVING OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD WITHIN THE CHURCH? This is a matter that would require several sermons to discuss fully, but I notice that there is something, even, in the conformation of a Church to secure this. God is very tolerant and He bears with many mistakes in His servants and yet blesses them. But depend upon it, unless a Church is formed at the very outset upon Scriptural principles and in God’s own way, sooner or later all the mistakes of her constitution will turn out to be sources of weakness! Christ loves to dwell in a house which is built according to His own plans and not according to the whims and fancies of men.

The Church ought not to set up as her authority the decrees of men, either living or dead—her Ruler is Christ! Associations formed otherwise than according to Scripture must fail in the long run. I wish Christians would believe this. Chillingworth said, “The Bible and only the Bible, is the religion of Protestants.” That was not true. Certain Protestants have tacked many other things to the Bible—and they are suffering as the result of their folly—for they cannot keep their Church from becoming Popish. Of course they cannot! They have admitted a little leaven of Popery and it will leaven the whole lump. The dry rot in one part of the house will spread throughout the whole fabric, sooner or later. Let us be careful to build on the foundation of Christ—and then let every man take heed how he builds thereon, for even if the foundation is good, yet if he builds with hay and stubble, the fire will cause him grievous loss.

But next, God will only dwell with a Church which is full of life. The living God will not inhabit a dead church! Hence the necessity of having really regenerated people as members of the Church. We cannot secure this in every case with all our watching—tares will grow among the wheat. But if the admission of unregenerate men is usual and there are no restrictions, then the Lord will be grieved and leave us. God dwells not in temples made with hands—He has nothing to do with bricks and mortar— He dwells in living souls! Remember that text—“God is not the God of the dead, but of the living,” and it bears this sense among others, that He is not the God of a church made up of unconverted people. Oh, that we may all live unto God, and may that life be past all question.

That being supposed, we next notice that to have God among us we must be full of faith. Unbelief gives forth such a noxious vapor that Jesus, Himself, could not stay where it was. His strength was paralyzed—“He could not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.” Faith creates an atmosphere in which the Spirit of God can work! Meanwhile, the Spirit of God, Himself, creates that faith, so that it is all of His own working from first to last! Brothers and Sisters, do you believe your God? Do you believe up to the hilt? Alas, too many only believe a little! But do you believe His every Word? Do you believe His grandest promises? Is He a real God to you, making His Words into facts, every day of your lives? If so, then the Lord is among us as in the Holy Place!

Faith builds a pavilion in which her King delights to sit enthroned. With that, must come prayer. Prayer is the breath of faith. I do not believe God will ever be long with a Church that does not pray—and I feel certain that when meetings for prayer, when family prayer, when private prayer, when any form of prayer comes to be at a discount—the Lord will leave the people to learn their weakness! Lack of prayer cuts the sinews of the Church for practical working. She is lame, feeble, impotent, if prayer is gone. If anything is the matter with the lungs, we fear consumption—Prayer Meetings are the lungs of the Church and anything the matter there means consumption to the Church, or at best a gradual decline, attended with general debility.

Oh, my Brothers, if we want to have God with us, pass the watchword round, “Let us pray!” Let us pray after the fashion of the widow who was importunate and would not be repulsed! Remember, it is written, “Men ought always to pray and not to faint.” Where prayer is fervent, God is present. Supposing there is this faith and prayer, we shall also need holiness of life. You know what Balaam did when he found he could not curse the people? Satanic was his advice. He bade the king of Moab seduce the men of Israel by the women of Moab that were fair to look upon—these were to fascinate them by their beauty and then to invite them to their idolatrous rites—which rites were orgies of lust. He hoped that the lewdness of the people would grieve the Lord and cause Him to leave them and then Moab could smite them.

He sadly succeeded. If it had not been for Phinehas, who, in holy wrath, drove his javelin right through a man and woman in the very act of sin, sparing none in the vehemence of his zeal, Israel had been quite undone. So in a Church. The devil will work hard to lead one into licentiousness, another into drunkenness, a third into dishonesty and others into worldliness. If he can only get the goodly Babylonian garment and the wedge of gold buried in an Achan’s tent, then Israel will be chased before her adversaries! God cannot dwell in an unclean Church!

A holy God abhors the very garments spotted by the flesh. Be you holy as Christ is holy! Do not take up with this German silver electrotype holiness, which is so much boasted of nowadays. Do not be deluded into selfrighteousness, but seek after real holiness—and if you find it, you will never boast about it—your life will speak, but your lips will never dare to say, “See how holy I am.” Real holiness dwells with humility and makes men aspire after that which yet lies beyond them. Be holy, upright, just, straight, true, pure, chaste, devout. God send us this behavior and then we shall keep Him among us as long as we live!

Lastly, when we have reached that, let us have practical consecration. God will not dwell in a house which does not belong to Him. No, the first thing with any one of us is to answer this question—Do you give yourself up to Christ—body, soul and spirit—to live for Him and to die for Him? Will you give Him all that you have of talent and ability, and substance, time and life, itself? Where there is a Church made up of consecrated people, there God will remain and there He will make a Heaven below! And there the shout of a King shall be heard! And there His strength shall be revealed! And there His glory shall be seen, even as it is beheld on high! The Lord send us this, for Jesus’ sake. Amen and Amen!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Numbers 23.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—907, 114, 149.

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“THE STAR OUT OF JACOB”  
NO. 3343

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1913. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. “There shall come a Star out of Jacob.”  
Numbers 24:17.

THIS prophecy may have some reference to David, but we feel persuaded that the true design of the Holy Spirit is to set forth an emblem of our Lord Jesus Christ. All Nature, above as well as around us, is laid under contribution to set forth our Lord. All the flowers of the field and many of the beasts of the plain—and now the very orbs of Heaven—are turned into metaphors and symbols by which the Glory of Jesus may be manifested to us! Where God takes such pains to teach, we ought to be at pains to learn. Where He makes Heaven and earth to be the pages of the book, we ought to be most ardent in our study. Oh, you who have neglected to learn of Christ, may that neglect come to an end and may some word be spoken which shall be as the beaming of a star unto the darkness of your soul, that henceforth you may be led to know Christ and to be found in Him!

Our Lord, then, is compared to a star, and we shall have seven reasons to assign for this. He is called a Star as—  
I. THE SYMBOL OF GOVERNMENT.  
You will observe how evidently it is connected with a scepter and with a conqueror. Jacob was to be blessed with a valiant leader who should become a triumphant sovereign. Very frequently in Oriental literature, their great men, and especially their great deliverers, are called stars. The star has been constantly associated with monarchy and even in our own country we still look upon the star as one of the emblems of lofty rank. Behold, then, our Lord Jesus Christ as the Star of Jacob! He is the Captain of His people, the Leader of the Lord’s hosts, the King in Jeshurun, God Over All, glorious and blessed forever!  
We may say of Jesus in this respect that He has an authority which He has inherited by right. He made all things and by Him all things consist. It is but just that He should rule over all things. As there is not a tongue that can move in Heaven or earth except by His permission, it is right that every tongue should confess that He is Lord to the Glory of God the Father! Oh, that men were just towards the Son of God! Would that their rebellious souls would give way to the force of rectitude—that they would no longer say, “Let us break His bonds asunder and cast His cords from us!” Unconverted men and women, I would that you would yield to Jesus. He has a right to you. It is through His intercession that your forfeited life is still spared! It is by His Divine goodness that you are where you are tonight. Through His mediatorial Sovereignty it is that you are allowed to be on praying ground and pleading terms with God! Give Him His due then. Rob Him not of the allegiance which He so justly claims. Give not your spirit over to that exacting tyrant who seeks to compass your destruction! Bow the knee and kiss the Son, even now, lest He be angry and you perish from the way. Acknowledge Him to be your Lord!  
Our Lord as a Star has an authority which He has valiantly won. Wherever Christ is King, He has had a great and a stern fight for it. Remember the dread conflict in Gethsemane in which He said, “I have trodden the wine press alone.” When He came red with His own gore from Calvary, He had, in fact, then and there put to flight the hosts of Bozrah and of Edom and stained His garments with the victor’s crimson! He who, then, traveled in the greatness of His strength is still mighty to save. In every human heart where Jesus reigns, He reigns through having dislodged, by the force of Divine Grace, the old tyrant who had fixed his sovereignty there. The maintenance of that Sovereignty within the heart is the result of the same powerful scepter of His love and Grace. Oh, that King Jesus would put forth His power and get a throne in more hearts! Believers, do you not long to see Him glorious? I know you do if you love Him! You would live for this, you would die for this—that Christ might have His own and drive the milk-white steeds of triumph through the streets of Jerusalem, all His people bowing before Him and strewing His pathway with their honors! O Sinners, would to God that you would yield to Him! I pray that now He may gird His sword upon His thigh and by the power of Grace constrain you to bow your willing necks to His silver scepter! Brothers and Sisters, it is a mournful fact that Christ has so small a part of the world as yet in His royal power. Look, the gods of the heathen stand fast upon their pedestals! The old harlot of Rome still flaunts in her scarlet! The crescent of Mohammed wanes, but still its baleful light is cast throughout the nations! Why does He tarry? Perhaps His finger is on the latch. It may be that He will come before long. Come quickly, Lord! Our yearning hearts beseech You to come! Meanwhile, it is for you and for me to be fighting, each soldier in his rank, each of us standing in his place, as his Master has bidden us, contending with heart and soul and strength for the right and for the true, for faith, for holiness, for the Cross and all that that Cross indicates among the sons of men! Blessed Star of Jacob! You shine with no borrowed rays! You shine with a mysterious power which none gave to You, for it is inherently Your own.  
Before we leave this point, I will only say this Kingdom of Christ, wherever it is, is most beneficent. Wherever this Star of government shines, its rays scatter blessings! Jesus is no tyrant. He rules not by oppression. The force He uses is the force of love. There was never a subject of Christ’s Kingdom that complained of Him. Those who have served Him most, have longed to serve Him more! Why, even His poor martyrs in the catacombs of Rome, dying of starvation, or dragged up to the Coliseum to be devoured by wild beasts, never said an ill-word of Him. Certainly if it were difficult to any, it seems it would be hard to them—but the more they were troubled, the more they rejoiced—and there never were sweeter songs than those which came from dying lips when men were crackling on the firewood, or being dragged limb from limb at the heels of wild horses, or being sawn asunder! Just in proportion as the bodily pains became acute, the spiritual joy became intense! And while the outward man decayed, the inner man leaped up into newness of life, anticipating the joys of the first-born before the Throne of God! He is a good Master. Young people, I would that you would serve Him! Oh, that you were enlisted in His service. It is now a good many years since I gave my heart to Him—it is fast coming on 20 years, but I cannot say a word against Him! No, but I wish I had always served Him! I wish I had served Him, before, and I pray that He may use me to the fullest extent. If He will make but a doormat for His temple of me, I shall be but too glad. If He will let my name be cast out as evil and give my body to the dogs, I do not care, so long as His truth does but prosper and His name becomes great! But alas, there is so much self in us, pride and I know not what besides, that we who really know the Master, have reason to ask Him to bring in His great artillery and blow down the castles of our natural corruption— conquer us yet again, and rule in us by main force of Grace, till in every part and corner of our spirits there shall be nothing but the love of Christ and the indwelling of His gracious Spirit! By the star we understand the symbol of government. In the second place, the star is—  
II. THE IMAGE OF BRIGHTNESS.  
When men wish to speak of brightness they talk of the stars. They who are righteous are as the stars and they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever! Our Lord Jesus Christ is brightness itself! The star is but a poor setting forth of His ineffable splendor. Oh, let the thought come home to you. He is the brightness of His Father’s Glory—unutterably bright as the Deity. He is brightness Himself in His Human Nature, for in Him there was neither spot nor wrinkle. As Mediator, exalted on high, enjoying the reward of His pains, He is bright indeed! Observe that our Lord as a Star is a bright particular Star in the matter of holiness. In Him was no sin. Look, and look, and look again into His star-like character. Even the lynx-eyes of infidels have not been able to discover a mistake in Him! And as for the attentive eyes of critics who have been Believers, they have been made to water again and again—and then to glisten and sparkle with delight as they have seen the mingling of all the perfections in His adorable Character to make up one perfection!  
As a Star, He shines also with the light of knowledge. Moses was, as it were, but a mist, but Christ is the Prophet of Light. “The Law was given by Moses”—a thing of types and shadows—“but Grace and truth come by Jesus Christ.” If any man is taught in the things of God, he must derive his light from the Star of Bethlehem. You may go as you will to the universities, to the tomes of the learned, to the schools of the philosophers, but in spiritual things you receive no light till you look up to Jesus! And then in His light you see light, for there is transcendent brightness in Him. He is the Wisdom of God as well as the Power of God. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life! Divine Light has found its center in Him!  
His Light, too, is that of comfort. Oh, how many have emerged from the darkness of their souls and found peace by looking up to this Star of Jacob, the Lord Jesus Christ! Well did our hymn put it—  
*“He is my soul’s bright Morning Star,  
And He my Rising Sun.”*  
One glimpse of Christ and the midnight of your unbelief is over. But a sight of the five wounds and your sins are covered and your iniquities put away. Happy day, happy day, when first the soul beholds a crucified Redeemer and gives herself up to Him, relying upon Him for eternal salvation! Shine, sweet Star—shine into some benighted heart tonight! Give holiness, give light, give the knowledge of God, give joy and peace in believing, in believing in the precious blood!  
When speaking upon Christ as a Star, “the Symbol of Government,” I said, submit to Him. Now, speaking of Him as a Star, the Image of Brightness, I say, look to Him—look to Him! It is the Gospel’s precept, “Look unto Me, and be you saved all you ends of the earth,” and well do

we sing— *“There is life for a look at the Crucified One!”*

Poor Sinner, delay no longer! You are not asked to do anything, nor to be anything, nor to feel anything! You are simply bid to look away from self to what Christ has done and you shall live—

*“View Him prostrate in the Garden,  
On the ground your Maker lies!  
On the bloody tree behold Him,  
Hear Him cry before He dies—  
‘It is finished!’  
Sinner, will not this suffice?”*

Look to Him, then, and live! Thirdly, our Lord is compared to a star to bring out the fact that—  
III. HE IS THE PATTERN OF CONSTANCY.  
Ten thousand changes have been worked since the world began, but

the stars have not changed. There they remain. We dreamed at one time that they moved. Untaught imagination said that all those stars revolved around this little globe of ours. But we know better now. There they are, both day and night—always the same—and we may say they have not changed since the world began, nor probably will they till, like a vesture, God shall roll up Creation because it is worn out. It is very delightful to recollect that the same star which I looked at last night was viewed by Abraham, perhaps with some of the same thoughts! And when we have gone and other generations shall have followed us, those that come after will look up to the same star! So with our Lord Jesus. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. What the Prophets and Apostles saw in Him, we can see in Him! And what He was to them, that He is to us and shall be to generations yet unborn! Hundreds of us may be looking at the same star at the same time without knowing it. There is a meeting place for many eyes. We may be drifted, some of us, to Australia, or to Canada, or to the United States. Or we may be sailing across the great deep, but we shall see the stars there. It is true that on the other side of the world we shall see another set of stars, but the stars, themselves, are always the same. As long as we who are in this hemisphere are concerned, we shall look upon the same star. So, wherever we may be, we look to the same Christ. One Brother here has learning, but as he looks to Christ, he sees the same Christ as the poor unlettered woman in the aisles. And you, poor man, who have not, perhaps, a sixpence in the world, you have got the same Christ to trust in as the richest man in all the world! And you who think yourself so obscure that no one knows you but your God, you look to this same Star and it shines with the same beams for you, as for the Christian who leads the van in the Lord’s hosts! Jesus Christ is still the same, the same to all His people, the same in all places, the same forever and ever! Well, therefore, may He be compared to those bright stars that shine now as they did of old and change not! In the fourth place, we may trace this comparison of our Lord to a star as—

IV. THE FOUNTAIN OF INFLUENCE.  
The old astrologers used to believe very strongly in the influence of the stars upon men’s minds. Without endorsing their exploded theories, we meet in Scripture with expressions like this—“Can you bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades or loose the bands of Orion?”—alluding, no doubt, to the fact that the Pleiades are in the ascendant in the sweet months of spring when the warm breath and gentle showers are bringing forth the green sprout and tender blade, the foliage and the flowers of May with all the loveliness of the season. While Orion is in the ascendant as a wintry sign, when the bands of frost are binding up the outburst of Nature. But, whether there is an influence in the stars or not, as touching this world, I know there is great influence in Christ Jesus! He is the Fountain of all holy influences among the sons of men. Where this Star shines upon the graves of men who are dead in sin, they begin to live! Where the beam of this Star shines upon poor imprisoned spirits, their chains drop off, the captive leaps to lose his chains! When this Star gleams upon a burdened Christian with its light, he begins to bud and blossom and precious fruits are brought forth! When this Star shines upon the backslider, he begins to mend his ways and to follow, like the eastern sages, its light till he finds his Savior once more! This Star has an influence upon our nativity. It is through its benign rays that we are born-again and in our destiny it has an influence upon our death, for it is in its light that we fall asleep, believing that we shall wake up in the image of the Lord Jesus! Oh, sweet Star, shine on me always! Never let me miss Your rays, but may I always walk in the light thereof, till I am found sitting in the full noontide heat of the Sun of Righteousness forever and ever! In the fifth place, the Lord Jesus Christ may be compared to a star—  
V. AS A SOURCE OF GUIDANCE.  
There are some of the stars that are extremely useful to sailors. I scarcely know how else the great wide sea would be navigated, especially if it were not for the polar star. Jesus is the Polar Star to us. How the poor Negro in the olden times, when the curse of slavery had not been taken away, must have blessed God for that polar star—so easy to find. Any child with but a moment’s teaching will soon know how to discover it in the midst of its fellows at night. And when the Negro had once learned to distinguish the star that shone over the land of freedom, how he followed it through the great dismal swamps, or along the plains which were still more dreadful! How he could ford the streams and climb the mountains, always cheered by the sight of that polar star. Such is Jesus Christ to the seeker! He leads to liberty. He conducts to peace. Oh, I wish you would follow Him, some of you who are going about a thousand ways to find peace where you will never find it! There is never a Sunday but I try to speak, sometimes in gentler tones, and at other seasons with thundering notes, the simple Truth that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. I try to make it plain to you that it is not your prayers and tears, your doings, your willings, your ANYTHING that can save you—but that all your help is laid upon One who is Mighty and that you must look alone to Him! Yet, Sinners, you are still looking to yourselves! You rake the dunghills of your human nature to find the pearl of great price which is not there! You will look beneath the ice of your natural depravity to find the flame of comfort which is not there! You might as well seek in Hell, itself, to find Heaven as look to your own works and merits to find some ground of trust! Down with them! Down with them, every one of them! Away with all those confidences of yours, for— *“None but Jesus, none but Jesus,  
Can do helpless sinners good!”*  
Just reverse that helm and shift that sail, and tack about! Follow not the wrecker’s beacon on yonder shore luring you to the rocks of selfdelusion, but where that Star guides, there let your vessel sail and pray for the favoring gales of the blessed Spirit to guide you rightly to the Port of Peace. Our Lord is compared to a star, surely—  
VI. AS THE OBJECT OF WONDER.  
One of the first lines which full many of you ever learned to recite

was— *“Twinkle, twinkle, little star,  
How I wonder what you are.”*  
But that is precisely what Galileo might have said and exactly what the  
greatest astronomer that ever lived might say. You have sometimes  
looked through a telescope and have seen the planets, but after you have  
looked at them you do not know much about them—and those who are  
busy all day and all night long taking constant observations, I think, will  
tell you that the result is rather that of astonishment than of intelligence.  
Still, it is—  
*“How I wonder what you are.”*  
So to those of us who are in Christ Jesus, He is a peerless Star! But oh,  
Brothers and Sisters, we may well wonder what He is! We used to think,  
when we were little ones, that the stars were holes pricked in the skies  
through which the light of Heaven shone, or that they were little pieces of  
gold dust that God had strewn about. We do not think so now. We understand that they are much greater than they look to be. So, when we  
were carnal and did not know King Jesus, we esteemed Him to be very  
much like anybody else—but now that we begin to know Him, we find  
out that He is much greater, infinitely greater than we thought He was!  
And as we grow in Grace, we find Him to be still more glorious! A little  
Star to our view at first, He has grown in our estimation into a Sun, now, a blazing Sun by whose beams our soul is refreshed! Ah, but when we get near to Him, what will He be? Imagine yourself borne up on an angel’s wing to take a journey to a star. Travelling at an inconceivable rate, you open your eyes all of a sudden and say, “How wonderful! Why, that which was a star just now has become as large to my vision as the sun at noon!” “Stop,” says the angel, “you shall see greater things than these,” and, as you speed on, the disc of that orb increases till it is equal to a hundred suns! And now you say, “But what? Am I not near it now?” “No,” says the angel, “that enormous globe is still far, far away,” and when you come to it, you would find it to be such a wondrous world that arithmetic could not compute its size! Scarcely could imagination belt it with the zone of fancy. Now, such is Jesus Christ! I said He grows upon His people here, but what must it be to see Him there where the veil is lifted and we behold Him face to face? Sometimes we long to find out what that Star is, to know Him, to comprehend with all saints what are the heights and depths, and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge— but, meanwhile, we are compelled to sit down and sing—

*“God only knows the love of God—  
Oh that it now were shed abroad  
In this poor stony heart!”*

We have to confess that—  
*“The first-born sons of light  
Desire in vain its depth to see!  
They cannot reach the mystery,  
The length, the breadth, the height!”*

But, to conclude, the metaphor used in the text may well bear this seventh signification. Our Lord is compared to a star as—  
VII. HE IS THE HERALD OF GLORY.  
The bright and morning star foretells that the sun is on its way to gladden the earth with its light. Wherever Jesus comes, He is a great Prophet of Good. Let Him come into a heart and, as soon as He appears, you may rest assured that there is a life of eternity and joy to come! Let Jesus Christ come into a family and what changes He makes there! Let Him be preached with power in any town or city and what a herald of good things He is there! To the whole world, Christ has proclaimed glad tidings. His coming has been fraught with benedictions to the sons of men. Yes, the coming of Christ in the flesh is the great prophecy of the Glory to be revealed in the latter days, when all nations shall bow before Him and the age of peace, the golden age, shall come—not because civilization has advanced, not because education has increased, or the world grown better—but because Christ has come! This is the first, the fairest of the stars, the prognostic of the dawn.  
Yes, and because Christ has come, there will be a Heaven for the sons of men who believe in Him. Sons of toil, because Christ has come, there shall be rest for the weary! Daughters of sorrow, because Christ has come, there shall be healing for the weak! O you whom chill penury is bowing down, there shall be lifting up and sacred wealth for you because the Star has shone! Hope on! Hope always! Now that Jesus has come, there is no room for despair!  
I commend these thoughts to you and earnestly ask you once again, if you have never looked to Christ, trust in Him now! If you have never submitted to Jesus, submit to Him now! If you have never confided in Him, confide in Him now! It is a very simple matter. May God the Holy Spirit teach and guide you to disown yourselves and to acknowledge Him. Cease from your own thoughts and trust His Word. This done by you all, there is proof positive that all is done for you by Christ. You are His and He is yours—where He is, shall your portion be—and you shall be like He, for you shall see Him as He is! It will be a day to be had in remembrance if you are now led to give yourselves to Him. I well recollect when my heart yielded to His Divine Grace—when I could no longer look anywhere else and was compelled to look to Him! Oh, come to Him! I know not what words to use, or what persuasions to employ. For your own sake, that you may be happy now! For eternity’s sake, that you may be happy hereafter! For terror’s sake, that you may escape from Hell! For mercy’s sake, that you may enter into Heaven, look to Jesus! You may never be bidden to do so again. This bidding may be the last, the concluding measure which shall fill up the heap of your guilt because you reject it. Oh, do not despise the exhortation. Let the prayer go up quietly now from your spirit, “God be merciful to me, a sinner.” Let your soul wrestle vehemently. Let your tongue utter its mighty resolve— *“I’ll to the gracious King approach,  
Whose scepter pardon gives.  
Perhaps He may command my touch,  
And then the suppliant lives!  
I can but perish if I go,  
I am resolved to try,  
For if I stay away, I know  
I must forever die.  
But, if I die with mercy sought,  
When I the King have tried—  
That were to die, delightful thought,  
As sinner never died!”*

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**LUKE 15:1-24.**

Verse 1. Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners to hear Him. They were drawing near. It was not an unusual occurrence. It was their habit to draw near to Christ. The Pharisees and Scribes stood in the outer ring. They did not come too near. These poor outcasts and publicans and sinners drew near. They wanted to catch every word. They could not have too much of it. They took a delight in getting near to His blessed Person. They drew near to hear Him.

2. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This Man receives sinners, and eats with them. The sinful, known to be so. This Man receives them, welcomes them, admits them to an intimacy with Him. What is worse, He eats with them! To teach them is bad enough, but to sit at the same table with them, making Himself their company and making them His company—this is worse than worse! And so they murmured. I am very glad that they did. We owe a great deal to the murmurings of the proud Pharisee, for our Lord graciously answered those murmurings and then He gave us some of the choicest jewels of speech that are preserved in the treasury of knowledge!

3. And He spoke this parable unto them, saying. So it is only one parable, yet it is three. Three panels making one picture. The whole three are necessary to make up all His teaching.

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? He is justifying His looking for the lost ones. Their accusation was that He received the sinful and false, and ate with them. “Well, well,” says Christ, “I do that, but I am a shepherd, and if I have lost one of My sheep, do you blame Me if I leave the flock to go after the lost sheep?” “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. A true picture of Christ going after those who are willful and wayward and, therefore, have taken to wandering till they are lost—lost to God, lost to society, lost to usefulness, lost to happiness—perhaps lost to hope. He goes after them. That is, in His life. He throws them on His shoulders in His death. He will bring them home rejoicing by His Resurrection Life and then throughout eternity He will make the glorified spirits in Heaven glad by showing them the sheep that was lost, the soul that was saved!

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 there is such, if there is some that have never wandered and who belong to the flock, yet the flock, itself, does not, of itself, cause any great exuberance of joy. The overflow of delight is caused by the lost sheep when it is found! A Church of godly people will give great content to Christ, but still, if there is any bell ringing, any sound of joy and gladness, it will be over the wandering one that has been restored! Here you have the Son of God, Himself, and His relation to the wandering souls of men. He is their Shepherd! He seeks them! He brings them back to the fold and He is glad! Now comes the second panel of the picture.

8-10. 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? 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. In this second picture you have the Holy Spirit working through the Church, compared to a woman. She has lost her piece of money. She gets the candle of the Gospel. She takes the broom of the Law—she sweeps and searches, she raises dust, she expends her candle till she finds her piece of money. You notice that she blames herself for its being lost, for she says, “I have found the piece which I had lost.” The shepherd did not say that of the sheep. He said, “the sheep that was lost.” That was its own doing. The Church of God seems to blame herself that she has lost her hold upon so many who once belonged to her. The Holy Spirit, through the Church, seeks after lost souls who bear the image of the King upon them, like minted pieces of silver. It is a wonderful verse which is repeated here. “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God.” It does not say that the angels rejoice. It means that—but there is joy in their presence. Who is in their presence but God, Himself? The great and blessed God, whose Throne they continually surround, in whose face they see joy over saved souls! And notice the joy is about one sinner—a sinner. That is all we know about him. He may have been as poor as a church mouse and he may have made himself sick unto death by his vice. There was joy over him when he repented. It was only one! It was not a batch of twenty. It was not a large number converted—there is joy over one sinner. What had he done? Built a church? No. Preached a sermon? No. He had repented! That is all, but that is quite enough to set all the music of the angels’ harps pouring forth the praise of God! “One sinner that repents.”

11. And He said—And here comes the greatest of all the parables, the most instructive, perhaps, and the best loved of them all! In these parables we do not find anything about a Savior, a Mediator. Did you ever read a parable that contained all the Truth of God? If any man were to try and make a parable that contained all Truths of God at once, verily I say unto you, he would be a fool! He must fail, and fail in his object of teaching anything—

*“One thing at a time, and that done well,*

*Is a very good rule as many can tell.”*  
And to teach one Truth at a time is quite sufficient. It is true that the parable that we are going to read says nothing about a mediator, and it does not say anything about the father seeking his lost son, not a word. No work of the Holy Spirit. It is meant to teach one thing—and it does teach it! And if it does not teach 50 things, do not imagine that the other 49 are not true!

11, 12. 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. He would have that when His father died. Does he demand to have his heritage in his father’s life-time? Yes, he does. It is an unreasonable demand. Yet—

12. And he divided unto them his living. He was of a gentle mold, of a kindly heart. He did not want to have a son stay with him like a slave. He must be served willingly or not at all—so he divided to them his living.

13. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together. He turned the sheep and the stock and everything into money.  
13. And took his journey into a far country. We do not know where it was. It does not matter, it was a far country. He wanted to get away from his father, from his authority, from his observation. He went into a far country.  
13. And there wasted his substance with riotous living. What he did I do not know. His elder brother had heard some very bad stories about him which we shall see at the end of the chapter. They may not, however, have been all true, for rumor is greatly given to exaggeration. Beware of this exaggeration, especially of the follies of others!  
14. And when he had spent all. Got to his last penny.  
14. There arose a mighty famine in that land. Famines generally come when one’s money is all gone. He might not have feared a famine if he had still been wealthy. The two things come together, the two seas meet. He had spent all and now there was a famine.  
14. And he began to be in need. The first time in his life. He had always had everything he wanted, but now he began to be in want. It is an ugly kind of feeling when, for the first time, you cannot buy a loaf of bread. When, for the first time, you cannot get a night’s lodging for love or money—and have not any money and nobody gives you any love. He began to be in need.  
15. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country. I dare say he was a member of the same company that he belonged to. He went to him and said, “Now help me. You have many a time enjoyed yourself at my house. You have drunk my champagne, now help me. I am in trouble.” Well, he had a berth empty and that was to keep his pigs—the very worst thing a Jew could do—and what a Jew would never do unless he was starving.  
15. And he sent him into his fields to feed swine. “There is a job for you! You need a job? Go into my fields and feed my swine.” The son has become a swineherd. One who fared sumptuously everyday at home, has now come to serve pigs!  
16. And he would gladly have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat. So hungry was he, that if he could have eaten the slop which the pigs fed upon, he would have been glad to kneel at the trough and feed with them!  
16. And no man gave unto him. No, they all alike seemed stonyhearted. When you have plenty, everybody will give you some more. When you have nothing, nobody will give you a penny. “No man gave to him.”  
17. And when he came to himself. For he had been away from himself. He was beside himself and now he came home to himself.  
17. He said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I—The son whom he loves. “And I.”  
17-19. 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. Let me be anything, so that I may have something to do with you. Let me live at home. Let me eat the bread from your table. Put me in the lowest place. I cannot be so low as I now am. Put me anywhere. Make a hired servant of me.  
20. And he arose, and came to his father. But—Blessed “but.”  
20, 21. 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. He was going on with his prayer, “Make me as one of your hired servants,” when his father kissed him right on his lips and smothered that prayer! He did not mean to let him pray that, and so the father, interrupting him, stopped that legal bit of prayer.  
22. 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. Is this the justifying righteousness of Christ? I think not. No servant can put that on. God Himself, imputes the righteousness of Christ to us! It means just this—Receive this poor forgiven sinner into the Church and treat him like a gentleman. Do not look at him as one that is wearing rags any longer. Put the best robe on him, treat him well, take him into your favor, receive him into your society, put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.  
23, 24. 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 A fine old Saxon word that is, “merry.” I have known some good people afraid to say, “I wish you a merry Christmas.” But I always like it, for I like these grand old Bible words. If the word “merry” means anything wrong, it is you that make it wrong! But it is right enough in the Bible. “They began to be merry.” Now, is it not a very curious thing that the father said, “Put the robe on him, put the shoes on him”—but he never said, “Now make him eat.” Why is that? He says, “Let us eat and be merry.” He does not say anything about the son eating. No, Brothers and Sisters, because the best way to make another man eat is to go at it yourself. It breeds an appetite in him. If he is standing there looking at what you are doing—“Let us eat and be merry”—his mouth begins to water! Why, you know how hard it is if you are called upon to stand when you are very hungry and see other people eat. How you want to eat! That is the best preaching in the world. If the end of the discourse is to make a man eat, the best preaching is to fall to, yourself! “Let us eat and be merry,” and they did that—and then this restored prodigal son found his appetite, and so feasted, too.

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THE GREAT SIN OF DOING NOTHING

NO. 1916

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 5, 1886, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out.”  
Numbers 32:23.**

THERE are many dear friends engaged in business who can only reach the Tabernacle in time for the middle of the service and, therefore, they lose the reading of the Scriptures and the exposition which make up a whole with the sermon. This is a great loss to them, but as it is not their fault, we must not let them suffer for it, so far as we can remedy the evil. With this design let me explain to them that, according to the chapter which we have read and expounded, the Israelites had conquered the country possessed by Og, king of Bashan, and Sihon, king of the Amorites. And the tribes of Reuben and Gad, having great quantities of cattle, thought that a country so rich in pasture would be eminently suitable for them and for their flocks. They were no bad judges, for the country was specially fitted for sheep farming.

They, therefore, asked Moses that they might have that country to be theirs. But Moses objected. Did they mean to sit still and enjoy that country—and then leave the rest of the tribes to cross the Jordan and to fight for their possessions? If so, he declared that it was a very evil course to take—that they were selfish in seeking their own ease and that they would be discouraging God’s people and doing all sorts of mischief. He, therefore, proposed to them that if they were to have that conquered country for their own, they should at least cross the river with their brethren and fight and continue fighting until the land on the other side of the Jordan had been cleared of its old inhabitants and the whole of Israel could take the whole of the country—and each tribe could possess its portion.

He put it to them as a matter of honor and as a matter of right, that they ought to help in conquering the rest of the land. Why should they receive their lot without fighting and leave the other tribes to bear the toil and danger of war? Had not God bid them all to go up and drive out the condemned Canaanites? How could they evade their duty without great sin? He would have them take their full share in the war and on that condition they might have the rich meadows of Bashan, but not otherwise. This was clearly just and equitable and commended itself to those concerned. They at once agreed to the proposal and Moses, to enforce the agreement, told them in the words of the text, that if they did not keep their covenant and give all due aid to their brethren, then they would sin against God and they might be sure that their sin would find them out.

I remarked, in reading the chapter, that Moses spoke very wisely, very forcibly, very honestly—and the people were very pliant. They yielded to his persuasions and the difficulty which threatened to divide the nation was readily remedied. It is well to have a wise leader. It is well for him when he leads a reasonable people! Oh, that I may be able, tonight, to speak a word in season and may your ears be ready to hear it! May the Lord bring as gracious an issue out of this service as He did out of the discourse of His servant Moses! To His Holy Spirit shall be all the praise.

We shall speak at this time, first, of what was this sin? Secondly, what would be the chief sin of that sin? “If you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the Lord.” This would be the peculiar atrocity of their sin, that it would be leveled at God, Himself. And then there is a third point— What would the consequence of such sin be? “Be sure your sin will find you out.” They would be guilty and would not long go unpunished.

I. First, then, WHAT WAS THIS SIN? What is this sin about which the Spirit of God says by Moses, “Be sure your sin will find you out?” A learned divine has delivered a sermon upon the sin of murder from this text; another upon theft; another upon falsehood. Now they are very good sermons, but they have nothing to do with this text if it is read as Moses uttered it. If you take the text as it stands, there is nothing in it about murder, or theft, or anything of the kind. In fact, it is not about what men do, but it is about what men do not do. The iniquity of doing nothing is a sin which is not so often spoken of as it should be. A sin of omission is clearly aimed at in this warning—“If you will not do so, be sure your sin will find you out.”

What, then, was this sin? Remember that it is the sin of God’s own people. It is not the sin of Egyptians and Philistines, but the sin of God’s chosen nation and, therefore, this text is for you that belong to any of the tribes of Israel—you to whom God has given a portion among His beloved ones. It is to you, professed Christians and Church members, that the text comes, “Be sure your sin will find you out.” And what is that sin? It is, very sadly, common among professed Christians and needs to be dealt with—it is the sin which leads anyone to forget his share in the holy war which is to be carried out for God and for His Church. A great many wrongs are tangled together in this crime and we must try to separate them and set them in order before your eyes.

First, it was the sin of idleness and of self-indulgence. “We have cattle: here is a land that yields much pasture: let us have this for our cattle and we will build folds for our sheep with the abundant stones that lie about, and we will repair these cities of the Amorites, and we will dwell in them. They are nearly ready for us, and there shall our little ones dwell in comfort. We do not care about fighting: we have seen enough of it already in the wars with Sihon and Og. Reuben would rather abide by the sheepfolds. Gad has more delight in the bleating of the sheep and in the folding of the lambs in his bosom than in going forth to battle.”

Alas, the tribe of Reuben is not dead and the tribe of Gad has not passed away! Many who are of the household of faith are equally indisposed to exertion, equally fond of ease. Hear them say, “Thank God we are safe! We have passed from death unto life. We have named the name of Christ. We are washed in His precious blood and, therefore, we are secure.” Then, with a strange inconsistency, they permit the evil of the flesh to crave carnal ease and they cry, “Soul, you have much goods laid up for many years! Take your ease—eat, drink and be merry!” Spiritual selfindulgence is a monstrous evil, yet we see it all around. On Sunday these loafers must be well fed. They look out for such sermons as will feed their souls. The thought does not occur to these people that there is something else to be done besides feeding.

Soul-saving is pushed into the background! The crowds are perishing at their gates! The multitudes with their sins defile the air! The age is getting worse and worse—and man, by a process of evolution—is evolving a devil! And yet these people want pleasant things preached to them! They eat the fat, drink the sweet and they crowd to the feast of fat things full of marrow and of wines on the lees well refined—spiritual festivals are their delight! Sermons, conferences, Bible reading, and so forth, are sought after, but regular service in ordinary ways is neglected. Not a hand’s turn will they do! They gird on no armor, they grasp no sword, they wield no sling, they throw no stone. No, they have gotten their possession, they know they have, and they sit down in carnal security, satisfied to do nothing!

They neither work for life, nor from life—they are absolute sluggards, as lazy as they are long! Nowhere are they at home except where they can enjoy themselves and take things easy. They love their beds, but the Lord’s fields they will neither plow nor reap. This is the sin pointed out in the text—“If you do not go forth to the battles of the Lord, and contend for the Lord God and for His people, you do sin against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out.” The sin of doing nothing is about the biggest of all sins, for it involves most of the others! The sin of sitting still while your Brethren go forth to war, breaks both tables of the Law and has in it a huge idolatry of self, which neither allows love to God or man. Horrible idleness! God save us from it!

This sin may be viewed under another aspect, as selfishness and unbrotherly. Gad and Reuben ask to have their inheritance at once and to make themselves comfortable in Bashan, on this side Jordan. What about Judah, Levi, Simeon, Benjamin and all the rest of the tribes? How are they to get their inheritance? They do not care, but it is evident that Bashan is suitable for them with their multitude of cattle! Some of them reply, “You see, they must look to themselves, as the proverb has it, ‘Every man for himself and God for us all.’” Did I not hear someone in the company say, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” I know that gentleman! I heard his voice years ago. His name is Cain and I have this to say to him—it is true that he is not his brother’s keeper, but he is his brother’s killer. Every man is either the keeper of his brother, or the destroyer of his brother! Soul-murder can be worked without an act or even a will—it can be and is constantly accomplished by neglect! Yonder perishing heathen—does not the Lord enquire, “Who slew all these?” The millions of this city unevangelized—who is guilty of their blood? Are not idle Christians starving the multitude by refusing to hand out the Bread of Life? Is not this a grievous sin?

“But wait,” says another, “they can conquer the land themselves. God is with them and He can do His own work and, therefore, I do not see that I need trouble myself about other people.” That is selfishness and selfishness is never worse than when it puts on the garb of religion! The boy at school who selfishly feeds himself upon his luxuries and gives nothing to his young companions is generally their ridicule. He is the greedy boy whom all despise. A man with large stores who, in time of famine, would feed himself but never think of the poor, is despised among men! But what shall I say of the man who, concerning the things of the soul— concerning Heaven, Hell, Christ and eternity—is so selfish that, being saved himself, he cares not one jot for others? He is so unbrotherly that I am half afraid he is no Brother! He is so inhuman that I can scarcely think a touch of the life of Christ can ever have quickened him! How is he a Christian who is not like Christ, but who just feels, “Well, I am all right and if I look to myself, other people must look to themselves. God will see to them all, no doubt! I have nothing to do with it”?

Now, unless we shake off that horrible selfishness and feel that the very essence of our religion lies in love and that one of the first fruits of it is to make us care about the salvation of our fellow men—unless, I say, we shake that off and go forth to fight the Lord’s battles—then this text very solemnly threatens us. “If you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out.” O my Brothers and Sisters, hear this text and let it operate with salutary influence to produce in you constant effort for the salvation of those around you!

But with this there was mingled ingratitude of a very dark order. These children of Gad and Reuben would appropriate to themselves lands for which all the Israelites had labored. God had led them forth to battle and they had conquered Sihon and Og. And now, these men would take possession of what others have struggled for, but they are not, themselves, to fight. This is vile ingratitude and I fear it is common among us at this very day. How came we to be Christians at all? Instrumentally, it is through those holy missionaries who won our fathers from the cruel worship of the Druids and afterwards from the fierce dominion of Woden and Thor. We must also trace our Gospel light to those stakes at Smithfield, where men of God counted not their lives dear to them, but willingly gave up all they had—and their lives, also—by a painful death that they might keep the Truth of God alive in the land.

Some of you came to be Christians through the earnest labors of men who preached by the roadside, or by the loving entreaties of tender mothers who wept you to the Savior, or by the faithful ministry of some Brother from the pulpit, or the equally faithful teaching of an earnest Sunday school teacher. We owe under God much to past ages and much to present laborers! There is no man among us but stands immensely indebted to the Church of God. Though God is our Father, yet the Church is our mother and through her various agencies we have been born to God. Do we acknowledge all this debt and are we not going to pay it? Are we to receive all and then give out nothing in return? Are we to be like candles burning under bushels? Are we to waste our life by much receiving and little distributing? This will never do! This will not be life, but death!

I do not charge this upon anybody, personally, but if this cap fits anybody, pray let him wear it! If any man must acknowledge his obligation to the Church of God and yet he is not repaying it, let him cover his face for very shame! Will you not pass on the Light you have received? Verily you deserves to perish in darkness! Are you fed and will you not break your bread to the hungry, or pass a cup of cold water to the thirsty? What are you doing, strange ingrate? Will you simply be a stagnant reservoir into which streams of mercy never fall out of you, to run again, but to stand and putrefy in selfishness? Remember the Dead Sea and tremble, lest you be like it—a pool accursed and cursing all around you! O God, have mercy upon the great mass of Your professing people to whom this must be solemnly applied—that they do receive, but give back to You and to Your cause so little either of time, substance, talent, prayer, or anything else!

The text, when spiritually interpreted, says concerning our personal service in the conquest of the world for Christ—“if you do not so, behold you have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out.”

Again, we may view this from another point of view. It is the sin of untruthfulness. These people pledged themselves that they would go forth with the other tribes and that they would not return to their own homes until the whole of the campaign was ended. Now, if after that they did not go to war and did not fight to the close of it, then they would be guilty of a barefaced lie! It is a wretched thing for a man to be a covenant-breaker. It is sacrilege for any man to lie, not only unto man, but unto God. I would speak very tenderly, but if any man has been converted from the error of his ways, by that very conversion he is bound to serve the Lord. If he has been baptized as a Believer, by that Baptism he declared that he was dead to the world and buried to it—that from that day on he might live in newness of life.

Now, if he lives only to make money and hoard it, and he does nothing for God’s Church and for poor sinners, is not his Baptism a lie? Such a baptized person was buried, but he was never dead! Is not this to turn Baptism into a farce? He gave himself up to the Church of God—he became a member of it—and by that act and deed he pledged himself to do all he could for its growth and its prosperity. And if he does nothing, he is a deceiver. If his joining a Church meant anything, it meant that he would take part in the common service of God. A do-nothing professor is a merely nominal member and a nominal member is a real hindrance! He neither contributes, nor prays, nor works, nor agonizes for souls, nor takes any part in Christian service—and yet he partakes in all the privileges of the Church! Is this fair? What is the use of him? He sits and hears and sometimes sleeps under the sermon. That is all. Is not his union with the Church a practical lie? I will not say so, but I will ask the question. It seems to me that if I belong to the Israelites and they are sent by God to conquer a country—and I do not go forth to the war with them and take my part in the conflict—I am not a true Israelite. I am unworthy of my nation! I am disloyal to the standard! I am false to my fellow soldiers. I think it is so—don’t you?

Having entered the Christian ministry, if I did nothing in it, I should feel that I disgraced it. If I simply tried to enjoy religion without an effort to spread it, I ought to be drummed out of the army of preachers. If there are any in the Church who have talent that they do not use for God, or money which they do not lay out for Christ, or time which they do not use for holy purposes, they are sinning and their sin will find them out. Your buried talent, will it not rust? And rusting, will it not create within your spirits a most horrible disease and be a peril to you? Must it not be so? Are they not guilty of an acted lie before high Heaven who call themselves servants of God and yet do not serve Him? You often sing—

*“‘Tis done! The great transaction’s done!  
I am my Lord’s, and He is mine.  
He drew me and I followed on,  
Charmed to confess the voice Divine.  
High Heaven, that heard the solemn vow,  
That vow renewed shall daily hear.  
Till in life’s latest hour I bow,  
And bless in death a bond so dear.”*

Is that hymn true? Do you mean those verses, or do you mock God? You have all sung the hymn many times and mark, “Happy day! Happy day!” the chorus. But is your singing true or false? If any man or woman among you shall, after such a song sink back into himself and do nothing for his Lord, what truth is there in him? God save us from using our lips to mock His holy name! It can be little short of blasphemy to sing such words and yet live a selfish, indolent life. Will a man thus insult his God? O Sirs, I beseech you make such language true, or else have done with it—lest the record of it destroy your souls!

Once more and I will have done with this painful subject. What would their sin be? According to Moses it would be a grave injury to others. Do you not notice how he put it to them? “Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall you sit here?” What an example to set! If one Christian man is right in never joining a Christian Church, then all other Christian men would be right in not doing so—and there would be no visible Christian Church! Do you not see, you non-professing Believers, that your example is destructive of all Church life? What are you doing? If one Christian man, with the talent to preach, is right in not preaching, then other Christian men have a right to trifle in the same way—and then there would be no ministry left!

An idler is a great waster and makes others, wasters, too—his example is likely to make all around him as indolent as himself. I notice in our Churches that a few earnest men and women lead the way and others are sweetly drawn to follow them. How precious are the earnest few in a Christian community! David knew the value of the first three in his band. But if the leading spirits are dead, cold, indifferent—what happens? Why, lethargy spreads over the whole! I am sorry to say that I hear of instances in which a minister laments, “I labor with all my might, but I am persuaded that nothing will ever be done while Mr. So-and-So is here.” He is often a cold-blooded deacon, or a purse-proud member. When you come to know him, you feel, “While there is such a great big iceberg floating close to the shore, the garden by the sea must be frostbitten—nothing can grow.”

It were a pity that any of us should freeze others. God save us from it! “Oh,” says one, “nobody knows me and, therefore, I cannot have much influence either for good or for evil.” Not over your own child—your daughter, your son? That influence which you have over even one or two little ones may spread far further than you imagine. We cannot calculate the range of moral influence—it is immeasurable! I suppose that there is not a single moving atom of matter which does not influence, in some measure, the entire universe. One atom collides with another and that with another—and so it reaches the remotest star. Whether we do or do not do, what we do or do not do, will have an influence upon all that are round us—perhaps to all eternity.

Perhaps the word I speak tonight shall thrill when yonder sun has burned out like a coal and the moon has become black as sackcloth of hair. I am not sure but that our thoughts upon our bed may throb throughout the ages in their incessant results. “None of us lives to himself, and no man dies to himself”—for good or for evil we are yoked with the universe and there is no possibility of severance. There is much influence for evil in an idle example—possibly such an example would not be set by certain persons if they would but think of the consequences. To such consideration of consequences I invite all whose gravest fault is forbearing to do good. O barren tree, do not excuse yourself because you do not drip with poison like the upas! It is crime enough that you cumber the ground!

Moses goes on to remark that if these people did not go forth to war they would discourage all the rest. “Therefore discourage you the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the Lord has given them?” It is no slight sin to discourage holy zeal and perseverance in others. May we never be guilty of killing holy desires even in children! How often has a burning desire in a boy’s heart been quenched by his own father who has thought him too impulsive or too ardent! How frequently the conversation of a friend, so called, has dried up the springs of holy desire in the person with whom he has conversed! Let it not be so. Yet without cold words, our chill neglects may freeze. I know a terrace where the shutting up of one or two shops has a deadening effect upon the trade of the other shops. Somehow, the closed shutters give a gloomy look to the place and customers are repelled. Does not the same thing happen to groups of workers when one grows idle? Does not the one dull brother deaden the rest?

We cannot neglect our own gardens without injuring our neighbors. Do you live anywhere near a house that is not let, which has a back garden left to run to waste? All manner of seeds are blown over upon your ground and, though you keep the hoe going, the weeds baffle you, for there is such a nursery for them just over the wall! One mechanic coming late among a set of workmen may throw the whole company out of order for the day. One railway truck off the rails may block the entire system. Depend upon it, if we are not serving the Lord our God, we are committing the sin of discouraging our fellow men. They are more likely to imitate our lethargy than our energy! Why should we wish to hinder others from being earnest? How dare we rob God of the services of others by our own neglect? O God, deliver us from this sin!

If I had preached a sermon about murder or theft, you would all have escaped the lash, but few of us will be without rebuke, now that I have kept the text in the setting in which God originally put it—and in which He meant it to be presented for our rebuke and exhortation!

II. Secondly, let us carefully notice WHAT WAS THE CHIEF SIN IN THIS SIN? Of course, if the Reubenites did not keep their solemn agreement to go over the Jordan and help their Brethren, they would sin against their Brethren, but this is not the offense which rises first to the mind of Moses. Moses overlooks the lesser, because he knows it to be comprehended in the greater—and he says, “Behold, you have sinned against the Lord.” In this, he anticipated the confession of David, “against You, You only have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight.” To refuse to help their Brethren would be disobedience to the Lord! Did He not command all Israel to drive out the Canaanites? In like manner, neglect of holy work is positive sin against the Lord. It is disobedience against the Lord not to be preaching His Truth if we are able to do so. Did not our Lord say, “Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature?” This command was not confined to a dozen or so, but was meant for all His people, as they have opportunity and ability. We who hear the Gospel are bid to proclaim it, for it is written, “Let him that hears say, Come.” The hearer of the Gospel is bound to be a repeater of the Gospel! We are all called upon, as we know the Lord, to tell others what the Lord has told us—and if we do not—we are guilty of disobedience to a great Gospel precept.

We are certainly guilty, dear Friends, of ingratitude, if, as I have already said, we owe so much to other men and yet do not seek to bless mankind. But chiefly we owe everything to the Grace of God and, if God has given us Grace in our own hearts and saved us with the precious blood of the Only-Begotten, how can we sit still and allow others to perish? As we value salvation, we are under bonds to make it known. We rejoice to be in the Kingdom of God—should we not spend and be spent for the growth of that Kingdom? He that does not bear arms in this war is a traitor to his Sovereign Lord.

There would be sin against God in the conduct of these people if they did not aid in the conquest of Canaan, for they would be dividing God’s Israel. Shall the Lord’s heritage be torn in two? God meant them all to stay together. They all came out of Egypt together; they all marched through the wilderness together and now He meant them to fight His battles together. Were these to take their inheritance and live among the sheepcotes and leave the other ten and a half tribes to go over Jordan and wage the war alone? This would be scattering the family of God! Can it be that any of us are dividing the Church of God, that is, dividing it into drones and workers? This would be a terrible division, but I fear that it already exists. It is apparent to those who are able to observe and it is mourned over by those who are jealous for the God of Israel. Half the schisms in churches arise out of the real division which exists between idlers and workers. Mind this. Be not sowers of division by being busybodies working not at all!

If you are not serving the Lord, you are sinning against the sacred Trinity. You sin against our Father who would have you do good and be imitators of Him as dear children. You sin against the Son of God who has bought you with a price that you might be zealous for His Glory. You sin against the Holy Spirit whose impulses are not to sleep and idleness, but to quickening and to holiness. May we no longer sin against the Lord by refusing to perform His will!

III. We have now reached the last point and the point that is most serious—WHAT WILL COME OF THIS SIN OF DOING NOTHING? What will come of it? “Be sure your sin will find you out.” Now, as the time is nearly gone, I will not do more than show that these Gadites and Reubenites would be sure to be found out by their own neglect. Their sin would find them out to their shame and sorrow if they did not lend all their strength to their Brethren according to their promise.

It would find them out thusly—they would be ill at ease. One of these days their sin would leap upon their consciences as a lion on its prey. They would wake up and say, “We were wrong. We were bound to have taken our share in that war”—and every man among them that was good for anything would be troubled in heart because he had failed to do his duty in the hour of need. He would feel uneasy. He would not want anybody to point him out, but he would point himself out and he would say to himself, “I failed in that case. I know I did. I acted very wrongly. I ought to have been with Joshua chasing out those Canaanites. I received my own portion of the land and ought, therefore, to have helped others to win their portions.”

When conscience was thus awakened, they would also feel themselves to be mean and despicable. As king after king was conquered and the notes of victory were heard all over Canaan, they would think themselves mice rather than men to have shunned so glorious a conflict. They would feel disgraced by their own inaction. Their manhood would be held cheap by the other tribes—in fact, they would become a by-word and a proverb— as men do who are notoriously greedy and selfish. Surely it is an intolerable disgrace to anyone to profess to be a man of God and to have no care about the souls of others, while they are perishing by millions!

More than that, the tribes who went not to the war would be enfeebled by their own inaction. God would have His people learn war, but if these men did not go to the fight, they would not be soldierly and they would not be able to take care of themselves when their land was invaded. How much of sacred education we miss when we turn away from the service of God! I believe that no man understands salvation so well as the man who, having tasted it for himself, has also preached it to those about him. If you want to know the evil of the human heart, try to do good to the unconverted and endeavor to guide the unbeliever to Jesus.

Get a dozen girls around you, my Sister, and watch the workings of their hearts as you seek to lead them to Christ—and you will learn much more than you knew before! My dear Brother, gather a number of youths about you and observe their feeling and conduct while you seek their conversion. You will soon know the depravity of human nature if you watch for souls for a little season—and if you get souls converted and act as a spiritual father to them—you will soon see how much they need the Holy Spirit to keep them and how much you need Him to keep you, also, for your patience will be tried! You will learn both the sweet and the bitter of the things of God by being engaged in Christ’s service.

Jesus says, “Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me”—service is a yoke we must bear in order to learn of Christ. The only way to learn to swim is to get into the water. To be a soldier and never know the smell of gunpowder is impossible! At least such soldiers are little to be relied on in case of war. No, no—our sin, if we do nothing, will find us out in our being enfeebled, in our being disgraced, in our feeling that we are mean and in the accusation of our conscience. Let us find this sin out and shake ourselves free from it before it finds us out!

Their sin would also have found them out, had they fallen into it, because they would have been divided from the rest of God’s Israel. If they had not gone across the Jordan to fight, the ten and a half tribes would have always said, “What have we to do with you? The Jordan rolls between us and so let it. We do not want any connection with those who acted so basely to us in our hour of need.” They would practically have cut themselves off from union with the Israel of God and they would have secured to themselves the loss of all fellowship with earnest men. Those who are non-workers lose much by not keeping pace with those who are running the heavenly race. The active are happy—the hand of the diligent makes rich in a spiritual sense. There is that which withholds more than is meet and it tends to poverty—I am sure it is so in a spiritual sense.

To come more practically home, beloved Brothers and Sisters, if you and I are not serving the Lord, our sin will find us out. It will find us out perhaps in this way. There will be many added to the Church and God will prosper it, and we shall hear of it, but we shall feel no joy in it. We had no finger in the work and we shall find no comfort in the result. We did not point out the way to troubled consciences. We never went to early morning Prayer Meetings, nor to any Prayer Meetings, to pray for a blessing. We never spoke a word or even gave a tract away and, therefore, we shall see the blessing with our eyes, but we shall not eat of it. While God’s people lift up their loud hallelujahs of joy, we shall only mourn, “My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me!” It is no joy to see a harvest reaped from fields which we refused to plow.

It may be that you will begin to lose all the sweetness of public services. By doing nothing you lose your appetite. Many a person who has no appetite needs a wise doctor to say to him, “Of course you cannot eat, for you do not work. Exercise yourself and your appetite will return.” He that earns his breakfast, enjoys his breakfast. And he who labors for Christ finds that the services of the sanctuary are exceedingly sweet to him. I know some dear Brothers here who cannot get to a Sunday sermon because they have something to do for their Lord throughout the Sabbath— therefore they drop in to this Thursday evening sermon. Thus they gain a Sabbath in the middle of the week which is exceedingly sweet to them. They can only attend one service on Sunday, but that is doubly refreshing to them. They are engaged at the Ragged School, or at the corner of the street where they are accustomed to preach—and the Lord makes up to them their lost opportunities. Believe me, when they do get a meal, they heartily appreciate it, for they come with an appetite which they have gathered in the service of their Master! If you do not work, your sin will find you out in the loss of enjoyment when present at the means of Grace.

I have known this sin find people out in their families. There is a Christian man—we honor and love him—but he has a son that is a drunk. Did his good father ever bear any protest against strong drink in all his life? No. He, of course, did not like the blue ribbon. I will not dispute about total abstinence, but I do not feel much astonished at a boy drinking much when he sees his godly father regularly drink a little. Every man should labor by precept and example to put down intemperance and he who does not do so may be sure that his sin will find him out!

Here is another. His children have all grown up thoughtless, careless, giddy. He took them to his place of worship and he now enquires, “Why are they not converted?” Did he ever take them, one by one, and pray with them? Did he ever speak earnestly to each boy and each girl—and labor for the conversion of each one? I am afraid that in many cases nothing of the sort has been attempted! Certain mistaken individuals almost think it wrong to seek the conversion of their children while they are children— and their sin finds them out when they see them growing up in ungodliness.

Besides, if we do not look after God’s children, it may be that He will not look after ours. “No,” says God, “there were other people’s children in the streets and you had no concern about them—why should your children fare better? You never opened a Ragged School for the poor, why should I bless you? There were men in your employment by whom you gained your living, but you never spoke to them about their souls, nor cared whether they were saved or damned. And I am not going to look after your family when you have no concern for Mine.” “Be sure your sin will find you out.”

I do not know how this warning may come home to any Brother or Sister here who has been idling, but it is better that my warning should find him out than that his sin should find him out! I do not know whether there are any idlers here, though I have a pretty shrewd guess that there are. Friends, neglect of the Lord’s work will come home to you and I will tell you when it will come to you, if it does not do so before. When you are sick and ill, your faith in Christ will bring you great comfort, but you will be sorrowful if you have to say to yourself, “Oh, that I had served God while I was young!”

A friend said to me not long ago, “My dear Sir, you are often laid aside will illness and, no doubt, the reason is the imprudent manner in which you worked away in your youth. You preached 10 times in a week almost all the year round, year after year, and of course you wore yourself out.” “Oh, yes,” I said, “it may be so, but I do not regret it in the least! Thank God, I preached with all my might all over the land when I could do so. And I would, again, if I could only get renewed strength!” If I cannot work so much as in earlier days, I have not the misery of saying, “I wasted my opportunities and spent my best days in ease.” I do say to myself, “Would God I had done more, or had done it better, but I am thankful to be able to exonerate myself from all charge of sloth.” If those of us who do much have to whip ourselves a bit, what should those do who practically do nothing at all and discourage others? What can idlers do but fear that their sin will find them out?

Thus far have I spoken to God’s people and if you think that this is rather rough upon them, what shall I say to you who do not love the Lord at all? O Sirs, if the fan that is in Christ’s hand purges His own floor in this stern way, what will that fan do with you who are as chaff to the wheat? If He sits here as a Refiner and purifies the sons of Levi, and puts even the gold into the fire, what will become of the dross? “If the righteous scarcely are saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” If the language of God is sharp, even, to His own Beloved because He says, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent,” what will His language be to those who are not His children, but are living in open rebellion against Him?

Tremble, you that forget God! Hear His own Words—they are none of mine—“Now consider this, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.” God help you to flee from the sin of doing nothing! The Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, lead you into the Father’s service! Amen.

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THE SINNER’S REFUGE  
NO. 2621

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MAY 7, 1899.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A LORD’S-DAY EVENING, EARLY IN THE YEAR 1857.

**“Then you shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee there, who kills any person at unawares.” Numbers 35:11.**

YOU are aware that the principle of blood-revenge is a deep-seated one in the Eastern mind. From the earliest ages it was always the custom with the Orientals, when a man was murdered, or slain without malice aforethought, for the nearest relative, his heir, or any person related to him, to take revenge for him upon the person who, either intentionally or unintentionally, was the means of his death. This revenge was a very special thing to the Oriental mind. The avenger of blood would hunt his victim for 40 years—yes, until he died, if he was not able to reach him before—and would be on his trail all his life, that he might slay him. It was not necessary that the manslayer should have any trial before a judge—his victim was dead and if the one who killed him was not put to death, it was reckoned among some tribes to be legitimate to kill his father, or indeed any member of his tribe—and until someone in that tribe was put to death, as a revenge for the man who had been slain, by accident or otherwise, a deadly feud existed between the two clans which never could be quenched except by blood.

Now, when the Lord gave to the Jews this Law concerning the cities of refuge, he took advantage of their deep-rooted love towards the system of the revenge of blood by the nearest relative. God acted wisely in this, as He has done in all things. There are two matters mentioned in Scripture which I do not believe God ever approved, but which, finding they were deep-seated, He did not forbid to the Jews. One was polygamy, the practice of marrying many wives had become so established that, though God abhorred it, yet He permitted it to the Jews because He foresaw that they would inevitably have broken the commandment if He had made an ordinance that they should have but one wife. It was the same with this matter of blood-revenge—it was so firmly fixed in the mind of the people that God, instead of refusing to the Jews what they regarded as the privilege of taking vengeance upon their fellows, enacted a Law which rendered it almost impossible that a man should be killed unless he were really a murderer, for He appointed six cities, at convenient distances, so that when one man killed another by accident, and so committed homicide, he might at once flee to one of those cities. And though he might have to remain there all his life, yet the avenger of blood could never touch him, if he were innocent. He would have a fair trial, but even if he were found innocent, he must stay within the city into which the avenger of blood could not, by any possibility, come. If he went out of the city, the avenger might kill him. He was, therefore, to suffer perpetual banishment, even for causing death accidentally, in order that it might be seen how much God regarded the rights of blood and how fearful a thing it is to put a man to death in any way. You see, dear Friends, that this prevented. the likelihood of anyone being killed who was not guilty of murder, for, as soon as one man struck another to the ground by accident, by a stone, or any other means, he fled to a city of refuge. He had a head start from the pursuer and if he arrived there first, he was secure and safe.

I wish to use this custom of the Jews as a metaphor and type to set forth the salvation of men through Jesus Christ our Lord. I shall give you, first, an explanation and, then, an exhortation.

I. I SHALL ATTEMPT AN EXPLANATION OF THIS TYPE. Note, first, the person for whom the city of refuge was provided. It was not a place of shelter for the willful murderer—if he fled there, after a fair trial he must be dragged out of it and given up to the avenger. And the avenger of death was to kill him and so have blood for blood, and life for life. But, in case of an accident, when one man had slain another without malice aforethought and had, therefore, only committed homicide, the man fleeing there was perfectly safe.

Here, however, the type does not adequately represent the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is not a refuge provided for men who are innocent, but for men who are guilty—not for those who have accidentally transgressed, but for those who have willfully gone astray! Our Savior has come into the world to save not those who have, by mistake and error, committed sin, but those who have fearfully transgressed against wellknown Divine Commandments and who have followed the sinful dictates of their own free will, their own perversity leading them to rebel against God.

Note, next, the avenger of blood. In explaining this portion of the type, I must, of course, take every part of the figure. The avenger of blood, I have said, was usually the next of kin to the one who had been slain. But I believe any other member of the family was held to be competent to act as the avenger. If, for instance, my brother had been killed, it would have been my duty, as the first of the family, to avenge his blood, if possible, then and there —to go after the murderer, or the man who had accidentally caused his death—and to put him to death at once. If I could not do that, it would be my business and that of my father and, indeed, of every male member of the family, to hunt and pursue that man until God should deliver him into our hands so that we might put him to death. I mean not that it is now our duty, but it would have been so regarded under the old Jewish dispensation. It was allowed, by the Mosaic Law, that those who were the relatives of the man killed would be the avengers of his blood.

We find the counterpart of this type, for the sinner, in the Law of God. Sinner, the Law of God is the blood-avenger that is on your trail! You have willfully transgressed—you have, as it were, killed God’s Commandments, you have trampled them under your feet—and so the Law of God is the avenger of blood. It is after you and it will have you in its grasp before long! Condemnation is hanging over your head and it shall surely overtake you! Though it may not reach you in this life, yet, in the world to come, the avenger of blood, the Moses, the Law of the Lord, shall execute vengeance upon you and you shall be utterly destroyed!

But, further, there was a city of refuge provided under the Law of God—no, more, there were six cites of refuge, in order that one of them might be at a convenient distance from any part of the country. Now, there are not six Christs—there is but one, but there is a Christ everywhere. “The Word of God 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. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

The city of refuge was a priestly city—a city of the Levites, and it afforded protection for life to the manslayer. He might never go out of it till the death of the then reigning High Priest, after which he might go free without being touched by the avenger of blood. But, during the time of his sojourn there, he was housed and fed gratuitously—everything was provided for him and he was kept entirely safe! And I would have you mark that he was safe in this city, not because of its walls, or bolts, or bars, but simply because it was the place Divinely appointed for shelter. Do you see the man running towards it? The avenger is after him, fast and furious! The manslayer has just reached the borders of the city—in a moment the avenger stops—he knows it is no use going any further after him, not because the city walls are strong, nor because the gates are barred, nor because an army stands outside to resist, but because God has said the man shall be safe as soon as he has crossed the border and has come into the suburbs of the city! Divine appointment was the only thing which made the city of refuge secure! Now, Beloved, our Lord Jesus Christ is the Divinely-appointed way of salvation! Whoever among us shall make haste from our sins and flee to Christ, being convinced of our guilt, and helped by God’s Spirit to enter that road, shall, without doubt, find absolute and eternal security! The curse of the Law of God shall not touch us, Satan shall not harm us, vengeance shall not reach us, for the Divine appointment, stronger than gates of iron or brass, shields everyone of us “who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” in the Gospel!

The city of refuge, I must have you note, too, had around it, suburbs of a very great extent. Two thousand cubits were allowed for grazing land for the cattle of the priests and a thousand cubits within these for fields and vineyards. Now, no sooner did the man reach the suburbs of the city, than he was safe—it was not necessary for him to get within the walls, but the outskirts, themselves, were sufficient protection. Learn, then, that if you do but touch the hem of Christ’s garment, you shall be made whole! If you do but lay hold of Him with “faith as a grain of mustard seed,” with faith which is very feeble, but is truly a living principle, you are safe—

*“A little genuine Grace ensures*

*The death of all our sins!”*  
Get anywhere within the borders of the city of refuge and you are, at once and forever, secure from the avenger!

We have some interesting particulars, also, with regard to the distance of these cities from the habitations of men in ancient Judea. It is said that wherever the crime of homicide might be committed by any man, he might get to a city of refuge within half a day and, verily, Beloved, it is no great distance from a guilty sinner to the sheltering breast of Christ! It is but a simple renunciation of our own powers and a laying hold of Christ, to be our All-in-All, that is required in order to our being found within the city of refuge! Then, with regard to the roads to the city, we are told that they were strictly preserved in good order. Every river was bridged. As far as possible, the road was made level and every obstruction removed so that the man who fled might find an easy passage to the city. Once a year the elders of the city went along the route to see that it was in proper repair and to assure, as far as they could, that nothing might occur through the breaking down of bridges, or the blocking of the highway, to impede the flight of any manslayer and cause him to be overtaken and killed. Wherever there were by-roads and turns, there were legible sign-posts with this word plainly visible upon them, “Refuge”— “Refuge”—pointing out the way in which the man should flee if he wished to reach the city. There were two people always kept on the road, so that in case the avenger of blood should overtake a man, they might intercept him and entreat him to stay his hand until the man had reached the city, lest innocent blood should be shed without a fair trial—and so the avenger himself would be proved guilty of murder. The risk, of course, was upon the head of the avenger if he put one to death who did not deserve to die.

Now, Beloved, I think this is a picture of the road to Christ Jesus. It is no roundabout road of the Law—it is no obeying this, that, and the other command—it is a straight road. “Believe, and live.” It is a road so hard that no self-righteous man will ever tread it, but it is a road so easy that every man who knows himself to be a sinner may, by it, find his way to Christ and his way to Heaven! And lest any should be mistaken, God has set me and my Brothers in the ministry to be like hand-posts in the way, to point poor sinners to Jesus! And we desire to always have on our lips the cry, “Refuge! Refuge! REFUGE!” Sinner, this is the way! Walk you therein and you shall be saved!

I think I have thus given the explanation of the type. Christ is the true City of Refuge and He preserves all those who flee to Him for mercy. He does that because He is the Divinely-appointed Savior, able to save unto the uttermost all them that come to God by Him.

II. Now, in the second place, I HAVE TO GIVE AN EXHORTATION. You must allow me to picture a scene. You see that man in the field? He has been at work. He has taken an ox-goad in his hand, to use it in some part of his farm work. Unfortunately, instead of doing what he desires to do, he strikes a companion of his in the heart and he falls down dead! You see the poor fellow with horror in his face. He is a guiltless man, but, oh, what misery he feels when he gazes upon the corpse lying at his feet! A pang shoots through his heart, such as you and I have never felt—horror, dread, desolation! Yes, some of us have felt something akin to it spiritually—we will not allude to the when and the why—but who can describe the agony of a man who beholds his companion fall lifeless by his side? Words are incapable of expressing the anguish of his spirit! He looks upon him, he tries to lift him up—he makes sure that he is really dead—what does he do next? Do you not see him? In a moment, he flies out of the field where he was at labor and runs along the road with all his might! He has many weary miles before him—six long hours of hard running—and as he passes the gate, he turns his head and there is the man’s brother! He has just come into the field and seen his brother lying dead!

Oh, can you conceive how the manslayer’s heart palpitates with fear? He has a little head start on the road—he sees the avenger of blood, with red face, hot and fiery, rushing out of the field with the ox-goad in his hand, and running after him! The way lies through the village where the dead man’s father lives—how fast the poor fugitive flees through the streets! He does not even stop to bid good-bye to his wife, nor to kiss his children—but on, on, he speeds for his very life! The relative calls to his father and his other friends—and now they all rush after him. Now there is quite a troop on the road—the man is still ahead, there is no rest for him. Though one of his pursuers may pause for a while, or turn back, the others still trail him. There is a horse in the village. They mount it and pursue him. If they can find any animal that can assist their swiftness, they will take it. Can you not conceive of the manslayer crying, “Oh, that I had wings, that I might fly to the city of refuge”? See how he spurns the earth beneath his feet! What, to him, are the green fields on either hand? What are the babbling brooks? He stops not even so much as to wet his lips! The sun is scorching him, but still on, on, on, he runs! He casts aside one garment after another! He still rushes on and the pursuers are close behind him. He feels like the poor stag hunted by the hounds—he knows they are eager for his blood and that if they do but once overtake him, it will be a word, a blow—and he will be a dead man. Watch how he speeds on his way! Do you see him now? A town is rising into sight! He perceives the towers of the city of refuge—but his weary feet almost refuse to carry him further! The veins are standing out on his brow like whipcords! The blood spurts from his nostrils—he is straining all his powers to the utmost as he rushes on—he would go faster if he had any more strength. The pursuers are after him—they have almost caught him, but see, and rejoice! He has just reached the outskirts of the city—there is the line of demarcation—he leaps over it and falls senseless to the ground—but there is joy in his heart.

The pursuers come and look at him, but they dare not slay him. The knife is in their hands and the stones, too, but they dare not touch him. He is safe, he is secure! His running has been just fast enough—he has managed to leap into the kingdom of life and to avoid a cruel and terrible death.

Sinner, that picture I have given you is a picture of yourself, in all but the man’s guiltlessness, for you are a guilty man! Oh, if you did but know that the avenger of blood is after you! Oh, that God would give you Grace that you might have a sense of your danger tonight! You would then not stop a solitary instant without fleeing to Christ. You would say, even while sitting in your pew, “Let me get away, away, away, where mercy is to be found,” and you would give neither sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids till you had found in Christ a refuge for your guilty spirit! I am come, then, to exhort you to flee to Jesus now!

Let me pick out one of you, to be a specimen of all the rest. There is a young man here who is guilty. The proofs of his guilt lie close at hand. He knows himself to be a great transgressor—he has foully offended against God’s Law. Young man, young man, as you are guilty, the avenger of blood is after you! Oh, that avenger—God’s fiery Law—did you ever see it? It speaks words of flame! It has eyes like lamps of fire! If you could once see the Law of God and mark the dread sharpness of its terrible sword, you might, as you sat in your pew, quiver almost to death in horror at your impending doom! Sinner, I think if this avenger shall seize you, it will not be merely temporal death that will be your portion—it will be death eternally! Sinner, remember, if the Law of God lays its hands on you, and Christ does not deliver you, you are damned! Do you know what damnation means? Say, can you tell what are the billows of eternal wrath and what the worm that never dies are? What the Lake of Fire, what the Pit that is bottomless are? No, you cannot know how dreadful these things are! Surely, if you could, Man, you would be up on your feet and fleeing for life—eternal life! You would be like that man in Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress who put his fingers in his ears and ran sway! And when his neighbors ran after him, he cried, “Eternal life! Eternal life!”

O stolid stupidity! O sottish ignorance! O worse than brutal folly that makes men sit down in their sins and rest content! The drunk still drinks his bowl—he knows not that in its dregs there lies wrath. The swearer still indulges in his blasphemy—he knows not that, one day, his oath shall return upon his own head! You will go your way and eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and live merrily and happily, but, ah, poor Souls, if you knew that the avenger of blood was after you, you would not act so foolishly! Would you suppose that the man, after he had killed his neighbor, and when he saw the avenger coming, would coolly take his seat and wait to be slain, when there was a city of refuge provided? No, that consummate folly is reserved for such as you are! God has left that to be the top stone of the folly of the human race, the most glittering jewel in the crown of free will—the dress of death wherein free will does robe itself. Oh, you will not flee to Christ, you will stay where you are, you will rest contented and, one day, the Law of God will seize you—and then wrath, eternal wrath, will lay hold upon you! How foolish is the man who wastes his time and carelessly loiters when the city of refuge is before him, and the avenger of blood is after him!

Suppose, now, I take another case. There is a young man here, who says, “Why, Sir, it is no use my trying to be saved. I shall not think of prayer or faith, or anything of that sort, because there is no city of refuge for me.” Suppose that poor man, who had killed his neighbor, had talked like that? Suppose he had sat still, folded his arms and said, “There is no city of refuge for me.” I cannot imagine such folly! And, surely, you do not mean what you said just now! If you thought there was no city of refuge for you, I know what you would do—you would shriek, and cry, and groan! There is a kind of despair that some people have which is a sham despair. I have met with many who say, “We do not believe we could ever be saved,” and they seem not to care whether they are saved or not. How foolish would the man be who would sit still and so let the avenger slay him because he fancied there was no entrance for him into the city! But your folly is just as great and even worse, if you sit still and say, “The Lord will never have mercy on me.” He is as much a suicide who refuses the medicine because he thinks it will not cure him, as the man who takes the knife and stabs himself in the heart! You have no right, Sir, to let your despair triumph over the promise of God! He has said it and He means it—“Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” If He has shown you your guilt, depend upon it, there is a city of refuge for you! Run to it! Run to it! May God help you to take yourselves to it now! Oh, if men only knew how dreadful is the wrath to come and how terrible will be the Day of Judgment, how swiftly would they flee away to Jesus! There is not a hearer of mine here who would delay an hour to flee to Christ if he did but know how fearful is his condition out of Christ! When God the Holy Spirit once convinces us of our sin, there is no stopping, then! The Spirit says, “Today, if you will hear His voice,” and we cry, “Today, Lord, today, we hear Your voice!” There is no pausing, then! It is on, on, on, for our very life! I beseech you, my Hearers, you who have sinned against God, and know it—you who want to be delivered from the wrath to come—I beseech you, by Him that lives and was dead, flee to Christ!

Take heed that it is to Christ you flee, for, if the man who had slain his neighbor had fled to another city, it would have been of no avail. Had he fled to a place that was not an ordained city of refuge, he might have sped on with all the impetuosity of desire and yet have been slain within the city gates. So, you self-righteous ones, you may flee to your good works, you may flee to your baptism and your confirmation—and your church or your chapel attendance—you may be all that is good and excellent, but you are fleeing to the wrong city and the avenger of blood will find you, after all! Poor Soul! Remember that Christ Jesus the Lord is the only Refuge for a guilty sinner—His blood, His wounds, His agonies, His sufferings, His death—these are the gates and walls of the city of salvation! But if we trust not in these, without a doubt, trust where we may, our hope shall be as a broken reed and we shall perish after all!

I may have one here who is newly awakened, just led to see his sin, as if it were the corpse of a murdered man lying at his feet. It seems to me that God has sent me to that one individual in particular. Man, God has shown you your guilt and He has seat me to tell you that there is a Refuge for you! Though you are guilty, He is gracious! Though you have revolted and rebelled against Him, He will have mercy on all who repent and trust in the merits of His Son! He has bid me to say to you, “Flee! Flee! Flee!” And, in God’s name, I say to you, “Flee to Christ.” He has bid me warn you against delays. He has bid me remind you that death surprises men when they least expect it. He has bid me assure you that the avenger will not spare, neither will his eyes pity—his sword was forged for vengeance, and vengeance it will have! God has also bid me exhort you, by the terror of the Lord, by the Day of Judgment, by the wrath to come, by the uncertainty of life and by the nearness of death, to flee to Christ this very moment—

*“Hasten, traveler, hasten! The night comes on! And you far off from rest and home,  
Hasten, traveler, hasten!”*

But, oh, how much more earnest is our cry, when we say, “Hasten, Sinner, hasten!” Not only does the night come on, but, look, the avenger of blood is close behind! Already he has slain his thousands—let the shrieks of souls, already damned, come up in your ears! Already the avenger has worked wonders of wrath—let the howling of Gehenna startle you, let the torments of Hell amaze you! What? Will you pause with such an avenger in swift pursuit? What? Young man, will you stop this night? God has convinced you of your sin—will you go to your rest once more without a prayer for pardon? Will you live another day without seeing to Christ? No, I think I see signs that the Spirit of God is working in you and I think I hear what He makes you say, “God helping me, I give myself to Christ even now! And if He will not, at once, shed abroad his love in my heart, this is my firm resolve—no rest will I find anywhere till Christ shall look on me and seal, with His Holy Spirit, my pardon bought with blood.”

But if you sit still, young man—and you will do so, if left to your own free will—I can do no more for you than weep for you in secret. Alas for you, my Hearer! Alas for you! The ox led to the slaughter is more wise than you are! The sheep that goes to its death is not so foolish as you are! Alas for you, my Hearer, that your pulse should beat a march to Hell! Alas that yonder clock, like the muffled drum, should be the music of the funeral march of your soul! Alas! Alas that you should fold your arms in pleasure when the knife is at your heart! Alas! Alas for you, that you should sing and make merriment when the rope is around your neck and the fatal drop is about to be given to you! Alas for you, that you should go your way and live joyfully and happily, and yet be lost! You remind me of the silly moth that dances round the flame, singeing itself for a while and then, at last, plunging to its death—such are you! Young woman, with your butterfly clothing, you are leaping round the flame that shall destroy you! Young man, light and frothy in your conversation, joyful in your life, you are dancing to Hell! You are singing your way to damnation and promenading the road to destruction! Alas! Alas! Alas that you should be spinning your own winding-sheets—that you should, every day, by your sins, be building your own gallows—that by your transgressions you should be digging your own graves and working hard to pile the firewood for your own eternal burning! Oh, that you were wise, that you understood this, that you would consider your latter end! Oh, that you would flee from the wrath to come!

O my Hearers, think of the wrath to come, the wrath to come! How terrible that wrath is! These lips dare not venture to describe it! At the very thought of it, this heart fills with agony! O my Hearers, are there not some of you who will soon be proving what the wrath to come really is? There are some of you who, if you were now to drop dead in your pews, must be damned. Ah, you know it! You know it! You dare not deny it! I know you know it! As you hang down your heads, you seem to say, “It is true. I have no Christ to trust to, no robe of righteousness to wear, no Heaven to hope for!” My Hearer, give me your hand! Never did father plead with son with more impassioned earnestness than I would plead with you. Why do you sit still when Hell is burning almost in your very face? “Why will you die, O house of Israel?” O God! Must I yearn over these people in vain? Must I continue to preach to them and be “a savor of death unto death” to them and not “a savor of life unto life”? And must I help to make their Hell more intolerable? Must it be so? Must the people who now listen to us, like the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida in the days of our Lord, have a more terrible doom than the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah? O you who are left to your own free will to choose the way to Hell—as all men do when left to themselves—let these eyes run down with tears for you because you will not weep for yourselves!

It is strange that I should feel more concern for your souls than you do for yourselves. My God knows there is not a stone that I would leave unturned to save each one of you. There is nothing that human strength could do, or human study could learn which I would not seek after if I might but be the instrument of saving you from Hell! And yet you act as though it concerned you not, whom it should concern the most. It is my business, but it is far more yours. Sirs, if you are lost, remember that it is yourselves who will be lost! And if you perish, bear me witness that I am clear of your blood. If you flee not from the wrath to come, forget not that I have warned you. I could not bear to have the blood upon my head which some, even of those who like sound doctrine, I fear, will have at the last day of account! I tremble for some I know who preach God’s Gospel, in some sense idly, but who never warn sinners. A member of my Church said to me lately, “I heard So-and-So preach— he is called a sound-doctrine-man. I listened to him for nine years and I was attending the theater all the time. I could curse, I could swear, I could sin and I never had a warning from that man’s lips during the whole nine years.”

Ah, me! I would not like one of my Hearers to say that concerning my preaching. Let this world hiss me! Let me wear the coat that sparkles, and the cap that garnishes a fool! Let earth condemn me and let the fools of the universe spurn me, but I will be free from the blood of my Hearers! The only thing I seek in this world is to be faithful to my Hearers’ souls. If you are damned, it will not be for lack of faithful preaching, nor of earnest warning. Young men and maidens, old men with gray heads, merchants and tradesmen, servants, fathers, mothers, children—I have warned you this night—you are in danger of Hell! And, as God lives, before whom I stand, you will soon be there unless you flee from the wrath to come! Remember, none but Jesus can save you! But if God shall enable you to see your danger and give you Grace to flee to Christ, He will have mercy upon you and the avenger of blood shall never find you! No, not even when the red lightning shall be flashing from the hands of God in the Day of Judgment! His City of Refuge shall shelter you forever! And in Heaven with Jesus, triumphant, blessed, secure, you shall sing of the blood and righteousness of Christ who delivers penitent sinners from the wrath to come. God bless and save you all! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-14.**

Verses 1-4. Moreover, brethren, I would not that you be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ. The history of Israel in coming out of Egypt was a very instructive type of the history of the visible Church of Christ. They were in slavery in Egypt as all men are in bondage to sin and Satan. They were brought out of Egypt as all the redeemed are delivered by the almighty Grace of God. With a high hand and an outstretched arm, the Lord brought Israel out of the house of bondage and, by a very wonderful Baptism, “in the cloud and in the sea,” they commenced their career as God’s separated people. Then they all shared in the same spiritual ordinances—“They did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink.” Yet, for all that, they were not all God’s people. They were so nominally and visibly—but they were not all really so. And, as there was a mixed multitude that came up out of Egypt, together with the true Seed of promise, so is there an alien element in every Church at this present day. Among those who have been baptized into Christ, there are still some who, while they eat the spiritual meat and drink the spiritual drink, yet for all that have not been brought into true communion with Christ and do not, in reality, know the Lord.

5. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. There was no evidence of faith in many of them and, “without faith it is impossible to please God.” Is it not a sad thing that in a people so highly favored as they were, there should have been so large a proportion of those who had not the faith which renders men pleasing to God? So they did literally come out into the wilderness to die there—and they never entered into the rest of God.

6. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we. We professed Christians—we, Church members.  
6. Should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. They gave way to their carnal appetites. They craved for meat when God had already given them angels’ food. Now, if we act like this, we cannot be pleasing to God.  
7. Neither be you idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. That is, to go through those unclean rites and ceremonies before their idols which are here called, “play.” Ah, dear Friends, may God keep us from the worship of anything which we can see with our eyes, or hear with our ears! May we never become idolaters! You know we can very easily make idols of our children. We can make idols of our own persons! We can make idols of our talents, of our respectability and so forth. But, oh, it matters not what the idol is—it is no more pleasing to God if it is of silver and gold than if it were of the mud of the river. No—“Neither be you idolaters, as were some of them.”  
8. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Fornication in God’s people is peculiarly black and filthy. In the ordinary man of the world, it is evil enough, but when a man professes to be a Christian, he must flee from even the very thought of it, and keep himself chaste, for his body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Oh, may none of us ever come anywhere near to this great evil, but in purity of heart may we walk before our God!  
9. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted Him, and were destroyed by serpents. I cannot stay to mention the many ways in which we can tempt Christ, but we can still readily do so. What a dreadful doom it was to be destroyed by serpents! Yet is it not amazing that in connection with this great sin, and its awful punishment, the bronze serpent was lifted high, that whoever looked at it might live? And now, if any have tempted Christ by presumptuous sin, by their delay, or by their infidelity, let them bless God that they are not yet destroyed by serpents because Christ has been lifted up even as the serpent of brass was exalted above the camp of Israel! Remember our Lord’s words to Nicodemus—“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”  
10. Neither murmur you, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed by the destroyer. It is a dreadful habit to get into—that of complaining against God. Occasional murmuring is doubtless sinful, but habitual murmuring becomes a very great evil! I am afraid that there are some who quibble at God’s Providence and at His Word till they come to be quibblers and nothing else! And what good is a man who can do nothing else but carp, quibble and criticize? O Beloved, “neither murmur you, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed by the destroyer.”  
11. Now all these things happened to them for examples. They were like a book in which we might read our own history in large characters. We see ourselves foreshadowed in them and we read our happiness or our misery in their behavior.  
11, 12. And they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Therefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. For if he begins to think that he stands, it may be that it is nothing but his own imagination—there may be no real standing about it. And there is no surer sign of the falsity of a man’s estimate of himself than the fact that it is a high one. He that thinks himself good has not begun to be good, for the door of the palace of wisdom is humility, and the gate of the temple of virtue is lowliness of mind.  
13, 14. There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it. Therefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I would like to see this verse put over the top of every “sacramental” table in every “church” in England—“Therefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.” If this text were properly understood, every crucifix would be broken to pieces and the altars, themselves, would be cleared away to make room for what should be there—the Table of the Lord—and we would have no more worship of visible things, which is idolatry! O you who are the dearly-beloved of God, flee from it! Keep as far from it as you can.  
I remember reading of a man of God who was the rector of a certain parish and who had in the church a very ancient and famous painted window of which he was somewhat proud. In the design there was a representation of the Godhead—the Father was there, and oh, how blasphemous! He was represented as an aged man! And, one day, this clergyman, who had seen no evil in the window, heard a rustic explaining to a companion that that was the God whom they worshipped. The rector did not hesitate for a moment, but he threw a stone right through that part of the painted window. I suppose that was an offense against the law of man, but certainly it was not against the Law of God! He would never have that figure replaced on any account, whatever, and I think that he did well! “Dearly Beloved, flee from idolatry.” Put it out of your sight! Do not tamper with it, but hate it with a perfect hatred! In God’s eyes, it is one of the most fearful of sins. He has said, “I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God,” and He will have nothing to come between us and the pure and simple worship of His own invisible Self.

FORETASTES OF THE HEAVENLY LIFE  
NO. 2607

**A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 29, 1899, (C. H. SPURGEON MEMORIAL SABBATH).  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, EARLY IN THE YEAR 1857.

**“And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down unto us, and brought us word again, and said, It is a good land which the Lord our God does give us.”  
Deuteronomy 1:25.**

You remember the occasion concerning which these words were written. The children of Israel sent 12 men as spies into the land of Canaan and they brought back with them the fruit of the land, among which was a bunch of grapes from Eshcol too heavy to be borne by one man, and which, therefore, two of them carried on a staff between them. I shall not say much, at this time, concerning the Israelites, but I want to show you that as they learned something of what Canaan was like by the fruit of the land brought to them by the spies, so you and I, even while we are on earth, if we are the Lord’s chosen people, may learn something of what Heaven is—the state to which we are to attain hereafter—by certain blessings which are brought to us even while we are here.

The Israelites were sure that Canaan was a fertile land when they saw the fruit of it which was brought by their brothers and when they ate some. Perhaps there was but little for so many and yet those who did eat were made at once to understand that it must have been a goodly soil that produced such fruit. In like manner, Beloved, we who love the Lord Jesus Christ have had clusters of the grapes of a bettor Eshcol—we have had some of the fruits of Heaven even while we have been on earth and by them we are able to judge of the richness of the soil of Paradise which brings forth such rare and choice delights.

I shall, therefore, present to you a series of views of Heaven in order to give you some idea how it is that the Christian on earth enjoys a foretaste of the blessings that are yet to be revealed. Possibly there are scarcely two Christians who have exactly the same ideas concerning Heaven, though they all expect the same Heaven, yet the most prominent feature in it is different to each mind according to its constitution.

I. Now, I will confess to you what is, to me, the most prominent feature of Heaven, judging at the present moment. At another time, I may love Heaven better for another thing, but, just lately, I have learned to love Heaven as A PLACE OF SECURITY.

We have been greatly saddened as we have seen some professors dishonoring their profession—yes, and worse, still, some of the Lord’s own beloved committing grievous faults and slips which have brought disgrace upon their character and injury to their souls. And we have learned to look up to Heaven as a place where we shall never, never sin—where our feet shall be fixed firmly upon the Rock—where there is neither tripping nor slipping—where faults shall be unknown—where we shall have no need to keep watch against an indefatigable enemy because there is no foe that shall annoy us—where we shall not be on our guard day or night watching against the incursion of foes, for, “there the wicked cease from troubling and there the weary are at rest.” We have looked upon Heaven as the land of complete security, where the garment shall be always white, where the face shall be always anointed with fresh oil, where there is no fear of our turning away from our Lord, for there we shall stand fast forever! And I ask you, if that is a true view of Heaven—and I am sure it is one feature of it—do not the saints, even on earth, in this sense, enjoy some fruits of Paradise? Do we not, even in these huts and villages below, sometimes taste the joys of blissful security? The Doctrine of God’s Word is that all who are in union with the Lamb are safe, that all Believers must hold on their way, that those who have committed their souls to the keeping of Christ shall find Him a faithful and Immutable Keeper. Believing this Doctrine, we enjoy security even on earth—not that high and glorious security which renders us free from every slip and trip, but, nevertheless, a security well-nigh as great because it secures us against ultimate ruin and renders us certain that we shall attain to eternal happiness!

And, Beloved, have you ever sat down and reflected on the Doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints? I am sure you have and God has brought home to you a sense of your security in the Person of Christ. He has told you that your name is engraved on His hand. He has whispered in your ear the promise, “Fear you not, for I am with you.” You have been led to look upon the great Surety of the Covenant as faithful and true and, therefore, bound and engaged to present you, the weakest of the family, with all the chosen race, before the Throne of God! And in such a sweet contemplation I am sure you have been drinking some of the juice of His spiced pomegranates, you have had some of the choice fruits of Paradise, you have had some of the enjoyments which the perfect saints above have in a sense of your complete and eternal security in Christ Jesus. Oh, how I love that Doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints! I shall at once renounce the pulpit when I cannot preach it, for any other form of teaching seems to me to be a black desert and a howling wilderness, as unworthy of God as it would be beneath even my acceptance, frail worm as I am! I could never either believe or preach a Gospel which saves me today and rejects me tomorrow—a Gospel which puts me in Christ’s family one hour, and makes me a child of the devil the next—a Gospel which first justifies and then condemns me—a Gospel which pardons me and afterwards casts me down to Hell. Such a Gospel is abhorrent to reason, itself! Much more is it contrary to the mind of the God whom we delight to serve. Every true Believer in Jesus can sing, with Toplady—

*“My name from the palms of His hand  
Eternity will not erase!  
Impressed on His heart it remains  
In marks of indelible Grace.  
Yes, I to the end shall endure,  
As sure as the earnest is given,  
More happy, but not more secure,  
The glorified spirits in Heaven.”*

Yes, Beloved, we enjoy a sense of perfect security even as we dwell in this land of wars and fighting. As the spies brought to their brethren in the wilderness bunches of the grapes of Canaan, so, in the security we enjoy, we have a foretaste and earnest of the bliss of Paradise!

II. In the next place, most probably the greater part of you love to think of Heaven under another aspect, as A PLACE OF PERFECT REST.  
Son of toil, you love the sanctuary because it is there you sit to hear God’s Word and rest your wearied limbs. When you have wiped the hot sweat from your burning brow, you have often thought of Heaven as the place where your labors shall be over and you have sung with sweet emphasis—  
*“There shall I bathe my weary soul  
In seas of heavenly rest,  
And not a wave of trouble will roll  
Across my peaceful breast.”*  
Rest, rest, rest—this is what you need—and to me, also, this idea of Heaven is exceedingly beautiful. Rest I know I never shall have beneath this sky while Christ’s servants continue to be so unreasonable as they are. I have served them to the utmost of my power, yet I am well-nigh hounded to my grave by Christian ministers perpetually wanting me to do impossibilities that they know no mortal strength can accomplish! Willing am I to labor till I drop, but I cannot do more than I am doing. Yet I am perpetually assailed on this side and the other, till, go where I may, there seems no rest for me till I slumber in my grave—and I look forward to Heaven, with great happiness, because there I shall rest from labors constant and arduous, though much loved.  
And you, too, dear Christian Friends who have been toiling long to gain an object you have eagerly sought—you will be glad when you get to Heaven. You have said that if you could attain your desire, you would gladly lie down and rest. You have longed to lay up a certain amount of riches. You have said that if you could once gain a pension, you would then make yourself at ease. Or you have been laboring long to secure a certain position and you have said that if you could only reach it, you would rest. Yes, but you have not reached it yet—and you love to think of Heaven because it is the goal to the racer, the target of the arrow of existence, the couch of repose for time’s tired toilers! Yes, an eternal rest for the poor weary struggler upon earth. You love it because it is a place of rest—and do we ever enjoy a foretaste of Heaven upon earth in that sense? Oh, yes, Beloved! Blessed be God, “we who have believed do enter into rest.” Our peace is like a river and our righteousness like the waves of the sea. God does give rest to His people even here—“there remains, therefore, a rest to the people of God.” We have stormy trials and bitter troubles in the world, but we have learned to say, “Return unto your rest, O my Soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.” Did you ever, in times of great distress, climb up to your closet and there, on your knees, pour out your heart before God? Did you ever feel, after you had so done, that you had, as it were, bathed yourself in rest, so that—  
*“Let cares like a wild deluge come,  
And storms of sorrow fall,”*  
you cared not one whit for them? Though wars and tumults were raging around you, you were kept in perfect peace, for you had found a great protecting shield in Christ. You were able to remain restful and calm, for you had looked upon the face of God’s Anointed!  
Ah, Christian, that rest, so placid and serene, without a billow of disturbance, which in your deepest troubles you have been enabled to enjoy upon the bosom of Christ, is to you like a bunch from the vintage of Heaven, one grape of the heavenly cluster of which you shall soon partake in the land of the hereafter! Thus, again, you see, we can have a foretaste of Heaven and realize what it is even while we are here upon earth.  
III. That idea of Heaven as a place of rest will just suit some indolent professors, so I will turn the subject around and show you that the very opposite idea is also true, and may be more useful to certain people. I believe that one of the worst sins of which a man can be guilty is to be idle. I could almost forgive a drunk, rather than a lazy man. He who is idle has as good reason to be penitent before God as David had when he was an adulterer. Indeed, David’s adultery probably resulted from his idleness. It is an abominable thing to let the grass grow up to your knees and do nothing towards making it into hay. God never sent a man into the world to be idle—but there are some who make a profession of being Christians who do nothing to serve the Lord from one year’s end to the other.  
A true idea of Heaven is that it is A PLACE OF UNINTERRUPTED SERVICE. It is a land where they serve God day and night in His Temple and never know weariness, and never require slumber. Do you know, dear Friends, the deliciousness of work? Although I must complain when people expect impossibilities of me, it is the highest enjoyment of my life to be busily engaged for Christ. Tell me the day when I do not preach—I will tell you the day in which I am not happy! And the day in which it is my privilege to preach the Gospel and labor for God is generally the day of my peaceful and quiet enjoyment after all. Service is delight! Praising God is pleasure. Laboring for Him is the highest bliss a mortal can know. Oh, how sweet it must be to sing His praises and never feel that the throat is dry! Oh, how blessed to flap the wings forever and never feel them tire! Oh, what sweet enjoyment to fly upon His errands forevermore, to circle round the Throne of God in Heaven while eternity shall last and never once lay the head on the pillow, never once feel the throbbing of fatigue, never once the pangs that admonish us that we need to cease, but to keep on forever like eternity’s own self—a broad river rolling on with perpetual floods of labor! Oh, that must be enjoyment! That must be Heaven, to serve God day and night in His Temple! Many of you have served God on earth and have had foretastes of that bliss.  
I wish some of you knew more of the sweets of labor, for although labor breeds sweat, it breeds sweets, too—more especially labor for Christ. There is a satisfaction before the work. There is a satisfaction in the work. There is a satisfaction after the work and there is a satisfaction in looking for the fruits of the work! And a great satisfaction when we get the fruits! Labor for Christ is, indeed, the dressing room of Heaven. If it is not Heaven, itself, it is one of the most blissful foretastes of it. Thank God, Christian, if you can do anything for your Master! Thank Him if it is your privilege to do the least thing for Him! But remember, in so doing, He is giving you a taste of the grapes of Eshcol! But you lazy people do not get the grapes of Eshcol because you are too lazy to carry the big bunches. You would like them to come into your mouths without the trouble of gathering them! You do not care to go forth and serve God. You sit still and look after yourselves, but what do you do for other people? You go to your place of worship—you talk about your Sunday school and Sick Visitation Society, yet you never teach in the Sunday school and you never visit a sick person—you take a great deal of credit to yourself while you do nothing at all! You cannot expect to know much of the enjoyments of heavenly Glory until you have experienced a little of the delight of working in the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.  
IV. Another view of Heaven is that it is A PLACE OF COMPLETE VICTORY AND GLORIOUS TRIUMPH. This is the battlefield—there is the triumphal procession. This is the land of the sword and the spear—there is the land of the wreath and the crown. This is the land of the garment rolled in blood and of the dust of the fight—there is the land of the trumpet’s joyful sound, there is the place of the white robe and of the shout of conquest! Oh, what a thrill of joy shall shoot through the hearts of all the blessed when their conquests shall be complete in Heaven, when death, itself, the last of foes, shall be slain, when Satan shall be dragged captive at the chariot wheels of Christ, when Jesus shall have overthrown sin and trampled corruption as the mire of the streets, when the great song of universal victory shall rise from the hearts of all the redeemed! What a moment of pleasure shall that be!  
But, dear Brothers and Sisters, you and I have foretastes of even that joy. We know what conflicts, what soul-battles we have even here—did you never struggle against unbelief and at last overcome it? Oh, with what joy did you lift your eyes to Heaven, the tears flowing down your cheeks, and say, “Lord, I bless You that I have been able to vanquish that sin.” Did you ever meet a strong temptation and wrestle hard with it, and know what it was to sing with great joy, “My feet well-nigh slipped; but Your mercy held me up”? Have you, like Bunyan’s Christian, fought with old Apollyon and have you seen him flap his dragon wings and fly away? There you had a foretaste of Heaven! There you had just a hint of what the ultimate victory will be! In the death of that one Philistine, you saw the destruction of the whole army. That Goliath who fell through your sling and stone was but one out of the multitude who must yield their bodies to the fowls of Heaven. God gives you partial triumphs that they may be the earnest of ultimate and complete victory! Go on and conquer, and let each conquest, though a harder one and more strenuously contested, be to you as a grape of Eshcol, a foretaste of the joys of Heaven!  
V. Furthermore, without doubt, one of the best views we can ever give of Heaven is that it is A STATE OF COMPLETE ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD recognized and felt in the conscience. I suppose that a great part of the joy of the blessed saints consists in a knowledge that there is nothing in them to which God is hostile—that their peace with God has not anything to mar it—that they are so completely in union with the principles and thoughts of the Most High that His love is set on them, that their love is set on Him, and they are one with Him in every respect. Well, Beloved, and have we not enjoyed a sense of acceptance here below? Blotted and blurred by many doubts and fears, yet there have been moments when we have known ourselves as truly accepted as we shall know ourselves to be even when we stand before the Throne of God! There have been bright days with some of us, when we could set to our seal that God was true and when, afterwards, feeling that “the Lord knows them that are His,” we could say, “And we know that we are His, too.” Then have we known the meaning of Dr. Watts when he sang—  
*“When I can say, ‘My God is mine,’  
When I can feel Your glories shine,  
I tread the world beneath my feet  
And all that earth calls good or great.  
While such a scene of sacred joys  
Our raptured eyes and souls employ,  
Here we could sit and gaze sway  
A long, an everlasting day.”*  
We had such a clear view of the perfection of Christ’s righteousness that we felt that God had accepted us and we could not be otherwise than happy! We had such a sense of the efficacy of the blood of Christ that we felt sure our sins were all pardoned and could never be mentioned against us forever!  
And, Beloved, though I have spoken of other joys, let me say this is the cream of all of them—to know ourselves accepted in God’s sight. Oh, to feel that I, a guilty worm, am now at rest in my Father’s bosom! That I, a lost prodigal, am now feasting at His table with delight! That I, who once heard the voice of His anger, now listen to the notes of His love! This is a joy that is worth more than all worlds! What more can they know up there than that? And were it not that our sense of it is so imperfect, we might bring Heaven down to earth and might at least dwell in the suburbs of the celestial city if we could not be privileged to go within the gates!  
So you see, again, we can have, in that sense, bunches of the grapes of Eshcol. Seeing that Heaven is a state of acceptance, we, too, can know and feel that acceptance and rejoice in it.  
VI. And again, Heaven is A STATE OF GREAT AND GLORIOUS MANIFESTATIONS. As you look forward to your experience in Heaven, you sing—  
*“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.”*  
You are now looking at it darkly, through a glass, but there you shall see face to face. Christ looks down on the Bible, and the Bible is His looking glass. You look into it and see the face of Christ as in a mirror, darkly. But soon you shall look upon Him face to face. You expect Heaven to be a place of peculiar manifestations. You believe that there Jesus will unveil His face to you, that—  
*“Millions of years your wondering eyes  
Shall over your Savior’s beauties rove.”*  
You are expecting to see His face and never, never sin. You are longing to know the secrets of His heart. You believe that, in that day you shall see Him as He is, and shall be like He in the world of spirits. Well, Beloved, though Christ does not manifest Himself to us as He does to the bright ones there, have we not had blessed manifestations even while we have been in this vale of tears ? Speak, Believer! Let your heart speak—have you not had visions of Calvary? Has not your Master sometimes touched your eyes with eye salve and let you see Him on His Cross? Have you not said—  
*“Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,  
Which before the Cross I spend,  
Life, and health, and peace possessing,  
From the sinner’s dying Friend.  
Here I’ll sit forever viewing  
Mercy’s streams, in streams of blood—  
Precious drops! My soul bedewing,  
Plead and claim my peace with God”?*  
Have you not wept both for joy and for grief when you beheld Him nailed to the tree for your sakes and saw Him bleeding out His life for you ? Oh, yes! I know you have had such manifestations of Him! And have you not seen Him in His risen glories? Have you not beheld Him exalted on His Throne? Have you not, by faith, beheld Him as the Judge of the quick and the dead? And as the Prince of the kings of the earth? Have you not looked through the dim future and seen Him with the crown of all kingdoms on His head, with the diadems of all monarchs beneath His feet, and the scepters of all thrones in His hand? Have you not anticipated the moment of His most glorious triumphs, when— *“He shall reign from pole to pole,  
With illimitable sway?”*  
Yes, you have, and therein you have had foretastes of Heaven. When Christ has thus revealed Himself to you, you have looked within the veil and, therefore, you have seen what is there. You have had some glimpses of Jesus while here—those glimpses of Jesus are but the beginning of what shall never end! Those joyous melodies of praise and thanksgiving are but the preludes of the songs of Paradise!  
VII. Lastly, the highest idea of Heaven is that it is A PLACE OF MOST HALLOWED AND BLISSFUL COMMUNION. I have not given you even half that I might have told you of the various characteristics of Heaven as described in God’s Word, but communion is the best. Communion! That word so little spoken of, so seldom understood. Blessed word, communion! Dearly-Beloved, you hear us say, “And the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all,” but there are many of you who do not know the meaning of that sweet Heaven in a word—communion! It is the flower of language! It is the honeycomb of words—communion! You like to talk of corruption best, do you not? Well, if you like that ugly word, you are very willing to meditate upon it. I do so when I am forced to do it, but communion seems to me to be a far sweeter word than that! You like to talk a great deal about affliction, do you not? Well, if you love that black word—you may have reason to love it—and if you care to be happy about it, you may do so. But give me for my constant text and for my constant joy, communion, and I will not choose which kind of communion it shall be!  
Sweet Master, if You give me communion with You in Your sufferings. If I have to bear reproach and shame for Your name’s sake, I will thank You if I may have fellowship with You in it! And if You will privilege me to suffer for Your sake, I will call it an honor, so that I can be a partaker of Your sufferings! And if You give me sweet enjoyments, if You raise me up and allow me to sit with You in heavenly places in Christ, I will bless You! I will bless God for ascension-communion—communion with Christ in His glories! Do you not say the same? And for communion with Christ in death—have you died unto the world, as Christ died unto it? Then have you had communion with Him in resurrection? Have you been raised to newness of life, even as He was raised from the grave? And have you had communion with Him in His ascension, so that you know yourself to be an heir to a throne in Glory? If so, you have had the best earnest you can receive of the joys of Paradise! To be in Heaven is to lean one’s head upon the breast of Jesus—have you not done that on earth? Then you know what Heaven is! To be in Heaven is to talk to Jesus, to sit at His feet, to let our heart beat against His heart. If you have had that bliss on earth, you have already tasted some of the grapes of Heaven!  
Cherish, then, these foretastes of whatever kind they may have been in your individual case. Differently constituted, you will all look at Heaven in a different light. Keep your foretaste just as God gave it to you. He has given each of you a separate experience of it which is most suitable to your own condition. Treasure it up! Think much of it, but think more of your Master, for, remember, it is, “Christ in you, the hope of glory,” that is your best foretaste of Heaven! And the more you realize that blessed Truth of God, the more fully prepared shall you be for the bliss of the joyous ones in the land of the happy!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **GENESIS 49.**

Verses 1-3. And Jacob called unto his sons and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. Gather yourselves together and hear, you sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father. Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power. All this was to Reuben’s advantage, yet he was spoiled through one fault.

4. Unstable as water, you shall not excel. So it is clear that the greatest strength and dignity and power will not serve a man so as to make him excel if he is unstable. There are many such persons still remaining in the world. Their doctrine changes like the moon and we never know what it is. Their spirit and temper constantly change. Their pursuits are sometimes in one direction and sometimes in another. They are, “everything by starts, and nothing long,” and to each of them it may be said, “Unstable as water, you shall not excel.”

4-7. Because you went up to your father’s bed, then defiled it: he went up to my couch. Simeon and Levi are brothers; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not into their secret; into their assembly, my honor, be not united: for in their anger they slew a man and in their self-will they dug down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for if was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel. It is a very remarkable circumstance, well worthy of notice, that this curse was turned into a real blessing, especially in the case of the tribe of Levi. It is true that they were divided and scattered, like handfuls of salt, throughout the whole of Israel, for they were attendants upon the Lord’s priests and they had cities appointed to them so that while they dwelled here, and there, and everywhere, it was in order that they might reach the whole of the people and prove a blessing to them. Are any of you laboring under a very serious disadvantage? Does it look to you like a curse? Then pray to God to make it into a blessing! I believe that often the worst thing that can happen to Christian men is really the best thing, for, while Nature would cry out, “The clouds are to be dreaded,” Grace can reply—

*“The clouds you so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessings on your head.”*

8. Judah, you are he whom your brethren shall praise. His name was praise and such was his history to be, for David came of that tribe, and great David’s greater Son, whom it is our joy to praise!

8. Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father’s children shall bow down before you. While that was true of Judah, it is still more true of Him who sprang out of Judah, even our Lord and King, the Lion of the tribe of Judah!

9. Judah is a lion’s whelp: from the prey, my son, you are gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion, who shall rouse him? Our Lord overcame His enemies even in the thicket of this world. And all power is given unto Him now that He has “gone up” again into His Glory. Let that man beware who would attack this Lion of the tribe of Judah—“Who shall rouse Him?” If you persecute His followers, you will rouse Him. If you deny His Truth, trample on the Doctrine of Atonement and reject His love, you will rouse Him! But beware in that day, for terrible is the King of Judah when He is once aroused! Therefore, submit yourselves to Him—“Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.”

10. The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be. When did the dominion depart from Judah till the Lord Jesus came as the Sent One? And unto Him, to this very day, the people gather and more and more shall gather in the latter days.

11, 12. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass’s colt unto the choice wine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: his eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk. It was literally so with Judah, but it is gloriously so with our Lord to this day. It was His blood which yielded the juice of those rare clusters of the choice vine and now, with garments dyed with His own blood, He comes from Edom, for He has trodden down His foes, and He cries, “I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me.”

13. Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Sidon. So did Zebulun dwell even until the day when our Lord came, for Matthew writes concerning Him, “Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, He departed into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zebulun and Nephthalim: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the Prophet, saying, The land of Zebulun, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.”

14, 15. Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: and he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute. This was a poor character for Issachar to possess. It was s tame-spirited tribe that loved rest and ease and, therefore, did not fight with the common foe. Issachar crouched down between the burdens instead of taking them up and bearing them! God grant that none of us may be of that lazy tribe! I think that I know some who are—they could do a great deal, but they see that rest is good and the land is pleasant—so they idle away their days.

16, 17. Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that bites the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. Dan is noted among the tribes for its famous leap, capturing that distant part of the country for itself. Here good old Jacob, worn out by what he had already said, exhausted by the ecstasy into which as a Prophet he had been cast, paused awhile and panted.

18. I have waited for Your salvation, O LORD. But He soon resumed His prophecy—  
19. Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last. Many of God’s servants belong to this tribe, for their life is spent in conflict. They do not seek it, but it comes to them and, for a time, they seem to be overcome, yet let them clutch at the promise given to Gad.  
20. Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties. Well fed and then yielding correspondingly. There are some people who like to have their bread to be fat, but they yield to the King no dainties. Let it not be so with us, but let us both feed well and yield well.  
21. Naphtali is a hind let loose. The type of what a Christian minister should be—indeed, what every Christian worker should be—“a hind let loose,” one who can say with David, “O Lord, truly I am Your servant. I am Your servant and the son of Your handmaid. You have loosed my bonds.”  
21. He gives goodly words. He has liberty in speech, freedom of utterance. He is not in bonds, he is as “a hind let loose.”  
22. Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well. Where he can suck up abundant nutriment—  
22. Whose branches run over the wall. He does more than he is expected to do. Nothing seems to content him, his “branches run over the wall.”  
23, 24. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength. You know how sorely Joseph was persecuted by his brothers, yet how the Lord was with him in all his troubles. It appears from these words that he was, himself, an archer, and that he was not in a hurry to shoot his arrows—his bow remained still. It is the strong who can afford to be quiet. As you go across the village green, a goose will hiss at you, while the strong ox lies down calmly and takes no notice of you—“His bow abode in strength.”  
24. And the arms of his hands. Not only his hands, but the arms of his hands—  
24-27. Were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob (from there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel) even by the God of your father, who shall help you; and by the Almighty, who shall bless you with blessings of Heaven above, blessings of the deep that lie under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb: the blessings of your father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors into the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren. Benjamin is a ravenous wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil. Little Benjamin is the last of the tribes.  
28-33. All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spoke onto them, and blessed them; everyone according to his blessing he blessed them. And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a burying place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah, his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebecca, his wife; and there I buried Leah. The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth. And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people. It is a very sweet thing to die with a blessing on your lips. And it is equally good to live in the same spirit. Our Lord Jesus was blessing His disciples when He was taken from them—and since we do not know when we shall be taken away from our relatives, let us be always blessing them. May the Lord, who has blessed us, make us a blessing to others!

—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 #537 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

ENCOURAGE YOUR MINISTER!  
NO. 537

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 18, 1863, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT CORNWALL ROAD CHAPEL, BAYSWATER.

**“Encourage him.”  
Deuteronomy 1:38.**

MOSES could not conduct the people into the promised land. Nor can the Law bring any man to Heaven. The Law may lead a man out of the Egypt of his sin, and it may bring him into the wilderness of conviction. There it may provide him with food and nourish him with some little comfort, but the Law can never give rest to the spirit into Canaan. Moses can never conduct the Israel of God. This was left for Joshua, whose name, you know, is but another form of the name, Jesus. As Joshua, alone, could drive the Canaanites out of the land, and give a portion to all the seed of Israel, so Jesus, alone, can give rest unto the heirs of Heaven.

Moses cannot do it. He may see the promised land, but he can never enter it. Legal convictions may be accompanied with some desires towards Divine things, yes, and some apprehensions of their sweetness, too. But the ultimate enjoyment, the rest which remains for the people of God, can only come to the Believer through Jesus Christ. See here the weakness of the Law. It is not able to bring us to our rest. “By the works of the Law shall no flesh living be justified.” Fly then, to Jesus. For He is the Captain of our salvation, by whom our foes shall be subdued and our everlasting inheritance secured.

It is not, however, my purpose to explore the mystic truth which is couched beneath. I confine myself this morning to the moral on the surface. Joshua was a young man in comparison with Moses. He was about to undertake the onerous task of commanding a great people. He had, moreover, the difficult enterprise of leading them into the promised land, and chasing out the nations which possessed it. The Lord commanded Moses, therefore, to encourage Joshua, that in the prospect of great labor he might not be dismayed. This teaches us, I think, that GOD, EVEN OUR GOD, IS GRACIOUSLY CONSIDERATE OF HIS SERVANTS and would have them well fitted for high enterprise with good courage.

He does not send them as a tyrant would send a soldier upon an errand for which he is not capable. Nor does He afterward withhold His succor, forgetful of the straits to which they may be reduced. But He is very careful of His servants and will not let one of them perish. He counts them as the apple of His eye, keeps them at all hours and defends them from all dangers. Why is this? The Lord our God has strong reasons for being thus considerate of His servants. Are they not His children? Is He not their Father? Does He not love them? If all human loves could be put together, they would scarcely make a drop in a bucket compared with the oceans of love which God the Father has towards His children.

All mothers’ loves, all the loves of friends, of brothers and of sisters, of husbands and of wives—if all piled together, would be a molehill, compared with the towering mountain of the Divine love which God the Father has towards His chosen. We are—and there is no other figure which sets forth the whole length and breadth of that love—we are as dear to God as His Only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ—

*“So dear, so very dear, to God I cannot dearer be; The love wherewith He loves His Son,  
Such is His love for me.”*

“As the Father has loved Me, even so have I loved you,” said Christ.

Now, none of us would send a child of ours upon a difficult enterprise without being anxious for his welfare. We would not put him upon a trial beyond his strength, without, at the same time, guaranteeing to stand at his side and make his strength equal to his day. Moreover, the Father Himself is concerned as to His honor in all that they do. If any servant of God shall fall, then God’s name is despised. The daughters of Philistia would rejoice and the inhabitants of Ekron triumph. “Aha! Aha,” they would say, “so we would have it! God’s servants are put to the rout. Jehovah was not able to give them victory. They trusted in Him and they were confounded. They rested upon Him and they fell to the ground.”

Think not that the heavenly Father will ever permit this to be said. Will He ever send forth His servants to let them fall by the hand of the Adversary? He is too jealous of His great name. His honor is too much concerned ever to permit this. You feeble ones, to whom God has given to do or to suffer for His name’s sake, rest assured that He has His eyes upon you now. He cannot leave you, unless He can cease to be “God over all, blessed forever.” He cannot forget you, for His heart of love can never change, and the relationship which He has towards you can never be dissolved.

Beloved, God the Father cares for His children because they are His children and because His honor is concerned in them. How sweet the thought—if I fail, God fails—if I succeed, being God’s sent servant, God has all the honor. Could I lean on Him and fail, then to that degree God’s purpose is not fulfilled, God’s promise is not kept, God’s Nature is not glorified. Oh, when you can fall back on the name, the renown, the very Character of God. When you can say, as Moses said upon the Mount, “What will You do for Your great name?” When you can plead as Luther did, “Lord, this is no quarrel of mine, it is Yours! You know You did put me to speak against Your foes and now if You leave me, where is Your Truth?” When you can plead with God in this way, surely He will rescue you. You cannot fail when your cause is God’s cause.

Nor is the Divine Father, alone, concerned. Is not the Son of God concerned in the welfare of His Brothers and Sisters? He has bought them with His blood. That which a man dearly purchases he will highly prize. If he did not, it would be as much as to confess that he had paid too costly a sum for what he bought. You are bought with a price. A price tremendous enough. The King of Glory gave His heart’s blood to redeem poor worms like ourselves, but He will never confess that He gave too much for us. In love He will esteem the purchase equal to the price He paid. The love and the price are both infinite.

As He looks upon any one of His people, He says, “There is My purchase,” and He values you not so much for what you are intrinsically worth as because He sees the drops of His own blood upon you. “There,” says He, “is the travail of My soul. There is the Divine satisfaction My Father gives Me for the sufferings I endured.” Do you think that when He thus values His servants He will leave them without His help? It cannot be. Moreover our blessed Lord has passed through precisely those very troubles to which He calls His people. “We have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” “He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

The thorn in your foot pierced His heel before it touched you. The sorrow which sends the tears gushing from your eyes have first of all swollen His heart—

*“In every pang that rends the heart,*

*The Man of Sorrows had a part.”*  
“In all their affliction He was afflicted and the angel of His Presence saved them.” If you have been widowed, you feel a compassion for those who are brought into the like state, to which others who have never passed through it are strangers. Were you ever a fatherless child? I know you will love orphans. Now our Lord and Master was forsaken of His Father. “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?” He says. He has gone all the length of human grief, and therefore it is not possible that He should be inconsiderate concerning any one of His Beloved.

Do you not know, to crown this point, that every Believer is actually a part of Christ? We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Were the poor servants of God at Damascus persecuted? Christ suffered. “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” To this very day our Head is in sympathy with us—

*“He feels at His heart all our sighs and our groans,*

*For we are most near Him, His flesh and His bones.”*Do you think the Head will not care for the members? Shall I let my finger fester uncared for, until it needs to be cut away from mortification? Not while my brain can think, or my tongue can speak. And Jesus, so long as He can see His people and His tongue can make any intercession, will not let even the meanest member of His Mystical Body suffer for lack of supplies. Even as God cared for Joshua, so does Christ care for you this morning, beloved Member of the Body of Christ.

Is not this sufficient argument—the Father’s interest and the Son’s? If not, remember the most blessed Spirit. He dwells in all the people of God. How can He dwell in them and not be mindful of them? We forget the sick and the poor because they live in a back street and we do not pass there. But you could not have poverty pining in your own house, methinks, without readiness to relieve it. You would not have sickness lying in your own chamber without showing sympathy. Now our body is the house of the Holy Spirit. He dwells in the body as in a temple, and do you think that He will see His people languish for lack of Divine Grace while He is present with them?

Can it be that He will walk in them and see them famish, perceive their lack and destitution and not supply their wants? Dream not so harshly of the tender and blessed Spirit, whose name is “the Comforter.” Be it never forgotten that it is His office to supply the wants of God’s people. It is the Holy Spirit’s business to see after the saints. “If I go away,” said Jesus, “I will send the Comforter unto you.” So long as they had the personal Presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, the disciples could want for nothing. As long as He had a crust of bread, they had half.

If He had a place where to lay His head at any time given Him by charity, they could rest with Him. “Where I am there shall also My servant be,” was Christ’s loving rule. When He went away, then they were left like orphans until the Spirit of God came as another Comforter, “who should abide with them forever.” Do you think that the Holy Spirit will neglect His office? O you weak and trembling Believer, do you imagine that God the Holy Spirit will be negligent of His sacred trust? Can you suppose that He has undertaken what He cannot, or will not, perform?

Now if it is His business to work in you, to strengthen you, to illuminate you, to comfort you, do you suppose He has forgotten you? Why say you, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, “My way is hid from the Lord and my judgment is passed over by my God? Have you not known, have you not heard, that the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, faints not, neither is weary.” You are near to Him. Now His eyes are upon you. Like as a father pities His children, even so the Lord pities you. And like as a mother tenderly fondles her suckling, even so the Lord loves you. The heart of His love is yearning over you, pitying your sufferings, ready to help you in your distresses. Trust in Him and He will surely encourage you, and with your fears exchanged for faith, you shall triumph over every foe, and realize every promise.

Observe well how far the tender consideration of God for His servants extends! He not only considers their outward state and the absolute interests of their condition, but He remembers their spirits and loves to see them of good courage. Some people think it a small thing for a Believer to be full of doubts and fears, but I do not think so. I perceive from this text that my Master would not have you entangled with fears. He would have you without carefulness, without doubt, without sorrow. He says, “Encourage him”—as much as if He had told Moses that it was an important thing for His servant Joshua to have his courage duly sustained.

My Master does not think so lightly of your unbelief as you do. You are desponding this morning. Well, this is a grievous matter. My Lord loves not to see your countenance sad. It was a law, you remember, of Ahasuerus, that no one should come into the king’s court dressed in mourning. But it is not the law of my Master, for you may come mourning as you are. But still He would have you put off those rags and that sackcloth, for surely there is much reason to rejoice. Rejoice in the Lord always! Be of good courage! Wait on the Lord, for He will renew your strength.

The Christian man must have his spirits sustained in order that he may glorify the Lord. If his spirits are kept up, he will be able to endure trial upon trial. He comes to the fire, but it will never kindle upon him when his faith is firm. He walks through the rivers, but the floods never overflow him while he can look to his God. The sweetest songs Believers ever have are those they sing at night. God’s people are like the nightingale—their music is best heard when the sun is gone down. Oh, how much depends on your spirit being supported! Let the spirit sink and a little trouble lays like a dead weight upon the soul.

On the other hand, if faith is firm, tons of trouble become light as a feather. Unless the spirits of God’s people are sustained, they will dishonor their God. They will think harsh things of Him, and perhaps they will speak harsh things against Him, and so the holy name of God will not be had in good repute. What a bad example it is! This disease of doubt and discouragement is an epidemic that soon spreads among the Lord’s flock. One downcast Believer makes twenty sad. This phobia is a contagious species of madness as soon are men are bitten with it. If there is one doubt of the promise of God, straightway a whole congregation will begin to foam with like doubts.

When Paul was in the ship and took bread and ate it in the midst of the storm, then all the crew were encouraged. But if Paul had been downcast, then, from the captain to the smallest cabin boy, there would have been great distress. Oh, be of good courage for the sake of your Brothers and sisters in Christ. When you would say a hard or bitter thing, keep it back as David did, lest he should offend against the generation of God’s people. “When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me.” Unless your courage is kept up, Satan will be too much for you.

My experience teaches me that the cowardly old Tempter always comes upon us when we are in our worst state. If he would but meet me sometimes, I could drive him as chaff before the wind. But he will always meet me when an attack of bile, or some domestic trouble, or ill tidings in the camp hinder my cheerfulness. Then, sure enough, in some dark, narrow lane stands the arch-enemy, with his sword drawn and he swears he will spill the blood of my soul. But just let the heart be right, let the spirit be joyful in God my Savior and the joy of the Lord shall be your strength and no fiend of Hell shall make headway against you.

Besides, labor is light to a man of cheerful spirit! You can work all day and almost all night when the spirits are right—but once let the heart sink and your soul lack encouragement—and then you grow weary and cry, “Would God it were evening and the shadows were drawn out, that we might rest from our toil.” Success waits upon cheerfulness. The man who toils rejoicing in his God, believing with all his heart, has success guaranteed. He who sows in hope shall reap in joy. He who trusts in the Lord and laughs at impossibilities, shall soon find that there are no impossibilities to laugh at! To the man who is confident in Jehovah, all things are possible. It is thus of paramount importance that the spirits of the Christian should be constantly kept up. God so considers it. Thus says the Lord, “Encourage him.” Make the good man’s heart glad. Make the Believer sing with joy. “Encourage him.”

II. Secondly, we remark that GOD USES HIS OWN PEOPLE TO ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER. He did not say to the angel, “Gabriel, there is

My servant Joshua, about to take the people into Canaan—fly down and encourage him.” God never works needless miracles. If His purposes can be accomplished by ordinary means, He will certainly accomplish them without using miraculous energy. Gabriel would have not been half so well fitted for the work as Moses. A Brother’s sympathy is more precious than an angel’s embassy.

The angel, swift of wing, had better known the Master’s bidding than the people’s temper. An angel had never experienced the hardness of the road, nor seen the fiery serpents. Nor had he led the stiff-necked multitude in the wilderness. Moses felt it all. For my part, I am glad to think that God does His work by man. It gives us such a bond of brotherhood. We must be dependent on one another. We need condolence in our grief. And we invite companionship in our joys. So, being mutually dependent on one another’s countenance and counsel, we are fused more completely into one mass and made more thoroughly one family.

To whom, then, should this work of encouraging the people be committed? Surely the elders should do it. Those of riper years than their fellows. I know some aged persons, who whenever they see a young Christian, make it a point to inform him of all the difficulties and perils of the road. Like Mistrust and Timorous, they have always a doleful story to tell about the way to Heaven. This was the old style of Christian in many of our Churches.

For my part, I think that the aged Christian is better employed in looking after the lambs of the flock and trying to carry them in their bosoms. Talk cheerily to the young and anxious enquirer. Lovingly try to remove stumbling blocks out of his way. When you find a spark of Divine Grace in the heart, kneel down and blow it into a flame. Leave the young Believer to discover the roughness of the road by degrees. Tell him of the strength which dwells in God, of the sureness of the promise, of the delightfulness of fellowship with Jesus, of the charms of communion with Christ. Entice the young Christian on as good mothers teach their children to walk by holding out here a sweet, and there some tempting thing, that they may put their trembling feet one after the other and at last know how to walk.

I would that every Church had many of these aged Brothers and Sisters, fathers and mothers in Israel, who take this for their motto whenever they see a young Christian,—“Encourage him.” I know of nothing more inspiriting than to hear the experience of a gray-headed saint. I have found much spiritual comfort in sitting at the feet of my venerable grandfather, more than eighty years of age. The last time I saw him, I said to him, “I suppose you have had many trials, Grandfather?” He said, “I have not had too many and the most of what I have had, I have made myself.”

“And do you think that God will ever leave His people?” I asked. “No,” he said, “for if He would leave one of them, He would have left me. But He is a faithful God, and I have proved Him, for I have known His love more than seventy years, and yet He has been faithful to me. Not one good thing has failed of all that the Lord God has promised.” Why, it comes home to the hearts of us young people and makes us feel that we have found something which it is safe to depend upon when those who have gone through the valley can bear such a word of testimony as this!

Do not let a word of peevishness come out of your mouth, my aged Brothers and Sisters. Let no syllable of complaining ever escape you. Let your mouth be filled with your Lord’s praises and with His honor all the day and so you will encourage others.

Not the aged only, but the wise in the family should be comforters. All Believers are not equal in knowledge. Some are quick of apprehension in the ways of the Lord. They rapidly acquire doctrinal knowledge. And experimental knowledge comes to them with a brighter light than it does to duller intellects. There are in all our Churches those who never will be doctors of divinity. Though they know right well that they are sinners and that Christ saves them, and so their acceptance is secured, if you talk to them about the mysteries of the Gospel they will soon get into depths where they lose their footing, for they have not learned to swim.

Perhaps they will never be able to understand, or at least to appreciate, the doctrine of election. Now, wiser men should not keep their knowledge to themselves. Above all they should not use it to criticize. I could tell of men who carry knowledge like a sword. They listen to the sermon and when they meet some friend who gained a little good from it, they will cavil. They say, “Oh, the first or the third point I did not think quite sound.” They will be sure to have something to say that will knock the bread from the mouths of those who are willing to eat. They are more knowing than wise.

Moses was wise in doctrinal knowledge. With what consummate wisdom he addressed Joshua. “Be strong and of a good courage—for you must go with this people unto the land which the Lord has sworn unto their fathers to give them. And you shall cause them to inherit it. And the Lord, He it is that does go before you. He will be with you. He will not fail you, neither forsake you—fear not, neither be dismayed.” Oh you that have searched the Scriptures through and know its promises—you that have been among these beds of spices and whose garments smell of frankincense, be sure to quote the promises of God to trembling hearts, and especially to those engaged in arduous labor for the Master.

Comfort them. Repeat the doctrine of God’s faithfulness. Say to them, “He will be with you. He will not fail you, neither forsake you—fear not, neither be dismayed.” Oh that the wise-hearted in the Lord’s family would be thus employed at all times!

Nor can I doubt that the happier sort of Christians ought always to be engaged in comforting the mournful and sorrowing. You know whom I mean. Their eyes always sparkle! Wherever they go they carry lamps bright with animation. Sunshine gleams in their faces. They live in the light of God’s Countenance. We have some of a more somber countenance, good people, too. They always see the black side of affairs. Now, you who are happy, try to encourage those that are downcast. Oh, dear Friends, I am afraid we neglect this duty, many of us.

You will say, “How can I perform it?” Speak a kind word always. Find out those who are weary and give them a word of consolation. Even a smile from your face may do them good. Do not avoid them because they

are melancholy, but rather pursue them. Hunt them out. Do not let them be quiet in their nest of thorns. If the Lord has given it to you to soar aloft into the clear blue ether, try to carry your friend with you and lift him above the clouds. Suppose your house is on a hill and he lives down in the marsh, ask him to climb the hill and stay with you.

Perhaps you have the keys of the promise. Use the key and open the door for him. It is just possible that you may live in the upper story where you can see further and behold more of the blessed land. Ask him to come up from his cellar and walk on the roof of your palace and scan the prospect through your telescope, “Encourage him.”

Let the Brother of low degree be likewise encouraged by these who are rich among you. You may frequently breathe comfort into a desponding spirit by seasonable help. The destitute will think himself rich upon your leavings. Perhaps your poor Brother thinks you look down upon him because you are better off than he is—try to prevent his thinking so. If God has blessed you with a good position in Providence, be ready to encourage those that are poor and needy. Oh, if all these things I have been counseling should be put in practice, what a vast amount of happiness, by God’s Grace, would be created! Our Churches would be more like families.

I do not like people to come into a place of worship like so many icebergs floating out to sea and wishing to avoid each other. I like to see all distinctions broken down, except the distinctions of superior Grace and those only observed because one Brother has cast in more to the common treasury of the Church of spiritual riches than another can do. I like those who fear the Lord to speak often to one another. We are getting into a bad state when they who fear the Lord speak often against one another. I believe that this one practice of encouraging each other might restore to the Churches that holy fraternity and blessed love which once distinguished them.

I am sure this would enrich you all. It is by commerce that countries grow rich. France sends her exports to England and England repays her with abundance. The labor of the humble and the skill and enterprise of the lofty contribute to the great commonwealth. An exchange of thought tends to help. A stream of holy wealth would flow through our Churches if each one would seek the other out with this aim of holy encouragement. How many a good thing is strangled in birth! How many a good enterprise is dashed to pieces on the shoals before it gets out to sea.

Encourage that loving-hearted Sister who thinks that she might at least take an infant-class in the Sunday school. Encourage that aged woman who has but little talent, but who yet might go from house to house to attend the sick. Encourage that poor struggling tradesman who would do something for the Master if he could by any means be delivered from the constant cares which harass him. Encourage every soul that has a spark of Divine Grace in it. Labor to help others and you shall find a most gracious return in your own soul. God encourages you. Christ encourages you as He points to the Heaven He has won for you. The Spirit encourages you as He works in you to will and to do of His own will and pleasure. Do you then act the Divine part and go forth to encourage others, according to the motto, “Encourage him.”

III. I advance to THE OBJECT that is uppermost in my mind. It struck me some six weeks ago that I might say a few things to my Brother’s congregation which he might not like to say himself. And that as his was a new enterprise—and I am sure all our hearts anxiously desire it the very richest success—I might possibly take the liberty of saying a few things to you, the congregation clustering around this pulpit, which may be useful in the future of the Church. I shall speak of him as a stranger, as I should speak of any other young man anxious to build up a Church and glorify his Master.

I believe there is a special occasion for the exercise of this duty of encouraging one another in the case of the minister and Church in this place. It is a fresh enterprise surrounded with peculiar difficulties and demanding special labor. “Why,” you say, “should a minister need encouraging? We have plenty of troubles all the week long with our losses here and crosses there. We want encouragements, but surely ministers do not.” Ah, if you want to have a refutation of that idea you had better come into this pulpit and occupy it a little time. If you would like to exchange, I would truly say that so far as the pleasure of my voice is concerned, apart from the spiritual joy my Lord gives me, I would change places with a crossing-sweeper, or a man who breaks stones on the road.

Let a man carry out the office of a Christian minister aright and he will never have any rest. “God help,” says Richard Baxter, “the man who thinks the minister has an easy life.” Why, he works not only all day, but in his sleep you will find him weeping for his congregation—starting in his sleep with his eyes filled with tears, as if he had the weight of his congregation’s sins resting on his heart and could not bear the load. I would not be that man in the ministry who does not feel himself so fearfully responsible that if he could escape from the ministry by going with Jonah into the depths of the sea, he would cheerfully do it.

For if a minister is what he should be, there is such a weight of solemn concern, such a sound of trembling in his ears that he would choose any profession or any work, however arduous, sooner than the preacher’s post. “If the watchman warn them not they shall perish, but their blood will I require at the watchman’s hands.” To sit down and ponder over the question—“Am I free of his blood?” is terrible. I have sometimes thought I must have a day or two of rest, but I frankly confess that rest is very little rest to me, for I think I hear the cries of perishing souls, the wailings of spirits going down to Hell, who chide me thus—“Preacher, can you rest? Minister, can you be silent? Ambassador of Jesus, can you cast aside the robes of your office? Up! And to your work again.”

As Mr. Whitfield said, when he thought of the ministry and what was concerned in it, he wanted to stand on the top of every hackney coach in London and preach the Gospel as he rode along. It is a work so solemn that if you do not encourage your minister, your minister will probably sink down in despair. Remember that the man, himself, needs encouragement, because he is weak. Who is sufficient for these things? To serve in any part of the spiritual army is dangerous, but to be a captain is to

be doubly exposed. The most of the shots are aimed at the officers. If Satan can find a flaw in our character, then it will be, “Publish it, publish it, publish it!” If he can lend us to keep back a doctrine or go amiss in practice, or wander in experience, he is glad enough.

How delighted is the devil to break the vessels of mercy. Pray for the poor minister, whom you expose to perish, if you do not preserve him by supplication. If there were a ship at sea stranded and broken on the rocks and someone volunteered to carry a rope to the sinking crew, you, standing on the shore, could do no more—methinks you could not do less— than cry, “O God! Help him to bear the rope to that wrecked ship.” Pray for the minister and encourage him, for there are plenty to discourage him. There are always carping spirits abroad who will remind him of any fault. He will be afflicted by those cowards who will not dare to sign their names to a letter, but send it to him anonymously.

And then there is the devil, who, the moment the man has got out of the pulpit, will say, “There is a poor sermon! You will never dare to preach it again.” After he has been preaching for weeks there will come a suggestion, “You are not in your proper sphere of labor.” There are all sorts of discouragements to be met with. Professing Christians will backslide. Those who do remain will often be inconsistent, and he will be sighing and crying in his closet, while you, perhaps, are thanking God that your souls have been fed under him.

Encourage your minister, I pray you, wherever you attend—encourage him for your own sakes. A discouraged minister is a serious burden upon the congregation. When the fountain gets out of order, you cannot expect to find water at any of the taps. And if the minister is not right, it is something like a steam engine in a great factory—everybody’s loom is idle when the power is out of order.

See that he is resting upon God and receiving His Divine power and you will all know, each Sunday, the benefit of it. This is the least thing you can do. There are many other things which may cause you expense, effort, time—but to encourage your minister is so easy, so simple a matter, that I may well press upon you to do it.

Perhaps you will say, “Well, if it is so simple and easy, tell us, who are expecting to settle down in this place, how we can encourage the minister here.” Well, you can do it in several ways. You can encourage him by very constant attendance. By the way, looking round here, I think I know some of the persons present who belong to neighboring Chapels.

What business have you here? Why did you leave your own minister? If I see one come into my place from the congregation of another Brother in the ministry, I would like just to give him a flea in his ear such as he may never forget. What business have you to leave your minister? If everyone were to do so, how discouraged the poor man would be! Just because somebody happens to come into this neighborhood, you will be leaving your seats?

A compliment to me, you say. I thank you for it. But now, in return, let me give you this advice—these who are going from place to place are of no use to anybody. But those are the truly useful men who, when the servants of God are in their places, keep to theirs and let everybody see that whoever discourages the minister, they will not, for they appreciate his ministry.

Again, let me say by often being present at the Prayer Meetings you can encourage the minister. You can always tell how a Church is getting on by the Prayer Meetings. I will almost prophecy the kind of sermon on the Sunday from the sort of Prayer Meeting on the Monday. If many come up to the House of God and they are earnest, the pastor will get a blessing from on High. It cannot but be, for God opens the windows of Heaven to believing prayer. Never fail to plead for your pastor in your closet.

Oh, dear Friends, when you mention a father’s name and a child’s name, let the minister’s name come forth, too. Give him a large share in your heart, and both in private and public prayer, encourage him. Encourage him, again, by letting him know if you have received any good. Oh, if there should come into this House of Prayer a sinner needing a Savior and not knowing the way, and my Brother’s words shall point him to the Savior’s Cross. If he should be the means of showing you what faith means and of leading you to believe in Him who has reconciled us unto God by His death, do not conceal the good news—come and tell it!

The best way to do it will be by proposing to be united with the Church in fellowship. Our Church Meeting nights, when we receive fresh candidates into fellowship, are the harvest nights in the Christian ministry. Then we see how God’s cause prospers in our hand. But if many in the Church who have been converted fail to let the minister know it and hold back, how is the poor man to be comforted?

I know I address some here—God’s people—who have never made a profession. Suppose all God’s people did as you do? And they have as much right to do it as you have. How, I ask you, would the ministry itself be maintained? How could ministers’ hearts be kept from breaking, if they never knew of any conversions? Make haste! Do not put it off! Delay not to keep God’s commandments, but come forward at once and be baptized, and acknowledge what God has done for your soul.

Again, you can all encourage the minister by the consistency of your lives. I do not know when I ever felt more gratified than on one occasion, when sitting at a Church Meeting, having to report the death of a young Brother who was in the service of an eminent employer, a little note came from him to say, “My servant, Edward \_\_\_\_\_\_, is dead. I send you word at once, that you may send me another young man. For if your members are such as he was, I never wish to have better servants around me.”

I read the letter at the Church Meeting and another was soon found. It is a cheering thing for the Christian minister to know that his converts are held in repute. Of another member of my Church an ungodly employer said, “I do not think anything of him. He is of no use to anybody. He cannot tell a lie!” Oh, that is the honor which a Christian minister longs and pants after, to have consistent followers, to have those listening to him who will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

Gather round my Brother, all of you, and encourage him, by earnestly aiding and abetting him in every good word and work. There is a neighborhood here, I am told, requiring evangelization. Here we have, side-by-side, poverty and riches. Shall not yonder wretched potteries be the better for the building of this House of Prayer? I am sure my friend, Sir Morton Peto, would think he had wasted his money if it were merely for the gathering of a congregation and not for improving the neighborhood.

We build our Houses of Prayer always with a view to the people round about. We believe it is like opening a well in the wilderness, or an oasis in the desert, or placing a drinking fountain where thirsty souls may drink. It is introducing a new physician into the neighborhood to attend to the diseases and sickness of souls. Oh, how my heart yearns after the success of this house—not only because the minister is my blood brother, and also my Brother in Christ, but because he is a valiant soldier of Christ.

To preach the Truth of God he has not hesitated to make himself a multitude of enemies elsewhere and will not be ashamed to do the same here, if the same case should occur. I honor him because he has honored my Master. And I expect that you will get from him the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth—so far as God has taught it to him. I know he is ready to lay down his own neck for the conversion of souls. I know his earnestness to do anything for the conversion of sinners.

And if you do not encourage him, you will bring down upon your head every curse of those who reject the Prophet of God. But encouraging him, you will see a Church flocking around him which shall last long after our time. It shall be a perennial stream of benediction to ages yet unborn, until Christ Himself shall come and consummate the kingdom, by reigning Himself in Person among the sons of men. May the Lord grant His blessing!

Some of you cannot encourage the minister. You can encourage no one, for you are not born again yourselves. Oh, if you have not passed from death unto life, the first thing that can encourage him is to begin to think about your own state. Where are you? What are you? Out of God, out of Christ, out of safety? You will be out of life and out of Heaven—shut in the pit forever, except you repent. Oh, you will encourage the preacher, if the Lord leads you, to consider your ways and turn from sin and from selfrighteousness, too. Look to the Almighty Savior, able to save unto the uttermost all among you who shall trust Him. May the Lord add a blessing, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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NO. 2957

A SERMON  
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**“The LORD our God spoke unto us in Horeb, saying, You have dwelt long enough in this mountain.”  
Deuteronomy 1:6.**

IT is a good thing, sometimes, to look back—to take a retrospective view of our life. It is a very bad thing to live upon the past—to say, “I believe I am a child of God because I had certain spiritual enjoyments and experiences 10 or 12 years ago.” Ah, such stale fare as this will not feed hungry souls. They need present enjoyment, or, at least, present confidence in the ever-living God. Yet, Brothers and Sisters, we may sometimes gather fuel for today from the ashes of yesterday’s fire. Remembering the mercies of God in the past, we may rest assured concerning the present and the future.

If we have wisely learned by experience, we may, from our own failures in the past, gain wisdom which shall enable us to avoid the evils which overcame us on former occasions. It is well to do as you may sometimes have seen the bargemen do on a river or canal. They walk backward, pushing with all their might backward, to drive their barge forward and, sometimes, we may go backward just far enough to help us to push forward, but no further than that! Never must anyone of us say to himself, “What I was in my youth, or what I was in middle life, is a sufficient comfort for me now. Soul, take your ease, for I have much goods laid up for many years.” That will never do, for we need to exercise a present faith to enjoy a present love—and to live in present holiness and fear of the Lord. Yet it will help us if we remember all the ways whereby the Lord our God has led us these many years in the wilderness.

But, coming to our text, we are reminded that we must expect changes—“You have dwelt long enough in this mountain.” Secondly, we ought not to make these changes without the authorization of our Divine Leader—“The Lord our God spoke unto us in Horeb, saying, You have dwelt long enough in this mountain.” But, thirdly, in our spiritual pilgrimage there are times when it becomes very clear that we have been long enough in a certain condition and need to make an advance towards the Canaan which is our blest inheritance.

I. To begin, then, WE MUST EXPECT CHANGES.  
Israel was not always to dwell at Horeb and even the choicest place of Divine manifestation is not always to be ours. The land of Jordan and of the Hermonites and the Hill Mizar, though very precious to us because of the spiritual experiences we have enjoyed there, are not to be our permanent places of abode. We have to journey onward and pitch our tent somewhere else.

We need not wonder at this, my Brothers and Sisters, for this is a changing world. We would be out of gear with the whole creation if we did not frequently change. Behold how the year changed. It seems but yesterday that the rivers were locked in ice. Soon we saw the flowers peeping up from the soil and now we have reached midsummer—and shall soon be looking for the appointed weeks of harvest! And it will not be long before winter will be here again. On this earth, on the greatest or on the minutest scale, all things change, whether it is an empire that rises and passes away, or a crocus or a rose that blooms and fades. All things that are, once were not and, by-and-by, shall not be, or, at least, the place which knows them, now, shall know them no more forever. The forest once slept in an acorn cup. That some forest, beneath the axe, shall pass away and vanish into smoke. All things change and, therefore, we, also, must expect to change.

And, mark you, we have already changed. Perhaps we had a happy childhood and can remember even now the songs of the nursery and the holy hymns of our cradle days. But there came a time when we had dwelt long enough in that mountain, for it would have been ill for us always to continue as children. Then we were youths and were at school. And perhaps we recollect with pleasure those free days of boyhood and girlhood when, if we did not know the value of knowledge, at any rate we found that those who taught us had more pleasant ways of teaching than our fathers knew! But it was not well for us to always stay at school— there came a time when our parents felt and we felt that we had stayed long enough in that mountain. Since that, some of us have passed from change to change till we have come to the full maturity of spiritual life. And some of you I see, with the snows of many a winter lying on your brows, are approaching yet another change—you know that, by-and-by, you must come to another, for it will be said of you, “You have dwelt long enough in this mountain.” And so, we shall pass through all the several stages of man till we come to the blessed mountain where we shall never dwell too long, nor ever feel that we have dwelt there long enough! But while we are beneath the moon, there must be waxing and waning to all who come under the moon’s spell. And where the very heart of the earth, like a great sea, has its ebbs and its floods, we cannot but expect that we, too, should have our ebbs and our floods without us and within us.

We must expect to have changes, next, because it is good for us to have them. For, if not, we might become rooted to the earth. This is not our rest. But if we were always in one place and in one state, we would begin to think that it was. Have you not noticed, with regard to the brethren who are free from trouble—who, to use a Scriptural simile, have not been emptied from vessel to vessel—how they settle on their lees and what a scum generally rises upon the surface of such people’s hearts? Because they have no changes, they begin to think that they shall continue forever as they are. They do not put that thought into words— they are not quite so foolish—yet they have the notion treasured up in their hearts that tomorrow will be as this day, only more abundant, and all the future in a similar fashion. If we have a long-continued spell of calm weather, we are apt to think that it will always be so. And if it were always so, perhaps we would get into as bad a condition as Coleridge pictures in his “Ancient Mariner.” Because there was no wind to drive the ship along and the tropical sun was shining everywhere, everything was becoming corrupt. God knows that our tendency is in that direction and, therefore, He makes us to be pilgrims and strangers here—as all our fathers were.

Were it not for changes, too, some would grow utterly weary. Some of God’s children would welcome almost any change from their present condition. They suffer, perhaps, from abject poverty—perhaps from unkindness on the part of those who ought to love and care for them. It may be that their condition is one in which the iron enters into their soul. Possibly their sorrow is a secret sorrow and the more severe because it must be kept to themselves and cannot be communicated to others. A worm, unseen by any human eye, is gnawing at their heart. They dare not mention it! If they did, they would not be sympathized with and might even be ridiculed. Ah, we little know the sorrows of others and there are some who look most cheerful and are wise to look so, who ought to be praised because with sacred patience they keep their sorrow to themselves! There are some whom you, perhaps, are envying, who far more need your pity than they deserve your envy. There is much sorrow even among God’s saints and it is a great mercy for them that the Lord sometimes turns their captivity. It seemed a pity that when Job had all his treasures, there should come such a change to him and that he should have to sit down among the ashes. But when he sat among the ashes, it was a happy circumstance for him that a change came and that, “the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning.” What if you are the lowest spoke of the wheel just now? You will be the highest spoke in less than a minute, for the wheel is always turning round! You are not in a permanent position as to your low estate any more than as to your high estate—if prosperity does not endure, neither does adversity. It is written, “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.” The hours of the night will pass away in due course and the joys of the morning will recompense you for the sorrows of the season of darkness.

Besides, dear Friends, it is well that we should have these changes because, if we did not, we might, all of us, become unwatchful. I do not know anything that helps more to take away the freshness and vigor with which a man does a thing than for him to do that particular thing every day. The same kind of thing happens when he does something many times that at first is very trying. If you put a man into one of the big boilers over in Southwark when they are putting in the rivets—well, I would not like to be that man, for the hammering is apt to make him deaf. Yet I am told by those who have to be inside the boiler to hold the rivet head, that they do not know anything about the great noise, for they have got used to it. They are like the blacksmith’s dog that will go to sleep under the anvil when the sparks are flying all around him—and it is possible to get used to anything in life. The sentinel who stands still in his box must not be very severely blamed if he goes to sleep. It is a good thing for him if he has a little walk to take, so that he can go to and fro with his rifle on his shoulder and thus may be able to stay awake by a change of posture. He may have a difficulty in doing that, however, if the watch is continued too long. The mill horse that goes round and round perpetually in a certain track, learns to sleep as he goes his round. There was a prisoner who was sentenced to the cruel punishment of being awakened every quarter of an hour throughout the night, but, at last, he learned to answer to the knock and still sleep right on—and so was not disturbed one whit!

I can well understand how, abiding in one state, we may get to be mechanical as a matter of routine, with no life and no vigor. I wonder how some of you would feel if you had to preach as often as I do? I wonder whether you would not find that it was apt to become rather mechanical? That is one of the things which I dread almost beyond all else and I trust that it will never become so with me, for I feel that if our ministry ever becomes merely mechanical, our usefulness will be completely destroyed. But the same thing may happen in Christian life— you may get to live mechanically. I have seen professedly Christian people who have done the right thing, but they have done it while they have been sound asleep. Did you ever go into a congregation—it has not been my lot to see such a sight often, but I have seen such a sight— where the minister has been fast asleep and the preaching has been nothing better than articulate snoring? There, the people sing while they are asleep and pray while they are asleep—there is no life, no force, no power, no change of any sort! Well now, if you could burn that meeting house down and the good man had to preach tomorrow in the little meadow by the side of it, why, he would then be wide awake and so would all his people! The mere change of position would do them good. Sometimes, sitting in a different seat might help people to feel a little more attentive to the message. It is for this reason that the Lord comes and shakes us up, and we begin to awake out of sleep and each one says, “Where am I? New troubles have given me new Grace and new comforts, so, Lord, I bless You for them. Give me new praises.” Thus the change begins to do us good! It lifts us out of the old ruts and sets us doing something different from what we have done before—which we are able to do with a measure of freshness which we have not previously known. That may be one reason why we have changes.

Another reason is this— if we have no changes in our pilgrimage, it is quite clear that we shall make no progress. If the children of Israel had remained at Horeb they would never have reached the land of Canaan. We cannot stay in one place and go on to another at the same time! So, shifts and changes often promote growth. Look, there is a tree which has grown in the place it now occupies as much as it can grow there because there is not much earth there. And besides, there is a pan of rock just underneath it from which it cannot derive any nutriment. Now, if with care the husbandman lifts the tree and shifts it to another position where the soil is deeper and richer, the tree will develop wondrously! And, sometimes, it is so with us. We have grown as big in Christ as we ever shall grow in that particular position, so now we must be shifted into a new one. Why, our very comforts may be like a pan of rock under the tap-root of our soul! We cannot get down any deeper and it may be that our circumstances shut us in like huge walls through which the roots of our spiritual being cannot penetrate to get fresh nourishment. To make us grow, it is a good thing that we do not always remain in one position.

And, moreover, I believe that our moves help us to grow in proportion, for one condition of life may make us grow only in one way. There is one set of trials that we have and they develop a certain set of Graces. Or there is one kind of service that we perform which brings out one special faculty and strengthens and sanctifies it. But God does not want His children to grow so as to have their arms twice as long as their toes! And He does not want the trees of His own right-hand planting to be lop-sided trees, sending all their branches out either toward the East or the West, and having no boughs for the other points of the compass. God would have us to be developed as manhood should be—each faculty and limb and muscle having its fair share of harmonious growth—and the whole keeping up that equilibrium which is characteristic of all God’s works.

My dear Brothers and Sisters, you have been in a very comfortable position for a long time and you know that you have never had a trial to test your patience. The result is that you have not any patience! You are very impatient if you have even a little trouble. Now the Lord is going to shift you into a place where you will need a great deal of patience, but He will give it to you! And there is another side of your character of which you know next to nothing—and which none of your friends suppose that you possess—but the Lord is going to bring that out. He has painted one part of your portrait and He is now going to turn His attention, by His blessed Spirit, to another side of it, that it may be seen that you are a representation of all the Graces of the Christian character! You ought to be glad that it is so, for who knows how much of Glory God is about to get from you through this change, which, perhaps, you are looking upon with the greatest possible dread?

Once more, and then I shall have given reason enough why we must expect changes. It may be, Brothers and Sisters, that we undergo changes in order that we may do more good. Some Christian, perhaps, who has long been in one position, has practically brought to Christ all who ever will be brought in by him in that place. I know that it is so with ministers. We sow our seed and we reap our harvest, but it would be very wise of some Brothers if they would just take their sickles and go off to another field—and sow and reap there. After you have been a long while fishing in one pond and have caught all the best of the fish, it will be a weary task to go on fishing there, so, do as a wise angler would do—take your rod and line off to another pond and try there! Changes for God’s servants are not at all things for which they ought to be blamed. At least I know some ministers whom I would not blame if they were to make a change. And neither do I think that the people of their charge would be particularly anxious to retain them. It is the same with us in our Christian life. It may be that we have done all the good we can do in our own family at home. Well, then, God is going to put us into another family! It may be that from our present standpoint we are only capable of a certain form of good—so the Lord is going to shift us and make different men and women of us, that we may be fitted for another form of service. And it is a blessed thing to be furnished and equipped for all the work of the Lord, whatever it may be that He commits to our charge.

II. And now, secondly, and very briefly, THE LORD’S PEOPLE ARE TO BE CAREFUL THAT THEY DO NOT MAKE CHANGES WITHOUT DIVINE AUTHORIZATION—“The LORD our God spoke unto us in Horeb, saying, You have dwelt long enough in this mountain.”

The children of Israel had a fiery cloudy pillar to guide them in their many wanderings. And if the pillar did not move, they stopped. Whether it was a day, or a week, or a month, or a year, they stopped while the pillar stopped. And when the pillar moved, then they moved, even though they had scarcely pitched their tents. And, Brothers and Sisters, let us, also, always seek Divine guidance. Let us put ourselves under the protection of Providence—especially in making changes. Some make changes out of mere love of novelty.

Some make changes because they think that anything new will be better than what they have at present. My dear Brother, you know the temptations that now assail you, so I would not advise you to seek to have a new set, about which you know nothing. My dear Sister, the cross that you have been carrying did not, at first, seem to fit your shoulders, but your shoulders have by degrees become fitted to it, so you had better keep that cross than seek another. There are many people who leap out of the frying pan into the fire, as our old proverb says. They think that things are going to be much better with them as soon as they make a change, but they had better “let well enough alone,” as another proverb says, for “as a bird that wanders from her nest, so is a man that wanders from his place.” There have been many people who have changed from side to side, just as sick persons restlessly move to and fro, merely shifting their position, yet all the while keeping their pain. One of the greatest blessings that we can have is a contented mind—if we have that, we shall not be anxious for a change.

Do not change because of a mere whim—let not that be your reason for altering your position. Do not change from worldly motives and be not always seeking the best for yourself. Do not change because of distrust, or because of anger with your God. If He bids you stand where you are, stand there and die at your post if necessary. But if He bids you go, then go, though it would make a tear as if your very heart were cut in two. It will be better for you thus to suffer then to disobey your Lord. We do not make many mistakes in life where we absolutely give ourselves up to God’s guidance because, though we do not hear a voice speaking out of the oracle, and we have not our way mapped out for us as on a chart, yet, somehow or other, if we are honestly seeking to do right and yet are about to make a mistake, God graciously interposes and prevents the mistake! Or He overrules what evidently was a mistake in such a way that it turns out to be the right thing, after all. Commit your way unto the Lord! Trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass. You are not fatherless. You are not left without a Guide. Poor tempest-tossed and weather-beaten boat, you still have a Helmsman! You are not a derelict left to drift upon the sea at the mercy of every current and every gale. There is within you, O Believer, One who is strong of hand and keen of eye who steers you through the fiercest storms and direst tumults of the sea, making even these to contribute to your progress towards the desired haven! Be not swift to change because of any reason of your own, but be not slow to change if God bids you do so. When the time comes and you have dwelt long enough in this mountain, up with the stakes, roll up the tent lines and put the canvas on the camel’s back and be off to the next place which the Lord has marked out for you, for He has gone before you to prepare your way!

III. I will not dwell longer upon that topic, but pass on to notice that THERE ARE SOME PLACES, SPIRITUALLY, IN WHICH GOD’S PEOPLE HAVE DWELT QUITE LONG ENOUGH. I wish to speak to the heart of everyone here—take home what belongs to you and may the Spirit of God be pleased to apply it to your soul!

Some of you know that you are not happy and that you lack something, but you do not know what it is that you lack. Some of you used to be very happy, at one time, in the pleasures of the world, but, somehow, either they have changed or else you have. You now have an empty space in your heart and you cannot fill it. The glass seems to have come off the world’s amusements and your businesses, which used to occupy you from morning to night, has become distasteful to you. You feel that you needed something, but you do not know what that something is. Let me tell you that what you really need is your God. Surely you have lived long enough without Him! You have lived long enough in sin. You have lived long enough in impenitence. You have lived long enough in danger of the wrath to come! O prodigal son, your Father calls you to come home! You surely have had enough of riotous living, enough of the swine-trough and the company of the hogs, enough of the citizens of that country and their scorn and cruelty, enough of rags and enough of the husks that the swine feed upon. Say right now, “I will arise and go to my Father!” And if you say this, the Spirit of God helping you to do so, this very hour you shall be in the embrace of your God, you shall receive the kisses of His love, the best robe shall be put upon you and you shall be welcomed home even as the prodigal in the parable was!

The mountain mentioned in our text was Mount Horeb, or Sinai—the mountain that burned with fire, the mountain around which they set boundaries so that if so much as a beast touched the mountain, it would be stoned or thrust through with a dart! It was that mountain from which they heard the thunder pealing while the Law of God was being proclaimed in a voice so terrible that they entreated that they might not hear it anymore! I believe there are some here—I had almost said that I hope there are—who have been long standing at the foot of Sinai. You have heard the thunder of that dreadful voice and you have felt condemned. Your soul is in bondage even now. If ever there was a slave in this world, you are one. You have the fetters on you and you have the cruel whip perpetually flagellating your conscience! Sometimes other slaves have rest, but you get none—you are tortured and tormented—you are almost like the fiend, himself, when he walked through dry places seeking rest and finding none!

Well do I remember when I was in your present condition and I was in it, oh, so long! And blessed was the day when my Lord said to me, “You have dwelt long enough in this mountain,” and then I came to Calvary and the blood of sprinkling, and I had done with Sinai! Yet I have never felt regret that I lingered so long at the foot of Sinai. I shall regret it if any of you do so, but I do not regret it in my own case because I think it was necessary for one who was to be a public teacher, that he should have more depression of spirit and more trials than anybody else—so that he might know the ins and outs of this matter in his own experience and so be able to help others who may be tortured in a similar way. But there is no reason why you, my Friend, should have this experience, for it may be that you are not to be a public teacher and it would be well for you if, this very moment, the spirit of bondage were cast out of you and the Spirit of adoption took possession of your soul! You need not remain at the foot of Sinai, for, as I found out, there is another hill called Calvary. You need not listen to the threats of the Law, for there is another voice— the voice of the blood of Jesus—“which speaks better things than that of Abel.” If you will, by simple faith, but listen to that voice, you will learn that it speaks peace, not punishment, and cries out for mercy, not for justice! O tempted, distressed, despairing soul, you have dwelt long enough in Mount Sinai! At this glad hour, the silver trumpet proclaims a Jubilee for you! Your inheritance, which you have forfeited, has been redeemed and you, yourself, once sold into slavery, are now freed, for the price of your redemption has been paid to the utmost farthing!

There is another mountain, a little further on, to which some of my friends have come—the mountain of Little Faith. They do now believe in God. They have looked to Jesus and have been lightened, yet they still see men as trees walking. Now and then they have high days and holidays and then they know whom they have believed and have great joy in the Lord! But at other times, they get down in the dumps and sing—or rather, moan—

*“‘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?’”*

Some of these are the very best people in the world and I would sooner see a man always doubling his interest in Christ and walking humbly and carefully before God than presuming upon his own safety and getting proud—and then venturing into temptation and falling into sin! There are some of God’s children who are truly His, but who seem to be like those flowers that grow best in shady places. If they had too much sunshine, I do not know what might become of them. But these people do not allow themselves that luxury. They are constantly troubled. They say that they believe, yet the petition always has to be added, “Lord, help our unbelief!”

Now, my Brother or my Sister, if you are in this condition, do you not think that you have dwelt long enough in this mountain? I knew you when you used to be raising such doubts and questions five years ago. Is it not time that you abandoned that bad habit? You never complain of a baby for cutting its teeth and you do not wonder if it has a lot of little complaints while it is a baby, but you do not expect it to cut its teeth and to have all these little infantile diseases when it gets to be a man! Do you not think that it is time that you had grown from being little children to become young men? And should not the young men begin to grow into fathers in the Christian Church? We watch and tend you while you are the lambs of the flock, but are you always going to be lambs? You, who are forty, fifty, 60 years of age and who ought to set an example to others by being courageous and full of confidence, are you always going to be Feeble-Minds and Ready-to-Halts? What? Are you always going to use crutches? Will you never outgrow them? Must we always wheel you about in a baby carriage of rich consolation? Will you never walk alone? Will you never outgrow your days of weakness? You have dwelt long enough and far too long in this mountain! Remember that Jesus Christ declared that He had come that His people “might have life.” Well, you have that, have you not? But He added, “and that they might have it more abundantly.” You have not that—do not rest satisfied until you have it!

There is another company of professors—men of brain, but with less heart than brain—men of the Thomas order who need a great deal of evidence to convince them—who tarry in the Mountain of Questioning. We have some persons of this kind, who, we trust, are Christians, but they always have some question to ask—and they come to see the pastor about it. And after that one is answered, they ask another, and then another and another. We are very glad to see them so thoughtful—we wish everybody was thoughtful and we do not want people to take things for granted just because we say them—we like to have them enquiring. But these people are always enquiring and they seem to have been always enquiring! If I have lost my way on a foggy night, I do not mind enquiring, but I like to move on a little and not stand still and keep on enquiring which is the way! There are some people who are always in a fog and always enquiring—and every new heresy that is started gives them a new set of enquiries! It is a wretched life that they lead, themselves, and other people, too—and I may well say to them, “You have dwelt long enough in this mountain.”

Just think, my Christian Brother, while you have been vainly trying to find out how many angels can stand on the point of a needle, your Brother has been winning souls for Jesus Christ! You have been sitting up at night seeking to discover the meaning of the tenth toe of the great image mentioned in the book of Daniel and of the little horn and the fourth beast! And you have been puzzling yourself as to what is going to happen at a certain period of the world’s history, but you have not found out much yet. Now, if you had been visiting the sick, the poor and the ignorant, and going after the lost sheep of the house of Israel, would not your occupation have been much more remunerative? Would it not have brought you a brighter crown at the Last Great Day? Enquire, certainly, as to all Truth of God revealed in the Scriptures, but many of you have already dwelt quite long enough in that Mountain of Questioning! It is time that you had ascertained that there are some things that are settled! I spoke with a man some time ago who said that he made his creed every week. I thought that he must be a disciple of the moon, though I did not call him a lunatic, yet he was very like one, and you might as well measure the moon for a suit of clothes as judge such a man by the creed which he is constantly changing!

Oh, but there are some things about which we are sure! And I bless God that some of us can say that the Gospel which we preached more than 20 years ago is precisely the same Gospel that we preach now! We are not conscious of having shifted our ground with regard to any of its doctrines, precepts, warnings, or invitations! It is a grand thing when an old Divine is able to say, as my own dear grandfather said to me not long before he died, “For 60 years I have preached the Gospel. And the sermon that I preached the first time I went into the pulpit, I could have preached the last time I went there, for I have made no alteration in my sentiments. The Truths that God taught me at the beginning, I have held fast, though I have been continually learning more and more of the meaning of them.” It is very necessary, though, if we are to do any good to others, that we go to the Mountain of Enquiry for a while, that we should feel that there comes a time when we have made up our minds and have learned something which we never mean to question again—we have dwelt long enough in that mountain!

At Horeb, Moses divided the people and marshaled them and said that such-and-such a tribe should go first, and another second, and another last. He drilled them as an army, yet they were not always to be content with being marshaled and drilled—they were to go forward and possess the land of Canaan! They had dwelt long enough in that mountain of marshalling and drilling, and some of you Christian people have had quite enough marshalling and drilling! Is it not time for those of you who are not doing anything for Christ, to begin to do something for Him? I do not think that when a young man is converted, he ought, at first, to begin working for Jesus Christ as the main business of his life. He should go to Christ’s school and try to learn something that he can afterwards talk about to others. I was very pleased with a dear Brother, a working man, who joined the church here a month or two ago. When I put to him the question, “What are you doing for Christ?” he said, “Well, Sir, I have the heart to do a good deal and I hope I shall yet do it, but, at the present time I am trying to learn more about Him, for, if I were to go and speak to some of my mates about Jesus Christ, they would be more than a match for me and I should not like to have my Savior made a subject of ridicule.” I thought there was sanctified common sense in that answer and I would advise other young Christians to go and do likewise—only do not forget to serve your Master when you have learned the way to do it! You, Mr. Recruit, have surely practiced “the goose step” long enough—can you not now go forward? To my certain knowledge you have been in the army for a dozen years—could you not do a little fighting if you were to try? Could you not learn to load a gun and fire it? Have you been studying the properties of gunpowder all this time and done nothing else to prove that you are a soldier? Shame on you!

I fear that the Church of Christ as a whole has been tarrying far too long in the Mountain of Marshalling and Drilling. Some clever Brother draws up a fine plan and the next thing is to form a committee, with a president and a vice-president and all manner of officers. You are getting on, now, like a house afire and that is how the thing usually ends—in smoke! There is the paraphernalia. There is the marshalling. There is the grand parade and there is the army—on paper! But when will the army begin the battle in real earnest? When will the Church of Christ get to close quarters with sinners? When will every Christian man and woman really begin working for Christ and cease talking about it? We have had the resolutions which have been proposed and seconded—and carried unanimously—and then forgotten! It is significant that there is no book containing the resolutions of the Apostles, but we have the Acts of the Apostles! And there will be something worth recording in the Lord’s “Book of Remembrance” if we turn our good resolutions into acts of holy service. Let us get to work, for we have tarried long enough in this mountain!

There are many other “mountains” that I might mention, but I do not think I need to do so. Unto whatever Truth of God you have attained, dear Friend, make sure of that and then go on to something beyond. Do not stop anywhere, for you have not yet attained, neither are you yet perfect. You can buy a box of the patent perfection paint and cover over all the knots and imperfections in the wood, but the wind and the rain will test your fine looking house and you will find the paint cracking and the bad joints and the holes in the wood showing before long. At least it is so with me in a spiritual sense. Imperfections will reveal themselves very soon and the paint will not answer after all. But, Brother, never be satisfied with yourself, for self-satisfaction is the end of all progress.

A painter said to his wife, one morning, “I shall never paint again.” “Why, my husband?” asked the good woman. “Because the picture that I have just finished perfectly satisfies me—it realizes my ideal and, therefore, I know that, now, my genius is exhausted.” When a man says, “Yes, I am a splendid fellow. I will tell everybody what I am, only I will do it very cunningly and say this is what Divine Grace has done for me. I will thank God for it, for the Pharisee in the Temple had Grace enough to do that!” Then depend upon it, Brother, the very power to grow has gone from you, for, if you were growing, you would have growing pains! You would feel like the chick in the egg that needs to get out. Oh, how often my soul feels cribbed, cabined and confined within my imperfect self! She will get completely free one day and, in anticipation of that blessed time, I joyously sing—

*“Welcome, sweet hour of full discharge,  
That sets my longing soul at large,  
Unbinds my chains, breaks up my cell,  
And gives me with my God to dwell!”*

Till that “sweet hour” arrives when you will dwell with God forever, do not delude yourself with the notion that you have got where you may stop. “Forward, onward,” must still be your motto! O eagle of God, if you are of the true royal breed, though you have looked the very sun in the face with undimmed eyes and soared till you have left the clouds far below you, yet still higher, higher, higher must you soar! If you could distance the sun, himself, and reach a yet more distant orb, still higher, higher must you soar! “Excelsior” is the motto of every Christian until, at last, he comes into the very Presence of his God and sees Him face to face! You never see an eagle roosting upon a thorn bush and saying, “I can get no higher.” And if any of God’s birds of paradise do that, I would bid them beware of the fowler! My self-satisfied Brother, he is after you and his big net will enclose you if you are not careful! Mount higher, Brother! Higher yet, for however high you have ascended, you have dwelt long enough in that mountain and must advance to something higher and still better! May God help you to do so for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

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FORTY YEARS  
NO. 1179

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 14, 1874, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“For the Lord your God has blessed you in all the works of your hands: He knows your walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the Lord your God  
has been with you; you have lacked nothing.”  
Deuteronomy 2:7.**

THE habit of numbering our days is a very admirable one. To do it rightly a man needs to be taught of God and if we have not been so taught, it is well to offer the prayer, “So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” Some men number their cattle, number their acres, number their pounds, but do not number their days, or, if they do, they fail to draw the inference from them which both reason and Divine Grace suggest—that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. It is not wisdom to try to seem younger than you are, though I have known many attempt it. I have marked between census and census that the ages of certain persons have hardly increased 10 years, as I thought they would have done by the lapse of time. The age of many whom we admire is an inscrutable mystery.

What there can be to be ashamed of in advancing years I am at a loss to know, for old age commands reverence—not ridicule. Why sorrow because another year of trial is over, another year of labor ended, another milestone on the road to Heaven left behind? Instead of regretting that we are so far on the voyage to the fair haven, we may rather rejoice and make our years, at least, as many as we can. If we pretend to be more juvenile than we are, uncharitable persons may possibly attribute it to vanity—it is a pity to give them such an opportunity.

At the same time, ripe years are not to be trifled with. We have known some who have treated the fact that they are advancing in life with unbecoming levity—their gray hairs show that they are nearing the bounds of life, but they are as thoughtless as if they were yet in their minority—and so they are an incongruous miniature of the weakness of age and the frivolity of youth. It is well to keep a cheerful heart to the last hour—and no man has so much reason for doing so as a believer in Jesus! But, at the same time, it is surely time to be solemnly earnest when one has passed the prime of life. Wisdom dictates, in old age, if never before, that a grave consideration of eternal earth should be more under foot and Heaven should be more in the heart.

Every year should increase our sense of the certainty, value and nearness of eternal things. “’Tis time to live if I grow old.” Works for God among our fellow men will soon be impossible to us—let us be diligent in them while as yet our sun is above the horizon. Now, if ever, we should redeem the time, because the days are evil. In the very middle of life, when strength is in our bones and we have the most grand possibilities of vigorous service, it is well for us to be fully alive to the highest interests and purposes. We should not be spending a dreamy existence, as if we were mere lotus eaters, born into a garden of poppies to sleep all day. We have something better to do than to flit among the flowers like butterflies, with nothing particular to care about, and no eternal future within the range of our thoughts or hopes.

My purpose, this morning, is to speak as a man of 40 years to others of my own standing. But much which is spoken will be appropriate to my seniors and applicable, also, to the younger ones of my audience. Forty years of mercy suggest many thoughts concerning the past, teach much that will be of use to us for the present and, I think, should influence us aright as to the future.

I. First, then, let us look back upon THE PAST in the light of the text. “The Lord your God has blessed you in all the works of your hands: He knows your walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the Lord your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing.” What strikes me in Moses’ review is this, the prominence which he gives to God in it. Here let me note that our own retrospect of the past, will, if we are genuine Christians, have in it many bright lights of the conspicuous Presence of God, making the pathway here and there like holy ground! The ungodly man, of course, leads a godless life—as God is not in all his thoughts, so God does not appear to him in all his ways—but to the godly, God’s hand is plain.

Look back, Believer, and note that to you the existence of God has not been a theory, but a fact observed and verified by actual experience. Can you not recall many occasions in which the Lord has as certainly manifested Himself to you as ever He appeared to Moses in the burning bush, or to Joshua outside the walls of Jericho, or to Solomon by night, or to the three holy children in the fiery furnace? Do you not remember that marvelous revelation of Himself to you when you were converted? What hand was that which took the rein and curbed that stubborn will of yours? Could any power less than Omnipotent have so completely turned the course of your life? Do you remember the consecrated hour when Jesus met with you, absolved you from the past and accepted you as His disciple?

Ah, they may tell us there are no miracles nowadays, but to each Christian his own conversion is a conspicuous miracle and will ever so remain! He will never be able to forget that then he came into actual contact with the holy God and felt His hand, yes, knew it beyond feeling, for it was not a matter of the senses—his spirit came directly into actual contact with the Eternal Spirit and our soul was bound up in the bundle of life with the Soul of the Lord our God! With some of us, many days have passed since then, but they have brought with them fuller displays of the Divine power. In examples of communion, have we not spoken with the Lord as a man speaks with his friend, if not absolutely face to face, yet marvelously like it? Have we not had answers to prayer which we dare not tell because they are too marvelous for others to believe, though they are treasured memories to ourselves?

It would be casting pearls before swine to speak to the ungodly of the Lord’s unveilings of His face to His beloved ones! These things are secrets of the Lord which are with them that fear Him, things unlawful for a man to utter, but never to be erased from our memories! Have we not passed through remarkable circumstances in which the right hand of the Lord has been as clearly seen as our troubles, themselves? “This poor man cried and the Lord heard him.” Brought, perhaps, by our own fault into “rare difficulties,” we have seen a plain path before us in answer to prayer. Plunged into the sea, like Jonah, by our own waywardness, yet we have been carried safely to the dry land to sing, “Salvation is of the Lord.”

These 40 years we look back upon with sacred delight, tracing the wells of Elim and the fruit-bearing palms, the pools in the valley of Baca and the places of encampment in the desert! And if to nobody else, certainly to us, there is an overruling Providence and a bountiful God! We have been like Hagar in the wilderness, ready to perish, but Jehovah has shown us a well of refreshment. And we have said, “Then God sees me.” Blessed is the name of the Lord for this! Let us magnify Him, this morning, that our life has not been without dashes of Glory from His loving Presence! Our Shepherd has not left us to wander alone. Our heavenly Friend has been better to us than a brother and has manifested Himself unto us as He does not unto the world. In this we will glory. Even as Paul gloried in the Revelation which he had received, so also will we rejoice in the displays of the Divine favor which we have beheld.

In reading over the retrospect of 40 years in the wilderness which the text contains, notice, next, that a very leading point is the blessing which God gave. I have read this verse over a great many times to discover any allusion to the sin of Israel, but I cannot perceive any, for it begins, “The Lord your God has blessed you in all the works of your hands.” It deals not with man’s sin, but with God’s blessing. As with Israel, so with us! In our life the most remarkable fact has been the blessing of God. He has blessed as with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. He has blessed us all ways and blessed us always. He has blessed us beyond conception, blessed us exceeding abundantly above what we asked or even thought and beyond what we can now remember! He has blessed us like a God.

Our text says He has blessed all the works of our hand. I suppose that alludes to all that Israel had a right to do. The Lord multiplied their cattle. He increased their substance. He guided them in their marches. He protected them in their encampments. There were some things in which He did not bless them. They wanted to go up into the Promised Land against His commandment and the Amalekites smote them—He did not bless them there. I thank God, this morning, Brothers and Sisters, that He does not bless the sins of His people, for if He did, it would bring on them the tremendous curse of being happy in the ways of evil! We have made our mistakes, and for those mistakes the Lord has laid His hand on us, armed with a rod, which has chastened us and restored us to the path of righteousness.

But in what was legitimate and right we have, some of us, to record that the Lord has uniformly blessed the work of our hands. The work of some of us has been to preach His Gospel, and if the Lord had given us a few score conversions we would have loved Him forever. But inasmuch as

He has given us thousands upon thousands of conversions, how shall we find language with which to praise Him? He has blessed the work of our hands so that a vast Church has been gathered and many smaller ones have sprung from it. One enterprise has been taken up, and then another. One labor which seemed beyond our power has been achieved, and then another and yet another! And at His feet we lay the crown. I must confess very special favor of the Lord towards me—the very stones in the street would cry out against me if I did not—He has, indeed, blessed all the work of my hands.

Brothers and Sisters, you have had a share in the blessing and have a share, also, in the praising. Sometimes the work of our hands has appeared to crumble to pieces, but then it has been rebuilt before long in a better style. Enemies have arisen and they have been exceedingly violent, only to fulfill some special purpose of God and increase our blessing against their wills. Sickness has come only to yield discipline—we have been made weak that we might be strong—and brought to death’s door that we might know more of the Divine Life. Glory be to God, our life has been all blessing from beginning to end! There has been no exceptional event all along—ever since we knew Him, He has dealt out blessing and blessing and blessing—and never a syllable of curses. He has fulfilled to us the Word, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.”

Again, Brothers and Sisters, in our retrospect of the past, we should notice the perfection of the Lord’s sympathetic care. Observe the words—“He knows your walking through this great wilderness.” He has known our rough paths and our smooth ways, the weary trudging and the joyous marches. He has known it all, and not merely known it in the sense of Omniscience, but known it in the sense of sympathy. As David puts it— “You have known my soul in adversity.” You have tenderly entered into my griefs and woes. You have borne my burdens and my cares. What do you say, Brothers and Sisters, has it not been so? Is not that witness true—“in all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the angel of His Presence saved them”? Is not this also true—“I have made and I will bear, even I will carry”? “He bore them on eagle’s wings and brought them to Himself.” Has He not often done so? And have we not to sing, today, of a dear Father’s love, so tender, so considerate that we can only wonder at it, and love in return?

You have had great losses, some of you. The dearest ones on earth, for whom you sorrowed much and justly, have been removed. Heart-breaking bereavements have happened, yet your hearts are not broken—neither are you cast down with too much sorrow—because underneath you are the everlasting arms and, “as your days so has your strength been.” Before some of you many doors have shut, but God has opened others. The brook Cherith has been dried, but there has been sustenance found for you in the barrel of meal and the cruse of oil somewhere else. Let us bless the generous sympathy which has known all our wandering through this great wilderness!

But I must pass on. We have had, also, what is better than this during our 40 years—the special Presence of God. “These forty years the Lord your God has been with you.” Adored be His name for that! He has not been ashamed to be with us though we have been despised and ridiculed. Whenever we have prayed we have had audience with Him. When we have worked, we have seen His mysterious hand working with us. When we have trembled, we have felt the tender arms sustaining us. When we have been in bodily pain, He has made our bed in our sickness. When we have felt the fiery furnace of trial, He has kept us alive amidst the glowing coals, delivering us from even the smell of fire by His own Presence. The best of all is God with us, and in this sign we conquer!

Again, we have had much cause to bless the Lord for the abundance of His supplies. Note those four words, “You have lacked nothing.” Some things which we could have wished for we have not received and we are glad they were denied us. Children would have too many sweets if they could and then they could become ill. We have not been pampered with dangerous dainties, but we have received necessities and have lacked nothing. Walking on in the path of Providence, trusting in the Lord, what have we lacked? We have known a few pinches, even as the children of Israel lacked water for the moment, but very soon were refreshed with water from the Rock. We may have needed bread for an hour, as they did when they were wicked enough to say, “Has the Lord brought us out of Egypt that we may die in the wilderness?” but the clouds, before long, dropped with a mysterious shower of food for them! And before long Providence has supplied us, also.

Our times of straitness have been occasions for appeal to the faithful promise and we have never appealed in vain. “You have lacked nothing.” “No good thing will God withhold from them that walk uprightly.” Everything that would be, in the fullest sense, a “good thing,” God has given us! If it would be a good thing that we should never again be tempted. If it were a good thing that the devil were buried. If it were a good thing for us to go to Heaven at once—we should have all these things! But then there are certain far-reaching purposes to be answered—and to reach them the Lord makes even evils work for the highest good in the ultimate issues of His grand designs. We ought to magnify the Lord that we have lacked nothing. Oh for a song of praise for 40 years of mercies—some of you can say 60 and 70 years of mercies! Praise Him, all you saints! “Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name!”

II. But now, Brothers and Sisters, we must take the second head, which is—forty years in the wilderness should teach us much of service for the PRESENT. I do not say that it will do so, for we do not all grow wiser as we grow older, but it ought to be so. Some of us were born with fools’ caps which we find hard to pull off. Folly is bound up in the heart of many a man and it takes much of the rod to whip it out of him. Experience is a noble teacher, but we are dull scholars. But, at any rate, we ought to have learned to continue trusting in God. After 40 years of the goodness of your Covenant God, do you mean to look to an arm of flesh, my Brethren?

You have been so kindly treated by your Master and Savior, would you now leave Him for earthly friendship? Do you need a better God? Do you desire a better confidence? Merchants generally continue in that business which pays them well, for they feel that they might go elsewhere and fare worse. “Return unto your rest, O my Soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.” Plow this field, Brother, you will never reap such a harvest anywhere else. Dig in this mine—there is no such gold elsewhere, for the gold of this land is good, and its wealth brings no sorrow with it. As Boas said to Ruth, so I say to you, “Glean not in any other field.” When Noah was in the ark the Lord shut him in—may He shut you in so fast that you may never leave your confidence in Jesus. “Trust in the Lord forever.”

You have found yourselves so blessed and benefited by trusting in Him up to now, stand fast in it and be not moved away from the hope of your calling. Be not so foolish, having been in the Spirit, as to seek to be made perfect by the flesh! Having walked so far, and so safely, by faith, do not attempt to walk by sight, or by the deeds of the Law. Having found that to trust in the Lord is better than to put confidence in princes, do not fawn at the feet of the proud. You have lived well enough upon the bread of your Father’s house, do not desire the delicate morsels of those who please the flesh. Stand fast in the liberty in which Christ has made you free and shun the yoke of bondage. You should at least have learned this from 40 years’ experience of the blessedness of resting in the Lord.

Experience should also give us greater ease in confiding in the Lord. Divine Grace has given you, in very deed, a real second nature, and this, by use, should have grown stronger and more prevalent. Faith is an untried path when we begin, but after so many years of testing God in all sorts of ways, in all kinds of circumstances, it ought now to be as easy to confide in the Lord as it is for a child to trust in a tender parent. Is it so? I fear not. Our long-tried confidence in God ought not now to be staggered by a little difficulty, as it was at the first. When fresh-water sailors first go to sea, every capful of wind frightens them. And if the vessel lurches a little, they cry, “She will certainly roll over.” But the old sailor, who knows what a storm means, thanks God for the wind, for it will drive the ship more rapidly into port! He never minds a lurch or two—he has his sea legs by this time!

And so men who have been blessed of God for 40 years ought to be equally at ease. We should be able to say, “I do trust Him and I will. I must believe Him—why should I doubt Him?” Nothing has ever occurred, as far as I am concerned, for 40 years, which could justify me in a mistrust of my God. And if, beloved Brethren, you and I never doubt our God till we have a reason to, we shall dwell in the unbroken rest of faith! Let the roots of faith take stronger hold, that like a cedar in Lebanon it my smile at the tempest. Forty years of Divine faithfulness should teach us, also, a surer, quicker, calmer and more joyous expectation of immediate aid in all times of strait and trial—we should learn not to be flurried and worried because the herds are cut off from the stall and the harvest is withered, for we know from abundant proofs that, “The Lord will provide.”

Have we come to a dead lift? Let us bless God for it, for now He will make bare His arm! He would have left you to lift your load if you could have lifted it, but now your extremity has come, His opportunity has come, also. I am often glad when I feel that none but my Lord can carry me through, for I am certain of His help. If we have, still, a batch of dough in the kneading trough which we brought out of Egypt, the windows of Heaven will not yet be opened. But when the last little cake has been baked, the manna will fall around the camp. As long as we can feel the bottom of the river we have not reached the best waters to swim in. When the barley loaves and the few small fishes are all broken, then the miracle of multiplying begins. My Brothers and Sisters, watch and wait for the Lord, and expect Him as confidently as you look for light at the hour of dawn. Far sooner may the sun forget his rising than the Lord forget His promise to succor His people in the hour of need. “My Soul, wait you only upon God, for my expectation is from Him.”

Forty years of blessing should teach each of us to believe in holy activity. “The Lord your God has blessed you in all the works of your hands.” Some people believe in God’s blessing the dreams and theories of their heads and their prayers are unattended by action. They believe in His blessing them when they are scheming and putting fine plans on paper, or when they meet at a conference to talk about how to do Christian work. I believe in God’s blessing the actual works of our hands—He waters not the seed which we talk of sowing, but that which we actually scatter. If people believed in this and just did one tenth of what they propose, it would be much better than the endless leagues of tasking and religious dissipation which threaten to become the bane of the Church. The schemes for evangelizing districts, towns, cities and the whole world, are so very numerous that there is no need to make any more—and were half the time thus vainly spent given to diligent labor—there would be much more of a blessing bestowed upon the sons of men!

Meet and confer by all means, but do not think that this is a very great matter for congratulation. The real winning of souls is far better. In business you will find, as a rule, that you will not get much more than you really work for. And you will find, in the things of God, that the blessing comes to diligence, zeal, earnestness and painstaking, for God blesses the works of our hands. Men of 40, it is time for us to be fully at work! Moses was 40 years old when he went down to visit his brethren in Egypt. Then he tried to turn, to practical use, the former 40 years of education in Pharaoh’s court—and though he had to wait 40 more years—it was no fault of his.

Joshua said, “Forty years was I when Moses sent me to spy out the land.” You cannot hope to live as long as these men did and, therefore, it is time to begin earnest work, for you are in your prime and will never be more fit for usefulness. If you have not begun before, let your consecration be at its fullest today. The Lord has blessed what you have done with a right motive—will it not be well to do more? Men in trade, when they find they make gains, increase their business. And when we find God blesses us in what we do, let us do more for Him! We must not slacken our zeal— it is a dreadful thing when men begin to do less while their natural force is unabated—it looks as if their hearts were growing cold. How commonly do we hear people say, “We have served an apprenticeship at work and

now we will leave the younger folks to go on.”

Just when you begin to be capable of doing the work well you leave it— and the Lord has to be served by another set of makeshifts. Man alive! Stick to your work as long as you are alive! Surely, work for Jesus deserves our most mature and best instructed years—and it ought not to be left to the mere boys and girls. The young people deserve great credit for taking to the work so heartily, but surely men and women in their prime are none too good to be enlisted, and the fullness of their strength is not too much to expect for Jesus! Brothers and Sisters, 40 years’ experience ought to have taught us to avoid many of the faults into which we fell in our early days. It is a great pity when advancing age teaches men to avoid their virtues rather than their follies. It is not at all unusual for zeal to grow chill as men advance in life. “Ah,” says the Brother, “I am not so hotheaded as I was.” No, Brother, nor yet so hothearted.

“Ah,” says another, “I was very zealous in my time.” Is not this, also, your time? Show us, now, what your boasted zeal was like, will you? We should be glad to see a specimen of it! Are you not ashamed to confess that you are backsliding in heart? Can you bear the prospect of taking your flight when your heart is in a wintry condition? As you come nearer Heaven ought you not to be more heavenly? A zeal which becomes weaker in proportion to our age looks very much like a merely animal excitement which decays with nature. The earnestness of Divine Grace defies the decline of years and it brings forth fruit in old age to show that the Lord is upright. No, we must learn not to avoid excellencies, but to avoid follies! And where we have burned our fingers once, we must not burn them again, but keep clear of what we now discover to have been excrescences, though perhaps at the time we thought them beauties.

May God grant, dear Friends, in all of us, that, as the Israelites which came out of Egypt died in the wilderness, little by little at each stopping place, so in us may the old Egyptian nature daily die and be buried. Have you ever thought of it? The march of the children of Israel could have been tracked in the wilderness by their graves—there remained a cemetery wherever there had been an encampment. Blessed be God, our march to Heaven may be traced by graves, too, for we die daily if we are in a right state and the old man is crucified with Christ, and we obey the command, “mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth.” Blessed shall the day be when the last “grave shall have been dug and the last evil passion shall have been buried forever, and the new race—the new Israel—shall enter into the promised land!

Beloved, there is another thing which 40 years suggest to me. You will have observed that the text mentions twice “The Lord your God.” All through the chapter it is always that—“Jehovah your God.” Here we have mention of His Covenant relationship in which He is ever most dear to us. Shall we not, at this time, renew our own personal covenant and take our God to be ours afresh? We read that Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebecca. Let us have a new wedding day, ourselves, and give ourselves over again to the Husband of our souls, even Jesus the WellBeloved. Are you tired of your Lord, any of you? Do you wish to sue for a divorce? “No,” you say, “No, no. But would God I were more enamored of Him, and that my whole self were more completely His.” Let this be a day

of re-consecration— *“’Tis done—the great transaction’s done!  
I am my Lord’s and He is mine:  
He drew me and I followed on,  
Charmed to confess the voice Divine.  
High Heaven that heard the solemn vow,  
That vow renewed shall daily hear,  
Until in life’s latest hour I bow,  
And bless in death a bond so dear.”*

May that be the case with each one of us. May we offer ourselves anew to Jehovah this day and take Father, Son and Holy Spirit to be our God forever and ever!

III. A great deal more might be said, but we have not time and, therefore, we must go on to the third head, which concerns THE FUTURE. Having come so far on our journey as to have reached 40 years, we are bound to feel a powerful influence upon us as to the future. How? I will borrow our remarks from the context. Read in the second chapter, second verse, “And the Lord spoke unto me, saying, You have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward.” What way was northward, then? Why, toward Canaan! Forty years wandering up and down in the wilderness is enough, now turn your faces towards Canaan and march heavenward.

Beloved Friends, it is time we all had our faces turned heavenward more completely. We have not always had our conversation in Heaven as we should have. Some of our faculties have been taken up with inferior things and we have looked towards Egypt. But we have compassed this mountain long enough—it is time, now, that we concentrate all our powers and turn them all straight away to the Zion which is above, and to the innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of the just made perfect! Our window should now be opened towards Jerusalem! Forty years of the world, why it is 40 years of banishment! And, as we are soon to have done with it, let us up and away to the hills of frankincense!

They tell me that when sailors, years ago, used to go to India, they would give as a toast when they left, “To our friends astern.” But when they had reached half way on the voyage they changed it—it was, “To our friends ahead.” When we get to 40 we may reckon we are probably more than mid-way on our voyage. We are bound, therefore, to remember our friends ahead. We have a large company waiting for us of dear ones that have gone before us. Indeed, the aged have a majority of their friends on the other side of the Jordan. Let us salute them—

*“Even now by faith we join our hands  
With those that went before,  
And greet the blood-besprinkled bands  
Upon the eternal shore.”*

Let us pledge our friends ahead and, from now on let us forget the things that are behind and press forward to that which is before—leaving earth and earthly matters more and more—and yielding ourselves more fully to the cords which draw us towards the celestial country. Let us begin more fully that holy, happy, praiseful life which is akin to that of Heaven! Is not this a good suggestion? The time past may suffice us to have worked the will of the flesh, now let us cry, “heavenward, ho!” Pull up the anchor,

spread the sails and let us go away to the fair country where Jesus has gone before us!

The next thing we should learn is indifference to this world’s heritage. The next verse says, “You are to pass through the coast of your brethren, the children of Esau, which dwell in Seir, and they shall be afraid of you; take you good heed unto yourselves, therefore: meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot breadth; because I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for a possession.” Esau sold his heritage and had his mess of pottage—let him have it— you keep the birthright and never think of putting your spoon into his mess. The world is for worldlings. What do you want with it? God does not intend you to have your portion in this life—why do you lust after it? He has appointed a better rest for you—are you not content to have it so? Perhaps the Israelites would have liked to have taken Edom. “No,” says God, “Edom is not yours. Canaan is yours. Go on—do not meddle with Esau’s cities.”

When you see worldlings very happy in their mirth, do not envy them! Let them have their portion. I never envy a horse his oats and his beans— he likes them and I could not eat them—why should I wish to be a dog in the manger? There are pleasures in this world for men of the world. Poor things, let them have them. As for you, you do not need them and cannot enjoy them! Let them alone and do not meddle with them. If you can bless them, do so, but by no means allow them to imagine that you envy them, for your position is infinitely better than theirs. Better to be God’s dog than the devil’s darling. The bad estate of the ungodly is far below our lowest condition. When we consider their end, any little envy which might arise at the sight of their prosperity will turn to horror at their doom.

Let us learn from the past to cultivate independence of spirit. “You shall buy meat of them for money, that you may eat. And you shall also buy water of them for money, that you may drink.” They were not to plunder the country, or make imperious demands. Neither were they to act as paupers and beg anything from Edom. What they needed they were to pay for in good money. The Edomites, no doubt, thought them a mob of escaped slaves, as poor as poverty itself, half starved and miserable. They were to let them see that they were nothing of the kind. They were to pay in full for all they had. It is a grand thing when a man can exhibit the princely independence which Abraham showed towards the king of Sodom. That little potentate said, “Give me the persons and take the goods to yourself.” “No,” says Abraham, “not I, lest you should say, I have made Abraham rich, I will not take a thread or even a shoe lace from you.”

No, Brothers and Sisters, if a man has been helped of God to live for 40 years, lacking nothing, and has walked uprightly, surely it would now be a scandalous thing if he were to do anything whatever which would be questionable as to integrity, or might savor of confidence in man. He is, indeed, a man of God who has learned to walk uprightly and no longer leans upon the creature, nor practices policy to win his way. “Ah,” said a minister to me, “if I were to preach in your bold style I should lose some of my richest people and offend the rest.” And if he did, would he not have an easy conscience? And is not that worth more than money? The minister who cares for any man’s opinion when he is doing his duty is unworthy of his office!

The servant of God must not be the servant of men. The only man whom God will bless is he who fears no man’s face and resolves that whether he offends or pleases, he will clear his soul from the blood of all men—

*“Fearless myself, a dying man,  
Of dying man’s esteem,  
I preach as though  
I might never preach again—  
A dying man to dying men.”*

Have the Israelites lived for forty years on manna, and shall they bow before the Edomites, and like paupers cry, “Please give us bread”? No, the favored feasters at Heaven’s table can afford to say, “We will pay you, we will owe you nothing.” God give you independence of spirit, my Brethren! Many have forgotten what it means—they will do anything for the sake of custom, or credit, or to get into society—and if they grow rich they can no longer attend a Non-conformist place of worship! For the sake of being patted on the back by nobodies they give up their fathers’ religion and renounce their principles, if, indeed, they ever had any!

Once again, after 40 years in the wilderness God would have His people learn generosity of spirit. The Edomites were very much afraid of the Israelites, and would, no doubt, have bribed them to let them alone. But Moses, in effect, says, “Do not take anything from them. You have no need to do so, for you have never lacked anything and God has been with you. They are afraid of you, you might take what you pleased from them, but do not touch even the water from their wells without payment.” Oh, that we had a generous spirit, that we were not for oppressing others in any degree whatever, feeling that we have too much already given us by God to be needing to tax any man for our own gain! The spirit of freedom from murmuring should be in us after 40 years of blessing!

Jarchi tells us that this exhortation meant that they were not to pretend to be poor. You know how many do so when it is likely to save their pockets. When the tribes came to the Edomites they were not to say to them, “We are poor people and have no money. You must not charge too much for the water, for we cannot afford to pay you at full rates.” No, no, no! It must not be! Supplied by the infinite God, the children of Heaven dare not pretend to be poor! Yet we find professors doing this all the time! If they have a very good business year, they say, “We have done very middling.” And if trade is rather dull, they cry, “Things are at a dreadful pass! Trade is decreasing, we cannot make a living at all.” Very seldom do I meet with a man who cheerfully confesses, “the Lord is blessing and prospering me and I am perfectly content. I want for nothing but more Divine Grace with which to bless the Lord all day long.”

This is the kind of talk for Christian men! They are princes, let them speak a princely language. To grumble and complain is like a rich man’s putting on old and slovenly garments that he may deceive by the presence of need and escape from bearing his due share of the public burdens. The Holy Spirit enables the Believer to boast in the Lord and glory in His name. I am not going to give my Master a bad name. He has treated me infinitely better than I ever expected or deserved! He is a good God. I feel

it to be a good thing to live, since He has accepted me in Christ—and a blessed thing to be on earth—because the Holy Spirit enables me to serve Jesus. I am not going to stand here and find fault with my Lord, or represent myself as a poor miserable wretch, oppressed by a hard taskmaster. My Lord has been good and only good, to me! And I will praise and magnify His name. Where we are poor let us confess it, but where God, in His infinite Grace has made us rich in Christ Jesus, let us glory in it!

Lastly, we ought, for the future, to show more confidence in God if we have had 40 years of His love—we should have more confidence in working for Him that He will bless us, more confidence as to our personal weakness that He will strengthen us, more confidence as to the unknown future that through the great and terrible wilderness He will be with us— and that through the last cold stream He will still be our companion! We should have more confidence that we shall behold the light of His Countenance and more confidence as to the supply of all our needs, for as we have lacked nothing, so all things shall be freely supplied till we cross the river and eat the old corn of the land. To gather all up in one word, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name!”

Would God you were all His people! Would God you all trusted Him for all things, for those who do so shall find good. The Lord bless you, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Deuteronomy 8.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”— PSALM 23 (VERSION III), 152, 214.  
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #1283 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

CONVERSIONS ENCOURAGED  
NO. 1283

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 12, 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“But if from there you shall seek the Lord your God, you shall find Him, if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in tribulation, and all these things are come upon you, even in the latter days,**

**if you turn to the Lord your God, and shall be obedient unto His voice; (for the Lord your God is a merciful God); He will not forsake you, neither destroy you, nor forget the Covenant  
of your fathers which He swore unto them.”  
Deuteronomy 4:29-31.**

LAST Lord’s-Day the title of my discourse was, “Conversions Desired” and my earnest prayer to God has been that the effect of this morning’s sermon may be conversions accomplished. I cannot be happy unless I indulge the hope that some will, this morning, turn to God with full purpose of heart, led to do so by the power of Divine Grace. For this I sought the Lord and at this I resolved to aim. I asked myself, “What is the most likely subject in the hand of the Holy Spirit to lead men to the Lord? Shall I preach the terrors of the Lord, or shall I proclaim the sweetness of Divine mercy? Each of these has its proper use, but which will be most likely to answer our design today?”

I remembered the fable of the sun and the wind. These rival powers competed as to which could compel the traveler to cast away his cloak. The wind blew boisterously and tugged at the garment as if it would tear it from the traveler’s shoulders, but he buttoned it closer about him and held it firmly with his hands. The battle was not to the strong and threatening. Then the sun burst forth from behind a cloud, when the wind had ceased its blustering, and smiled upon the traveler with warmth of kindness until he loosened his cloak and, by-and- by, was glad to take it off altogether. The soft, sweet influence of the sun had vanquished where the storm had raged in vain.

So I thought, perhaps if I preach the tender mercy of God and His readiness to forgive, it may be to my hearers as the warm beams of the sun to the traveler and they will cast away the garments of their sin and self-righteousness. I know that the arrows of love are keen and wound many hearts which are invulnerable to the sword of wrath. O that these sacred darts may win the victory this day! When ships at sea apprehend a storm they will gladly make for an open harbor, but if it is doubtful whether they can enter the port, they will rather weather the tempest than run the risk of being unable to enter the harbor’s mouth.

Some havens can only be entered when the tide happens to be at the flood and, therefore, the captain will not venture. But when the welcome signals are flying and it is clear that there is plenty of water and that they may safely run behind the breakwater, they hesitate no longer, but make

sail for the shelter. Let seeking souls know, this day, that the Lord’s harbor of refuge is open, the port of Free Grace can be reached, that there is sea room for the largest transgressor and love enough to float the greatest sinner into port! Ho, weather-beaten vessels, you may come and welcome! There is no need that even for a solitary hour you should run the risk of the tempest of almighty wrath! You are invited to find shelter and to enjoy it NOW!

It is rather singular that having these ideas floating in my mind and desiring to preach Free Grace and abounding mercy, that I should have found my text in Deuteronomy. Why, that is a book of the Law and is plentifully besprinkled with terrible threats! And yet I find a Gospel theme in it, yes, and one of the very richest! As I read it I admired it for its connection as well as for its own fullness. It seems to me so pleasant to find this lily among thorns. As in the wintry months of the opening year one finds a crocus smiling up from the cold soil and in its golden cup offers a taste of the sunlight which summer will more fully bring, so amid the uncongenial pages of the Law I see this precious Gospel declaration which, like the spring flower, assures us that God’s love is yet alive and will bring us happier times.

My thoughts also likened this passage to the water which leaped from the smitten rock, for the Law is like a rock and the Pentateuch is hard and stern as granite. But here, in its very heart, we find a crystal spring of which the thirsty may drink! I likened the text, also, to the manna lying on the desert sand, the bread of Heaven glittering like a shining pearl upon the barren soil of the wilderness. Here amid the fiery statutes of the Law and the terrible judgments threatened by the God of Sinai, you see this manna of mercy dropped about your tents this morning, as fresh, I hope, to you as if but newly fallen. May you eat of it and live forever!

Let us come to our text at once. The Lord, here, encourages sinners to turn to Himself and find abundant Grace. He encourages sinners who had violated His plainest commandments, who had made idols and so had corrupted themselves—and had, consequently, been visited with captivity and other chastisements—He invites them to turn from their evil ways and seek His face. I feel moved to say at the commencement of this discourse that if the text has any limited aspect, if it is to be regarded as uttered to any special character among transgressors, it peculiarly belongs to backsliders, for the people to whom it was first addressed were the people of God. They had set up idols and so had wandered. And it is to them, chiefly, though not to them exclusively, that these encouragements to repentance are presented.

And probably there are some backsliders here who once stood in the Church of God, but have been cut off from there. Who once were very zealous and earnest in the cause of God, but have now become utterly indifferent to all religion. I charge such to take this text home to themselves. Take every syllable of it into your own heart, Backslider. Read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the same—and may the text bring you to your knees and to your God! It gives you a pointed invitation to return from your wanderings and end your weary backslidings by coming, once more, to your Father’s house, for He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the Covenant of Mercy which He has made on your behalf! Happy are you that you may return! Happy shall I be if you return!

I thought I would lay special stress upon this, because the Lord, Himself, and His ministers with Him, rejoice more over one lost sheep that returns to the Shepherd of Souls than over 99 that went not astray! There is rejoicing when a man finds a treasure which he never had before, but it is scarcely equal to the joy of the woman who found the piece of money which was hers, already, but which she had lost. Glad is the house when the babe is born, but deeper is the joy when the lost son is found. My soul longs to see the Lord bring home His banished ones and to be the means of gathering His scattered ones!

Still, the text is fully applicable to all sinners—to all who have corrupted themselves and done evil in the sight of the Lord to provoke Him to anger. The Ever Merciful encourages them to turn to Him with full purpose of heart by assuring them that He will not forsake them. There seems to me to be in the text three points which should induce an earnest seeking of His face at once, for here is, first, a time mentioned. Secondly, a way appointed. And thirdly, encouragement given.

I. First, then, in the text there is A TIME MENTIONED. Look at it—“If from there you shall seek the Lord... When you are in tribulation, and all these things are come upon you, even in the latter days.” The time in which the Lord bids you seek Him, O you unforgiven ones, is first of all, “from there,” that is, from the condition into which you have fallen, or the position which you now occupy. According to the connection of the text, the offending Israelites were supposed to be in captivity, scattered among various nations, dwelling where they were compelled to worship gods of wood and stone, which could not see, nor hear, nor feel, nor eat, nor smell.

Yet “from there”—from the unhallowed heathen villages, from their lone sorrows by the waters of Babylon, from their captivity in far-off Chaldea, they were bid to turn unto the Lord and obey His voice! Their surroundings were not to be allowed to hinder their prayers. Perhaps, dear Friend, at this time you are dwelling among ungodly relatives. If you begin to speak about religion, you are put down at once. You hear nothing that can help you in the way to better things, but very much that would hinder you. Nevertheless, do not delay, but, “from there,” even from there, seek the Lord, for it is written—“If you seek Him, He will be found of you.”

It may be you are living in a neighborhood where everything is hostile to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and injurious, even, to your morals. Time was, and you may remember it with regret, when you were a child upon the knee of a pious mother, when you spent your Sundays in the Sunday school, when the Bible was read in your house everyday. But now all these helps are taken from you and everything around is dragging you down to greater and yet greater sin. Do not, however, make this a reason for delay—as well might a man refuse to go to a physician because he lives in an unhealthy locality, or a drowning man refuse a lifeboat because a raging sea surrounds him! Hasten, rather than slacken your speed! Do

not tarry till your position improves—do not wait till you move into a godly family, or live nearer to the means of Grace, for if you seek Him “from there” He will be found of you.

But you will tell me that it is not so much your regret that others are ungodly among whom you dwell, but that you, yourself, are in a wretched condition of heart. You have followed after one sin and another until evil has become a habit with you and you cannot shake it off. Like a rolling thing before the whirlwind, you are driven on—an awful force impels you from bad to worse. Awake yourself, O Man, for immediate action! If you wait till you have conquered this evil force by your own strength—if you delay to turn unto God until you are free from the dominion of sin—then assuredly you will wait forever and perish in your folly. If you could vanquish evil by your own power you would not need to seek the Lord, for you would have found salvation in yourself, but be not so infatuated as to dream of such a thing!

Today, “from there,” from the place where you now are, turn your face to your Father who is in Heaven and seek Him through Jesus Christ. Remember that hymn which ought to be sung every Sunday in our assemblies—

*“Just as I am—and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot,  
To You, whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come.”*

Every verse begins with, “Just as I am,” and so must your prayers, your faith, your hope begin. The whole hymn commences, “Just as I am,” and so must your Christian life be started. The Lord invites you as you are and where you are. Are you one of a godless family, the only one in the house who has felt any serious thought at all? Come, then, and tarry not, for the Lord invites you! Are you the one man in a large workshop where all the rest are irreligious? Admire His Sovereign Grace, accept the call and from now on be the Lord’s! The Lord invites those of you who have gone to the ends of the earth in sin and brought yourselves into captivity by your rebellion. Today, even today, He bids you seek Him “with all your heart and with all your soul.”

With regard to the time of turning, it is well worthy of our notice that we are especially encouraged to turn unto the Lord if we are in a painful plight. Our text says, “When you are in tribulation.” Are you sick? Have you felt ill for some time? Does your weakness increase upon you? Are you apprehensive that this sickness may even be unto death? When you are in such tribulation, then you may return to Him. A sick body should lead us the more earnestly to seek healing for our sick soul. Are you poor, have you come down from a comfortable position to one of hard labor and of scant provision? When you are in this tribulation then turn to the Lord, for He has sent you this need to make you see your yet greater necessity, even your need of Himself.

The empty purse should make you remember your soul poverty, the bare cupboard should lead you to see the emptiness of all your carnal confidences and accumulating debts should compel you to calculate how much you owe to your Lord. It is possible that your trials are very bitter at this moment because you are expecting to lose someone whom you dearly love and this is like tearing half of yourself away. One dear child is hardly cold in the tomb and your heart is bleeding when you think of that loss—and now another is sickening and will follow the first. When you are in this tribulation, then be sure to seek the Lord, for His pitying heart is open to you and He will sanctify this grief to noblest purposes.

Is it possible that I speak to one whose sins have become so open as to have been punished by the law of the land? Have you lost your character? Will none employ you any longer? When you are in this tribulation, then turn to your Lord, for He will receive earth’s castaways and make criminals His sons! Have you suffered from the just verdict of society because you are vicious, dishonest and disreputable? Are you, at this time, despised and looked down upon? Yet even to you would I say, when you are in tribulation, when every door is shut, when all hands are held up against you—even then seek the Lord and He will be found of you! If your father scarcely dares to think upon your name. If you have been a grief to your sister’s heart and have brought your mother’s gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, yet now, even in this shameful estate when you are in tribulation, turn to the Lord your God!

Doubtless there are some people who will never be saved unless they come into tribulation. Their substance must all be spent and a mighty famine must come upon them. The citizens of the far country must refuse them aid and with hungry bellies they must stand at the trough and be willing to feed with the swine, or else it will never occur to them to say, “I will arise and go to my Father.” No matter how deep your trouble, your safest and wisest course is to flee to God in Christ Jesus and put your trust in Him! Notice further, when you feel that the judgments of God have begun to overtake you, then you may come to Him. “When you are in tribulation and all these things—these threatened things—are come upon you.”

There are many in this world who feel as if their sin had at last found them out and had commenced to be a Hell to them. The Manslayer has overtaken them and is striking at them with terrible blows. “Ah,” says one, “my great sins have provoked, at last, God, and all men may see what He has done to me, for He has removed my choicest mercies from me. I despised a father’s instruction—that father is dead. I did not value my mother’s tears—my mother sleeps under the sod. The dear wife who used to beg me to walk to the House of God with her—I slighted and treated her with unkindness—and death has removed her from my bosom. The little child that used to climb my knee and sing its little hymns and persuade me to pray, has gone, too. God has found me out, at last, and begun to strip me. These are only the first drops of an awful shower of wrath from which I cannot escape.

“Alas, while one mercy after another is removed, my former joys have been embittered and are joys no more. I go to the theater as I used to do, but I do not enjoy it. I see beneath the paint and the gilt and it seems a mockery of my woe. My old companions come to see me and they would sing me the old songs, but I cannot bear them. Their mirth grates on my

ears—at times it seems to be mere idiotic yelling. I used to get alone and philosophize and dote upon many things which afforded me comfort, but now I find no consolation in them—I have no joy of my thoughts now. The world is dreary and my soul is weary. I am in the sere and yellow leaf and all the world is fading with me. What little joy I had before has utterly departed and no new joy comes. I am neither fit for God nor fit for the devil. I can find no peace in sin and no rest in religion. Into the narrow way I fear I cannot enter and in the broad way I am so jostled that I do not know how to pursue my course.

“Worst of all, there is before me a dreadful outlook. I am filled with horrible apprehensions of the dread hereafter. I am afraid of the harvest which must follow the sad seed sowing of my misspent life. I have a dread of death upon me. I know not how near it may be, but it is too near, I know, and I am not prepared for it. I am overwhelmed with thoughts of the judgment to come. I hear the trumpet ringing in my ears when I am at work. I hear the messengers of God’s justice summoning me and saying, ‘Come to judgment, come to judgment, come away.’ A fearful sound is in my ears and I—where shall I go?” Hear, O Man, and be comforted, for now is the appointed time for you to seek the Lord, for our text says, “When all these things are come upon you, if you turn unto the Lord your God, He will not forsake you neither destroy you.”

There is yet one more word which appears to me to contain great comfort in it and it is this, “even in the latter days.” This expression may refer to the latter days of Jewish history, though I can scarcely think it does, because the Jews are not, now, guilty of idolatry. I rather think it must refer to the latter days of any one of their captivities and in our case to the latter days of life. Looking around me I see that many of you are advanced in years and if you are unconverted I thank God I am as free to preach Christ to you as if you had been children or young men! If you have spent 60 or 70 years in rebellion against your God, you may return, “even in the latter days.” If your day is almost over and you have arrived at the 11th hour, when the sun touches the horizon and evening shadows thicken, still He may call you into His vineyard and at the close of the day give you your penny! He is long-suffering and full of mercy, not willing that any should perish! And therefore He sends me out as His messenger to assure you that if you seek Him, He will be found of you, “even in the latter days.”

It is a beautiful sight, though it is mingled with much sadness, to see a very old man become a babe in Christ. It is sweet to see him, after he has been so many years the proud, wayward, self-confident master of himself, at last learning wisdom and sitting at Jesus’ feet. They hang up in the cathedrals and public halls old banners which have long been carried by the enemy into the thick of the fight. If they have been torn by shot and shell, so much the more do the captors value them—the older the standard the more honor is it, it seems, to seize it as a trophy. Men boast when they have carried off—

*“The flag that braved a thousand years*

*The battle and the breeze.”*  
Oh, how I wish that my Lord and Master would lay hold on some of you worn-out sinners, you who have been set up by the devil as standards of sin! O that the Prince of the kings of the earth would compel you to say, “Love conquers even me.”

I will not leave this head till I have said that it gives me great joy to be allowed to preach an immediate Gospel to you—a Gospel which bids you turn unto God and find present salvation! Suppose, for a moment, that the Gospel ran thus—“You, Sinner, shall be saved in 12 months time if you turn to God.” Oh, Sirs, I should count the days for you till the 12 months were gone. If it were written, “I will be found of you in March, 1877,” I should weary over you till the auspicious season arrived and say, “Maybe they will die before mercy’s hour has struck! Spare them, good Lord!” Yes, and if it were true that God would not hear you until next Lord’s-Day I should like to lock you up and keep you out of harm’s way, if I could, till that time arrived, lest you should die before the promised hour.

If there were any way of insuring your lives, though you had to give all that you have for your soul, you might be glad to insure your life till next Lord’s-Day. But, blessed be God, the promise does not tarry! It is NOW! “Today if you will hear His voice.” The Gospel does not even bid you wait till you reach your home, or get to your bedside—but here and now—in that pew and at this moment, if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul, the Lord Jesus will be found of you and present salvation shall be immediately enjoyed! Is it not encouraging to think that just now the Lord is waiting to be gracious?

II. But now, secondly, let us look at THE WAY APPOINTED. To find mercy, what are we bid to do? “If from there you shall seek the Lord your God.” We have not, then, to bring anything to God, but to seek Him. We have not to seek a righteousness to bring to Him, nor seek a state of heart which will fit us for Him, but to seek Him at once! Sinner, you have offended God. None but God can forgive you, for the offenses are against Himself. Seek Him, then, that He may forgive you. It is essential that you seek Him as a real existence and a true Person, believing that He is and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

It is all in vain to seek sacraments—you must seek Him. It is idle to go through forms of prayer, or to utter customary phrases of devotion—you must seek Him. Your salvation lies in God, Sinner, and your seeking must be after God. Do you understand this? It is not going to your priest or to your clergyman, or to your Bible or to your Prayer Book, or even to your knees in formal prayer—you must draw near to God in Christ Jesus—and He must be found of you as a man finds a treasure and takes it to be his own. “But where shall I find Him?” one asks. When they sought God of old they went to the Mercy Seat, for there the Lord had promised to speak with them. Now, the Lord Jesus Christ is that Mercy Seat, sprinkled with precious blood—and if you want to find God, you must seek Him in the Person of Jesus Christ!

Is it not written, “No man comes unto the Father but by Me”? Jesus is the one Mediator between God and man—and if you would find God, you must find Him in the Person of Jesus the Nazarene—who is also the Son of the Highest. You will find Jesus by believing Him, trusting Him, resting upon Him. When you have trusted Jesus, you have found God in Jesus, for He has said, “He that has seen Me, has seen the Father.” Then have you come to God when you have believed in Jesus Christ. How simple this is! How unencumbered with subtleties and difficulties! When God gives Grace, how easy and how plain is believing! Salvation is not by doing, nor by being, nor by feeling, but simply by believing. We are not to be content with self, but to seek the Lord! Being nothing in ourselves, we are to go out of ourselves to Him. Being, ourselves, unworthy, we are to find worthiness in Jesus!

We are also to grasp the Lord as ours , for the text says, “You shall seek the Lord your God.” Sinners, that is a part of saving faith, to take God to be your God. If He is only another man’s God, He cannot save you. He must be yours, yours, assuredly yours, yours to trust and love and serve all your days, or you will be lost. Now, mark God’s directions—“If you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.” There must be no pretence about this seeking. If you desire to be saved, there must be no playing and toying, trifling and feigning. The search must be real, sincere, earnest, fervent, intense and thorough-going or it will be a failure.

Is this too much to ask? Surely if anything in the world deserves earnestness it is this! If anything ought to awake all a man’s powers to energy, it is the salvation of his soul! You cannot win gold and attain riches without being in earnest in the pursuit—and what earnestness does this deserve? This obtaining eternal life, deliverance from eternal death, acceptance in the Beloved, endless bliss? Oh, men, women, if you sleep over anything, at any rate be awake here! If you trifle upon any matters of importance, yet here, at any rate, be serious, solemn and earnest. Here there must be no idling and no delay. Note that there is a repetition in the text. “If you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul”—we must be doubly in earnest—heart and soul must be in the pursuit.

Half-hearted seeking is no seeking at all. To ask for mercy from God and at the same time to be willing to be without it is a mere pretence of asking. If you are content to be put off with an inferior blessing, you are not seeking the Lord at all. I remember one who is now a member of this Church who, in a desperate fit of soul anxiety, said solemnly to one of us, “I will never go to work again. I will neither eat nor drink till I have found the Savior.” And with that solemn resolve it was not long before he had found Him! Oh, Sirs, suppose you should be lost? Suppose you should perish while I am speaking? I know of no reason why your pulse should continue to beat, or your breath should remain in your nostrils—and if at this moment you were to die—at that same instant you would plunge amidst the flames of Hell! Escape, then, at once!

Even now make soul matters your sole concern. Whatever else you have to attend to, leave it alone and attend, first, to this chief thing, the salvation of your soul! If a man were in a sinking vessel, he may have been a student of the classics, but he will not think of his stopping to translate an ode of Horace! He may have been a mathematician, but he will not sit down to work out an equation—he will leap, at once, from the sinking vessel into the lifeboat, for his objective will be to save his life. And should it not be so as to our eternal life? My soul, my soul, this must be saved and with all my heart will I seek God in Jesus Christ that I may find salvation.

The text further adds that we are to turn to Him. Did you notice the 30th verse—“If you turn to the Lord your God.” It must be a thorough turn. You are looking now towards the world—you must turn in the opposite direction and look God-ward. It must not be an apparent turn, but a real change of the nature, a turning of the entire soul—a turning with repentance for the past, with confidence in Christ for the present and with holy desires for the future. Heart, soul, life, speech, action—all must be changed. Unless you are converted you cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven. May God grant you such a turn as this and to this end pray, “Turn me and I shall be turned.”

Then it is added, “ and be obedient to His voice,” for we cannot be saved in disobedience. Christ has not come to save His people in their sins, but from their sins. “If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land. But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured with the sword.” Do you see, my dear unconverted Hearers, what God’s advice is to you? It is that you obey, now, His Gospel and bow before the scepter of His Son Jesus. He would have you admit that you have erred and entreat to be kept from erring again. Your proud self-will must yield and your selfconfidence must be renounced. You must incline your ear and come unto Him, “Hear and your soul shall live.”

This His Holy Spirit will grant you Grace to do! This is the least that could be asked of you. You could not expect the great King to pardon rebels and allow them to continue in rebellion! He could not allow you to continue in sin and yet partake of His Grace. You know that such a course would not be worthy of a holy God. Do you feel inclined, at this moment, to turn to the Lord? Does some gentle power you have never felt before, draw you beyond yourself? Do you perceive that it would be well for you to be reconciled to your God and Father? Do you feel some inkling of regret, some spark of good desire? Then yield to the impulse! I trust it is the Holy Spirit within, working in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure. Yield at once—completely yield and He will lead you by a way you know not and bring you to Jesus, and in Him you shall find peace, rest, holiness, happiness and Heaven!

Let this be the happy day. Bend before the Spirit’s breath as the reed bows in the wind. Quench not the Spirit, grieve Him no more— *“Lest slighted once, the season fair  
Should never return again.”*

Beware lest bleeding love should never woo again, lest pitying Grace should never more entreat and tender mercy should never more cast its cords around you. The spouse said, “Draw me, we will run after You”—say the same. Behold, before you is an open door and within that door a

waiting Savior! Will you perish on the threshold?

III. Thirdly, the text contains VERY RICH ENCOURAGEMENTS. How does it run? “For the Lord your God is a merciful God; He will not forsake you.” Look at that, Sinner! “He will not forsake you.” If He were to say, “Let him alone, Ephraim is given unto idols,” it would be all over with you. But if you seek Him, He will not say, “Let him alone,” nor take His Holy Spirit from you. You are not yet given up, I hope, or you would not have been here this morning to hear this sermon.

I thought, when I woke this morning and saw the snow and pitiless sleet driven by a vehement wind, that it was a pity I had studied such a subject, for I would like to have the house crowded with sinners and they are not so likely to come out in bad weather. Just then I remembered that it was upon just such a morning as this that I found the Savior, myself, and that thought gave me much courage in coming here. I thought the congregation cannot be smaller than that of which I was one on that happy day when I looked to Christ. I believe that many will, this morning, be brought out and saved, for the Lord has not forsaken this congregation! I used to think He had given me up and would not show me mercy after so long seeking in vain. But He had not forsaken me, nor has He cast you off, O Sinner! If you seek Him with all your heart and soul, you may rest assured He will not forsake you.

And then it is added, “ Neither destroy you.” You have been afraid He would. You have often thought the earth would open and swallow you. You have been afraid to fall asleep lest you should never wake again, but the Lord will not destroy you. No, rather He will reveal His saving power in you. There is a sweeter word, still, in the 29th verse—“You shall find Him if you seek Him.” I wish I could sing and could extemporize a bit of music, for then I would stand here and sing those words—“You shall find Him if you seek Him.” At any rate, the words have sweet melody in them to my ears and heart—“You shall find Him if you seek Him.” I should like to whisper that sentence softly to the sick and to shout it to the busy. It ought to linger long in your memories and abide in your hearts—“You shall find Him if you seek Him.” What more, poor Sinner, what more do you need?

Then there are two reasons given—“ For the Lord your god is a merciful God.” Oh, guilty Soul, the Lord does not want to damn you! He does not desire to destroy you! Judgment is His strange work. Have you ever had to chasten your child? When you have felt bound to punish him severely by reason of a great fault, has it not been very hard work? You have said to yourself a hundred times over, “What shall I do? What shall I do to escape from the misery of causing pain to my dear child?” You have been driven to chasten him or you would not have done it. God never sends a sinner to Hell till justice demands it. He finds no joy in punishing. He swears, “As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies.”

Look at the judge when he puts on the black cap, does he do so with pleasure? No, some of our judges speak with choked utterance and with many tears when they say to the prisoner, “You must be taken to the place from where you came, there to be hanged by the neck till you are dead.” God never puts on the black cap without His heart yearning for men! His mercy endures forever and He delights in it. Notice how the Lord teaches us His care even over the most guilty by the comparisons He makes. “What man of you,” says He, “having a sheep gone astray, will not go after it until he finds it? What man of you, having a sheep that is fallen into a ditch, will not pull it out?” Any animal which belongs to us causes us concern if we lose it, or if it is in trouble. I noticed the other night how even the little kitten could not be missing without causing anxiety to the household. What calling and searching!

Rougher natures might say, “If the kitten will stay out of doors all night, let it do so.” But the owner thought not so, for the night was cold and wet. I have seen great trouble when a bird has been lost through the opening of a cage door and many a vain struggle to catch it again. What a stir there is in the house about a little short-lived bird! We do not like to lose a bird, or a kitten—and do you think the good God will willingly lose those whom He has made in His own image and who are to exist forever? I have used a very simple and homely illustration, but it commends itself to the heart. You know what you would do to regain a lost bird, but what will not God do to save a soul? An immortal spirit is better than 10,000 birds!

Does God care for souls? Yes, that He does, and in proof thereof Jesus has come to seek and to save the lost. The Shepherd cannot rest while one of His flock is in danger. “It is only one sheep! You have 99 more, good man, why do you go and bother yourself about one?” He cannot be pacified. He is considering where that sheep may be. He imagines all sorts of perils and distresses. Perhaps it is lying on its back and cannot turn over, or it has fallen into a pit, or is entangled among briars, or the wolf is ready to seize it. It is not merely its intrinsic value to him, but he is concerned for it because it is his sheep, and the object of his care. Oh, Soul, God has such a care for man! He waits to be gracious and His Spirit goes forth towards sinners—therefore return to Him!

Now dwell upon that last argument—“ He will not forget the Covenant of your fathers.” The Covenant always keeps open the path between God and man. The Lord has made a Covenant concerning poor sinners with His Son Jesus Christ. He has laid help upon One that is mighty and given Him for a Covenant to the people. He always remembers Jesus and how He kept that Covenant. He calls to mind His sighs, tears, groans and death-throes—and He fulfills His promise for the great Sufferer’s sake. God’s Grace has kept His Covenant on behalf of men! God is even eager to forgive that He may reward Christ and give Him to see of the travail of His soul!

Now, listen to me, you who are still unconverted. What solid ground there is, here, for your hope! If the Lord were to deal with you according to the Covenant of Works, what could He do but destroy you? But here is a Covenant of Grace made in Jesus Christ on the behalf of sinners and all that believe in Jesus are partakers in that Covenant and are made partakers of the countless blessings which that Covenant secures. Believe in Jesus! Cast yourself upon Him and by the Covenant mercies of God you shall assuredly be saved! You have heard me preach like this before,

have you not, a good many times? Yes, and I am, sometimes, fearful lest God’s people should grow tired of this kind of sermon. But then you need it over and over again.

How many more times will some of you need to be told this? How many more times must the great mercy of God be set before you? Are we to keep on inviting you, again and again and again, and go back with no favorable answer from you? I have been questioning myself in the night watches about this and I have said, “These people are unconverted. Is it my fault? Do I fail in telling them my Lord’s message? Do I mar the Gospel? Well,” I thought, “if it is so, yet I will charge them not to be partakers of my fault.” Brothers and Sisters, God’s mercy is so rich that even when the story of it is badly told, it ought to influence your hearts! It is so grand a thing that God should be in Christ reconciling the world to Himself by a wondrous Sacrifice, that if I stuttered and stammered, you ought to be glad to hear it! Or even if I told you in terms that were obscure, you ought to be so eager to know it that you would search out my meaning!

In secret correspondence a cipher is often used, but inquisitive people soon discover it. Ought there not to be more interest taken in the Gospel? But, my Friends, I do not speak obscurely. I am as plain a speaker as one might meet in a day’s march and with all my heart I set Christ before you and bid you trust Him! Will you do so this morning? Or will you not? See how dark it is outside, even at noon? God has hung the very heavens in mourning. Never fear, the sun will soon break forth and light up the day and even so—

**“Our hearts, if God we seek to know Shall know Him and rejoice!  
His coming like the morn shall be, As morning songs His voice.  
So shall His Presence bless our souls, And shed a joyful light;  
That hallowed morn shall chase away The sorrows of the night.”**

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Deuteronomy 4.***HYMN FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—199, 555, 40.  
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BROUGHT OUT TO BE BROUGHT IN  
NO. 2511

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, APRIL 4, 1897. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 6, 1886.

**“He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land which He swore unto our fathers.”  
Deuteronomy 6:23.**

OUR text occurs in the passage where the Israelites are told to personally instruct their children concerning the testimonies and statutes and judgments of the Lord. When they asked the meaning of the various ordinances of God’s House, their parents were to tell them—not to refer them to the priest—they were, themselves, to instruct their children in the things of God. In our own case, however much we may love and appreciate the Sunday school system—and we cannot love it too much—I hope we shall never forget that the first duty towards the child belongs to the parent. Fathers and mothers are the most natural agents for God to use in the salvation of their children. I am sure that, in my early youth, no teaching ever had such an impression upon my mind as the instruction of my mother—neither can I conceive that to any child there can be one who will have such influence over the young heart as the mother who has so tenderly cared for her offspring.

We should especially tell our children our own experience, for so it is enjoined in this passage—“When your son asks you in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God has commanded you? Then you shall say unto your son, We were Pharaoh’s bondmen in Egypt; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.” Perhaps, my Friend, there is no testimony that you can bear which will be so useful, so interesting and so striking, as the testimony of what you have, yourself, seen and handled of the Word of Life. Tell the Gospel as you find it in the Bible, but set it in the frame of your own experience of its preciousness! Tell your son how you sinned and how the Lord had mercy upon you. Tell him how He met with you, how you were brought to seek His face, how you were born again, how you received a new heart and a right spirit. He will think the more of this great change because it happened to his father, or to his mother, or to some kind friend. And, perhaps, if he is not himself converted as a child, in his later life he may think of what you told him or the remembrance of his mother’s God may rise before him when he is far away from the scenes of his youth and has spent many years in foolish vanities—and he may even then turn to God, beckoned back to the great Father’s House above by the memory of his godly father and mother here below.

It is my earnest desire, just now, to bear witness on the behalf of many of God’s people while I try to explain the meaning of our text, “He brought us out. . .that He might bring us in.” We shall have three heads to our discourse. First, we were brought out. As surely as Israel was brought out of Egypt, we who believe in Jesus have been brought out of the house of our bondage! Therefore, secondly, we are out. And thirdly, the Lord who brought us out will bring us into another and a better country—into “Your land, O Immanuel”—into that place of rest and everlasting jubilee which God by Covenant has given over to His people as their perpetual possession.

I. First, dear Friends, let us speak upon the fact that we were BROUGHT OUT. Our text says, “He brought us out from there.” That is, Jehovah, the God of Israel, brought His people out from the house of bondage and, in like manner, we bear our testimony that the Lord has delivered us from the bondage of sin and Satan.

Our witness, therefore, is, first of all, that God has had to do with us. Some there are who think that God dwells far away, shut up in eternal seclusion. But we have not found it so, for He has had dealings in mercy with us. They suppose that the things here below are too little and too commonplace for God to consider, but it has not been so with us, for He has dealt well with His servants according to His Word. They suppose that there is a thick veil that shuts us out from the Invisible, a great gulf that parts us poor mortals from any communication with God. They smile and turn upon their heels when we begin to talk of God—they are “agnostics”—know-nothings. Perhaps they will not say that there is no God, but they do say that they do not know whether there is a God or not! And, as to any communication between the Holy One of Israel and such poor creatures as we are, they will not believe it to be possible. Well, then, we have to bear our testimony upon this point and it is this— that with some of us a very little while ago, and with others of us so many years ago as to be among the memories of our youth—God had solemn dealings. We were in the land of darkness and in the valley of the shadow of death. We were fond of sin—we were slaves to it and we had no wish nor will to escape from it—but He who is the Father of our spirits, having loved us with an everlasting love, and having made a Covenant with His only-begotten Son on our behalf, tore the heavens and in majesty came down!

This was done spiritually, for God is a Spirit and, therefore, they who were round about us knew it not. And we ourselves saw Him not and beheld no similitude—neither heard we any voice with our outward ear. But, though it was spiritual, God’s coming to us was very real, for spirit is as real as matter and God is as real as the things that we touch, or see, or feel. We are not deceived in this matter, or, if we are, it has become so much a matter of daily consciousness, as well as of past memory, that we must be, indeed, besotted beyond all conception! But it has not been a dream to us, for it has changed our whole lives and it does, today, affect and move us most powerfully. We can imagine that it is a dream that we eat and drink, but it is no dream that God lives in us and we live in Him! It may be a dream that we have grown up from childhood into manhood—though it would take a great deal of argument to prove that to us—but it is no dream that, whereas we were blind, now we see! It is no dream that, whereas we were dead, now we live! It is no dream that things we did not believe in are now to us the best and highest and most practical of facts! It is not a dream that God has dealt with us and, though we cannot expect men to believe us, we feel sure that, had they known what we know, they would have been as little doubtful about it as we are. Had they passed through the experience we have had, they would have been as dogmatic in their assertion about it as we take leave to be.

Though we may be thought fools for this confidence, we think we are not fools. In other matters we are at least the equals of the men who think us fools as to our religion—and we can reason as well as they. If they have understanding, we have understanding, also. And, at any rate, we are quite willing to leave the matter to the test of the next world. You see, Beloved, we have two strings to our bow—if we should turn out to have been wrong and should die like dogs, we shall be none the worse— whereas, if our beliefs turn out to be well-founded, the ungodly will be in a sorry case, indeed! So we bear our witness without any kind of fear or shame, or any alarm about being thought fools for it, and we say that God has dealt with our spirits. Our spirit has spoken to His Spirit, and His Spirit has spoken to our spirit, and there have been Divine communications to us from the great God who made us, who, we assert, has new-made us and brought us out of our former condition into another and a better state. So, with the Israelites, we can say, “He brought us out.”

In describing this bringing out, I have to remind you that the Christian’s life runs parallel with the life of Israel in Egypt.  
In order to get Israel out of Egypt, the first thing was to make Israel loathe Egypt. When Israel was in Goshen and the land brought forth plentifully, Israel was like sheep in clover and, like a bullock that loves deep pasture, had no desire to come out from the fat Delta of the Nile. Israel prospered, Israel was great. Was not Joseph at the head of the State? And even after his death, did not the memory of Joseph still make every Egyptian respect the Israelites? They would have lived there, still— there would have been no coming out of Egypt, for Israel, if all had gone well with them there. The Lord saw that the first thing to be done, in preparation for the people’s emancipation, was to make them loathe Egypt. So there arises a new king that knows not Joseph, a king who considers that the existence of a foreign people in the midst of his nation is a source of danger. He must begin, if possible, to reduce their numbers. They shall work for him and render the unpaid labor of slaves. When they do this and still multiply, they shall find their own straw with which to make the bricks. When they complain of this, they shall have the tale of the bricks doubled until they begin to sigh and cry and groan by reason of their taskmasters.  
If you had met an Israelite ten years before the period of slavery and had said to him, “Do you feel at home in Egypt?” he would have answered,” Certainly! Everything prospers with us—we cannot do better than be here.” But afterwards, if you had met him and put to him the same question, he would have said, “Wish to stay in Egypt? Not I! Would God I could escape from the taskmaster! It is cruelty from morning to night and a toil that is terrible. And I have heard”—and the strong man would stand and weep as he told the story—“I have heard that now there is an edict issued that our male children shall be cast into the river, so that, if we have a son born into our house, it will be, indeed, an unbearable sorrow, for our children must be destroyed by the tyrant.” It was a great step towards the accomplishment of God’s eternal purpose when He made Israel to feel that Egypt was a house of bondage.  
It is in some such way as this that God makes His own elect to feel that the state of nature—the worldly, natural, sinful state—is a state of bondage. Look at the multitude of our fellow men—they have no wish to enter into any other state, they are quite satisfied with the condition in which they now are. Provided that they can earn good wages, that they can make money, that they can enjoy themselves in the pleasures of this life, they do not want anything more. You seem to be as those that mock when you talk to them about another world—they have enough difficulty to make both ends meet in this world, they say! You speak about a judgment to come—they would be a deal more impressed with some information about the police courts than about the Last Dread Assize when the Judge of All shall sit upon the Great White Throne! No, if they do not believe themselves to be mere beasts, to live and die, and then that will be an end of them, yet they act as if that were their belief. It is so with the most of our fellow men and it was so with you and with me in our unregenerate state. If we could have had our choice, we would have had a good time of it here, perhaps taking as our motto, “A short life and a merry one.” Or, if we were more prudent, we would have wished to have a well-ordered, moral, upright life in which we could be respectable and respected, and that would have satisfied us. O Sirs, it is a miracle of Grace that God has made us to loathe that old land of Egypt and to count it to be a house of bondage! And now, to live unto ourselves is slavery! To live for this world seems to us to be the meanest and most beggarly thing that can be!  
That was the first thing, then, that God did towards bringing out His people—He made them to loathe Egypt.  
The next thing He did was, to make them see His wrath upon Egypt— the plagues that He sent. They had, no doubt, looked upon the Egyptians as being a very happy people, like themselves. They were, for a time, birds of a feather. But now they see all Egypt made the target for Jehovah’s thunderbolts! At one time, all is darkness. At another time, the very air is filled with lice and flies. One day the frogs come up everywhere, even into the king’s chambers. At another hour, boils and sores are on man and beast and, at the appointed period, there comes a shower of fire and the fire is mingled with hail! And the fire runs along the ground and terrific claps of thunder come, peal upon peal, one after the other, and Israel thinks, “This is a poor country to live in. We must rise up and be gone! If God deals thus with the Egyptians, God grant that we may not be Egyptians! Let us clear out of this land as soon as we can.”  
So has God made some of us see His judgments upon guilty men. We have walked through the world with our eyes open and we have seen men as others do not see them—with the leprosy of sin white upon their brow! We have seen them with the fever of lust which nothing could abate. We have seen them droop and die and, with our eyes open, we have seen them pass into that region which is divided forever from all hope by a great gulf, so that they that would pass from us to them cannot, neither can they come to us that would pass from there! Yes, and our spirits have listened till we have heard in dread and fear the weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth of souls that passed away unforgiven, without God and without hope! We have heard that this city is to be burned up, for it is the City of Destruction and, burdened as we were, we began to run from it that we might, perhaps, escape before God should pour out the full vials of His vengeance upon men. I am talking no dreams now, or, at any rate, they are such dreams as I have had when I am most awake—such dreams as some here present have had, and such dreams as have made us anxious to get away from this present evil world which lies in the Wicked One, that we may not be destroyed with it in the day of God’s righteous wrath!  
Furthermore, dear Friends, God brought His people out of Egypt by breaking the power which held them in bondage. When they wished to get away from Pharaoh, they could not, for he held them as his slaves. But in due time God began to deal with Pharaoh and, at last, when He had killed the first-born in all the land, and the chief of all the strength of Egypt, they could not hold in captivity a single Israelite, no, not even a cow or a sheep or a goat that belonged to Israel! The power of Egypt was so completely broken that not a hoof was left behind!  
And there came a day with us when the power of sin was finally broken. We sat at the foot of the Cross looking up weeping and wondering, and all of a sudden, as we believed in Jesus, we learned the meaning of the angel’s message to Joseph, “You shall call His name, JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins.” And then and there He saved us from our sins! The guilt of sin was gone but, what was stranger, still, the power of sin was gone, too. We had proven the truth of the Apostle’s words, “Sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the Law, but under Grace.” With the crimson blood that bought our pardon, there fell the white and sparkling drops that cleansed our nature! The water with the blood delivered us from the guilt and power of sin and we were free, strangely free! We wondered how it was that we had not the desires and passions and inclinations that we used to have, or, if they came, we had a new life and power with which we fought with them hand to hand. We welcomed them no more as friends, but we spurned them as our worst foes, for God had delivered us from the great bondage we were under! Sin is a thing abhorred and detested by us and our spirit has come clean out from under its power as a reigning force!  
Remember also, Beloved, that when the Lord broke the power of Egypt over Israel, it was on the night of the Passover that He did it. That was the final blow that fell when the Israelites had slain the paschal lamb and sprinkled its blood upon the lintel and the two side posts of their houses. When Jehovah saw the blood, then He passed over them in such a wondrous way that they, also, passed over the Egyptians and marched out of the land more than conquerors through Him that had bled for them under the emblem of the paschal lamb!  
Beloved, that redemption has been accomplished for us, also! It is not everyone who can remember the very day and hour of his deliverance, but, as I told you the other morning, of Richard Knill, who said, “At such a time of the day, clang went every harp in Heaven, for Richard Knill was born again,” it was even so with me! I looked to Jesus and as I looked, I lived, and then and there I came clean out from that old slavery in which I had dwelt up to that hour! Blessed be the name of God for that glorious emancipation!  
Yet once more upon this part of our text, “He brought us out” when, after being set free, we were violently pursued by our old sins. The Israelites went up harnessed, marching in their ranks and, I doubt not, singing as they went because they were delivered from the daily task and from the cruel bondage. But suddenly they turned their heads while they were marching, for they heard a dreadful noise behind them, a noise of chariots and of men shouting for battle! And, at last, when they could really see the Egyptians and the thick cloud of dust rising behind them, then they feared that they would be destroyed, they should now fall by the hand of the enemy. You remember, Beloved, after your conversion (it may not have happened to you all, but it did to me), there came a time when the enemy said, “I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil! My lust shall be satisfied upon them! I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.” So Satan, loath to leave a soul, pursues it quickly. He will have it back if he can. And often, soon after conversion, there comes a time of dreadful conflict—when the soul seems as if it could not live. “Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that the Lord brought us into this condition of temporary freedom, that we might be all the more distressed by our adversaries?” So said

Unbelief!  
But you recollect how God brought His people right out by one final stroke. Miriam knew it when she took her timbrel and went forth with the women, and answered them in the jubilant song, “Sing you to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea!” I love best of all that note in the song of Moses where he says, “The depths have covered them.” “There remained not so much as one of them.” What gladness must have been in the hearts of the children of Israel when they knew that their enemies were all gone! I am sure it was so with me, for after my conversion, being again attacked by sin, I saw the mighty stream of redeeming love roll over all my sins and this was my song, “The depths have covered them!” “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us!”  
II. There has been so much in the first part of our subject—“He brought us out”—that I must speak only very briefly upon our second division which is, WE ARE OUT.  
That is to say, dear Friends, we are out of the bondage of sin and death, never to be captured again, and never to go back again of our own free will. “Oh,” says one, “that is strong teaching.” I do not care whether it is strong or weak, it is Bible teaching! Our Lord Jesus said, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.” To the woman at the well our Savior said, “Whoever drinks of this water shall thirst again: but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” The work of the Holy Spirit is no temporary regeneration, but one that really makes the man new forever—and the devil, himself, cannot undo the work! No, dear Friend, if God brings you up out of Egypt, you shall never go back again into the house of bondage!  
I heard, the other day, of a woman who came, at the end of a certain revival meeting, to make a confession of her faith. She said she had been regenerated six times! Now, I have heard and read in the Bible of people being born again, but to be born again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again is not what I have read anywhere in the Scriptures, or, if such a thing is possible—if being born again does not finally save men, remember that awful warning of the Apostle, “It is impossible. . . if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.” The Word of God is very explicit about that matter. “For the earth which drinks in the rain that comes often upon it, and brings forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receives blessing from God: but that which bears thorns and briers is rejected, and is near unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.”  
Our Savior also said, “Salt is good: but if the salt has lost its savor, with what shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out.” You cannot imagine that a person can be regenerated twice! If the work of regeneration is accomplished once, and it does not save the soul, then there is no salvation for it! That is all God ever will do and, therefore, do I bless and glorify His name that there never was and never shall be an instance in which He has made a man a new creature in Christ Jesus—and then the work of Grace has failed! There are plenty who come near to this point and who seem, sometimes, to have really reached it—but rest assured of this, Beloved, if the Lord has brought you forth out of this captivity, none shall ever undo what God has done! We are out. We are out. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” We hold to that plain and blessed Truth of God! Of old, the Lord said, “I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me.” Nothing can be more definite and explicit than that. We are bound for the land of Canaan, and into Canaan we shall go!  
We are out. That is, we are now separated unto the Lord. If we are, indeed, what I have described, we do not belong, in the fullest sense, to any country or to any people, but we belong to God—we are separate from all people upon the face of the earth! You cannot make anything but a Jew of a Jew. You may do what you like with him, but he always remains a Jew. And you cannot make anything of a Christian but a Christian. Put him where you may, he is still a Christian. Whatever sphere of social life he occupies, or in whatever country he dwells, he is always a Christian. I was never ashamed of being an Englishman except when I have seen an Englishman behaving wrongly towards other people. Then I have felt as if I would be a Frenchman, or anything else! But I would be a Christian, first of all, and above all! When I am a Christian, I know no nationality. We are cosmopolites—inhabitants of every place, wherever we may be—if we are inhabitants of the holy city which is above. Our citizenship is in Heaven. Therefore we are separated from all the rest of mankind. The world knows us not because it knew not our Lord. May God separate us more and more unto Himself!  
But we are separated that we may be preserved by the Lord and blessed by the Lord, for Israel, when brought out of Egypt, had to live by manna that dropped daily from Heaven, and by water that gushed out of the Rock. That is how all Christians ought to live. You are not to depend, now, upon the world—you are to depend upon God for everything—for your bread and for your water, and for all your needs. The whole of your life is to be in Him—not only that which is spiritual, but even that which is outward and visible is still to be a life in Christ, and a life for Christ— for you are dead to the world and your life is hid with Christ in God. The Lord said, even by the mouth of Balaam, “The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.” Oh, what a mercy it is to be out of Egypt in that respect!  
Dear Brothers and Sisters, whatever our condition may be, here, we are out of Egypt en route for the Glory land. He who brought us out of Egypt will bring us into Canaan. Our home is not here. Our feet are not fixed upon this narrow plot of earth—they are moving towards another country, that is, a heavenly one.  
III. I can only just touch upon the last part of our text—HE WILL BRING US— for our time has gone. But I want to say this much about it.  
The Lord brought us out on purpose that He might bring us in. He did not bring us out merely for what we are now, but also for what we are yet to be. If Israel had only been what she ought to have been, she would have been into Canaan almost as soon as she was out of Egypt! And if you and I were all we ought to be, we would, even here, enjoy full happiness, for there is a Heaven below, and there is a rest for the people of God which we find in Christ even now.  
So, next, the delay is caused by our unfitness. The Israelites were unbelieving, so they had to wander for 40 years in the wilderness before the nation entered upon its heritage in the land of Canaan. And it is because you and I are so carnal and there is so much of unbelief about us, that we go up and down, backwards and forwards, and do not fully enter into the possession of the glorious privileges which are ours by Covenant right. Yet, even here, we who have believed enter into rest! We have a foretaste of Heaven, we have the first-fruits of the Spirit. We have tasted the grapes of Eshcol and we are longing to cross the Jordan and to be— *“Where our dear Lord His vineyard keeps, And all the clusters grow.”*  
The Lord brought us out with this design, that He might bring us in. It is clear that He who brought us out can bring us in. That which remains to be done is not as much as that which has already been done. There is not half as much difficulty between here and Heaven as there lies behind us—between here and our fallen condition. Atonement has been made and that is the greatest work of all! Sin has been put away, eternal life has come into these dead souls and merely to keep that flame alive, albeit it needs Divine Power, yet is a small thing compared with the putting of the Light of God within us and the redeeming us from sin, death and Hell!  
He brought us out and He will bring us in, otherwise He would lose all that He has done. If the Lord does not bring us into Glory, then the precious blood of Christ has been shed in vain and the Holy Spirit has operated upon our hearts in vain. If God does not finish His work upon us and in us, then men and devils will say that He began to build, but He could not finish. A soul in whom the Lord does not finish His work would be a monument for the eternal derision of Satan and all his hosts—and that shall never be! God’s eternal purpose would fail if He did not bring us in. Let us, therefore, trust in Him, and say, “He will bring us in.” Despite the Girgashites, the Hittites and all the other “ites,” He will bring us in! Across the Jordan we shall go with our Joshua, Jehovah-Jesus, at our head and we shall take our possession, everyone of us, in that glorious land and stand in our lot in that day, as surely as He has brought us out.  
The important point for us to settle is—Has the Lord, indeed, brought us out? If any of you are still in bondage, the Lord make you to feel your bondage! The Lord make you to cry out in the bitterness of your soul! That is half-way towards getting out—that feeling of loathing for your present state is half the battle of your coming out of Egypt! The Lord make you to cry and groan, and look right out of yourselves wholly to the Lord Jesus and if, by the grip of faith, you get hold of my Master’s garments, there is none that shall make you lose your hold, for, if you have a hold on Him, He has a firmer hold on you! If you have but touched Him with the finger of faith, He has laid His eternal power under bond to save you and He must and will accomplish the work, great as it is! God has laid help upon One who is mighty, and that mighty One shall never fail. Oh, the bliss of being in Christ! It is to be out of Egypt and it is to have the certain prospect of being, by-and-by, in Heaven!  
God bless you all, dear Friends, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**DEUTERONOMY 6.**

Verse 1. Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you go to possess it. God’s commandments are to be taught, but they are also to be practiced—“which the Lord your God commanded to teach you, that you might do them.” And it is this doing of them that is the hard part of the work. It is not always easy to teach them—a man needs the Spirit of God if he is to teach them aright—but practice is harder than preaching. May God grant us Grace, whenever we hear His Word, to do it!

2. That you might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments, which I command you, you, and your son, and your son’s son, all the days of your life; and that your days may be prolonged. The fear of God must always be a practical power in our lives—“that you might fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments.” And that practical fear should lead us into obedience in detail. We ought so to study God’s Word that we endeavor “to keep all His statutes and His commandments.” A slipshod obedience is disobedience. We must be careful and watchful to know the Divine will and in all respects to carry it out. You who are His children, dwelling in such a household, and with such a Father, it well becomes you to be obedient children. No, it is not only for us to obey the command of the Lord our God, but we should pray till the rest of the verse also comes true—“you, and your son, and your son’s son,” our children and our children’s children. I am sure that if we love God, we shall long that our children and our children’s children may love Him, too. If your trade has supported you and brought you in a competence, you will naturally wish to bring your son up to it. But, on a far higher platform, if God has been a good God to you, your deepest desire will be that your son and your son’s son should serve the same Divine Master through all the days of their life! “That your days may be prolonged.” God does not give long life to all His people, yet in obedience to God is the most probable way of securing long life. There are also many of God’s saints who are spared in times of pestilence, or who are delivered by an act of faith out of great dangers. That ancient declaration of God often comes true in these later times, “As the days of a tree are the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.” At any rate, you who love the Lord shall live out your days, whereas the wicked shall not live out half their days. You shall complete the circle of life, whether it is a great circle or a little one— with long life will God satisfy you, and show you His salvation. The passage which now follows is held in very great esteem by the Jewish people even to this day. They repeat it frequently, for it forms part of their morning and evening services.

3, 4. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with you, and that you may increase mightily, as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you, in the land that flows with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD. There is but one God. This is the very basis of our faith—we know nothing of “gods many and lords many.” Yet it is the Triune God whom we worship. We are not less Unitarians, in the highest meaning of that word, because we are Trinitarians! We are not less Believers in the one living and true God because we worship Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

5. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Does not this show what is the very Nature of God? God is Love, for He commands us to love Him!! There was never an earthly prince or king whom I have heard of in whose statute book it was written, “You shall love the king.” No. It is only in the Statute Book of Him who is the Lord of Life and Love that we read such a command as this! To my mind it seems a very blessed privilege for us to be permitted to love One so great as God is. Here it is we find our Heaven! It is a command, but we regard it rather as a loving, tender invitation to the highest bliss—“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart”— that is, intensely. “And with all your soul”—that is, most sincerely, most lovingly. “And with all your might.” With all your energy, with every faculty, with every possibility of your nature.

6. And these words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart. Oh, how blessed to have them written on the heart by the Holy Spirit! We can never get them there except He who made the heart anew shall engrave upon these fleshy tablets the Divine Precepts.

7. And you shall teach them diligently unto your children. Christian parent, have you done this? “You shall” not only teach them, but, “teach them diligently unto your children.”

7. And shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. Our common talk should be much more spiritual than it often is. There is no fear of degrading sacred subjects by the frequent use of them—the fear lies much the other way—lest by a disuse of them we come to forget them. This blessed Book, the Holy Word of God, is a fit companion for your leisure as well as for your labor, for the time of your sleeping and the time of your waking. It will bless you in your private meditations and equally cheer the social hearth and comfort you when, in mutual friendship, you speak, the one with the other. Those who truly love God greatly love His holy Word.

8. And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand. They shall be your practical guide, at your fingertips, as it were.  
8. And they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall see by them, you shall see with them, you shall see through them.  
9. And you shall write them upon the posts of your house and on your gates. I could almost wish that this were literally fulfilled much more often than it is. I was charmed, in many a Swiss village, to see a text of Scripture carved on the doorpost. A text hung up in your houses may often speak when you are silent. We cannot do anything that shall be superfluous in the way of making known the Word of God.  
10-12. And it shall be, when the LORD your God shall have brought you into the land which He swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you great and goodly cities, which you built not, and houses full of all good things, which you filled not, and wells dug, which you dug not, vineyards and olive trees, which you planted not; when you shall have eaten and are full; then beware lest you forget the LORD, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Bread eaten is soon forgotten. How often we act like dogs that will take the bones from our hand and then forget the hand that gave them! It should not be so with us. All our spiritual mercies and many of our temporal ones are very much like the inheritance of Israel in the land of Canaan—wells that they did not dig, and vineyards which they did not plant. Our blessings come from sources that are beyond our own industry and skill. They are the fruits of the holy inventiveness of God and the splendor and fullness of His thoughtfulness towards His poor children. Let us not forget Him, since evidently He never forgets us!  
13-15. You shall fear the LORD your God, and serve Him, and shall swear by His name. You shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you, (for the LORD your God is a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the Lord your God be kindled against you, and destroy you from off the face of the earth. Our God is a jealous God. One said to a Puritan, “Why be so precise?” and he replied, “Because I serve a precise God.” God has done so much for us, in order to win our hearts, that He ought to have them altogether for Himself. When He has them all, it is all too little—but to divide our heart is to grieve His Spirit and sorely to vex Him.  
16-24. You shall not tempt the LORD your God, as you tempted Him in Massah. You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and His testimonies, and His statutes, which He has commanded you. And you shall do that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with you, and that you may go in and possess the good land which the LORD swore unto your fathers, to cast out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has spoken. And when your son asks you in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God has commanded you? Then you shall say unto your son, We were Pharaoh’s bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand: and the LORD showed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: and He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land which He swore unto our fathers. And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. Oh, Friends, it will be well when our boys and girls ask us questions like this and when we can give such answers! The great lack of the age in which we live is obedience to God. “Modern thought” has flung off obedience to Divine Revelation—and even in matters relating to social morality, many men reject all idea of anything being commanded of God—they only judge by what appears to them to be either pleasurable or profitable. What is most needed just now is that we, ourselves, and those about us become really conscious of the greatness and Sovereignty of God—and yield ourselves to Him to do as He bids us, when He bids us, where He bids us—and in all things to seek to follow His commandments that He may “preserve us alive, as it is at this day.”  
25. And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us. That would have been Israel’s righteousness if the people had observed to do all these commandments before the Lord. But it was marred and spoiled by disobedience. We rejoice to know that we who believe in Jesus have a righteousness unto which Israel did not attain, for the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, is our righteousness!

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 #673 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

SECRET SINS DRIVEN OUT BY STINGING HORNETS

NO. 673

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 28, 1866, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Moreover the Lord your God will send the hornet among them, until those who are left,  
who hide themselves from you, are destroyed.”  
Deuteronomy 7:20.**

LET us spiritualize the story of the conquest of Canaan by the children of Israel. Canaan was given to Abraham and to his seed by a covenant of salt. Our body, soul, and spirit are given to Christ Jesus to be His portion and His heritage—and the newborn principle within us which represents the seed of Israel is to conquer the whole of our manhood for Christ that He may have possession of it in all its powers and passions, parts and faculties. When our Lord Jesus Christ died, He died not only for our souls but also for our bodies—He did not purchase a right to a part of us only but to the entire man. He contemplated in His passion the sanctification of us wholly—spirit, soul, and body—that in this triple kingdom He Himself might reign supreme without a rival.

It is the business of the newborn nature which God has given to the regenerate to assert the rights of the Lord Jesus Christ. “My Soul, so far as you are a child of God, you must conquer all the rest of yourself which yet remains unblessed. You must subdue all your powers and passions to the silver scepter of Jesus’ gracious reign, and you must never be satisfied till He who is the King by purchase becomes also the King by gracious coronation, and reigns in you supreme.”

Although Israel had Canaan by right, the Jebusites and eight mighty nations had it in possession. And alas, we are made painfully to feel that though Christ has a right to us and He alone should reign in our mortal bodies, yet sin has a dwelling place in us! Those old sins which were born with us and seem as if they will never die till we, ourselves, are wrapped in our winding sheets, have entered into us and will dwell in us. I may say of our nature what was said in Egypt during the plague of frogs: “Behold these filthy things have come up into our chambers and into our ovens, and our kneading troughs.”

There is no part of our heart too hot or too sacred for sin to intrude into it. The whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint—from the sole of the foot even to the head—naturally—there is nothing but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. Sin has entrenched itself in our nature and it is not to be cast out by our mere talking about it nor by our best resolutions. Our sins have chariots of iron, as those of us know who have to contend with them, and their cities are walled up to Heaven their entrenchments are so strong! Our sins have so worked themselves into our flesh that our flesh cries out, “Spare them!”

“Surely the bitterness of death is past,” said Agag when he came delicately before Samuel. And thus our sins come so delicately to us, assume such pleasant shapes, and are so congenial, that something whispers, “Let them live!” It is hard to slay them—so difficult to cut them up root and branch, for they are in possession—and the new nature is but a babe! “But the old nature is the old man, and it is a very unequal fight between a babe and an old man!” The new nature has just emerged into an atmosphere which is not congenial with it, while the old nature has everything to help it—the devil from beneath, the world from without, and even the cares of business, of life—all seem to act as allies to the old nature.

Meanwhile the new nature has to fight alone. If the Eternal Spirit were not our helper, and if He who is the Father of our new nature were not also its support and its succor, long ago it would have died and been utterly cut off by the hosts of its foes! Christ and holiness have a right to us, but sin is in possession.

What then, Beloved? Why this—since sin has no right to any part of us, we go about a good and legal warfare when we seek, in the name of God, to drive it out! O my Body, you are a member of Christ! Shall I take you and subjugate you to the Prince of Darkness? O my Soul, Christ has suffered for your sins and redeemed you with His most precious blood! Shall I suffer your memory to become a storehouse of evil, or your passions to become firebrands of iniquity? Shall I surrender my judgment to be perverted by error, or my will to be led in fetters of iniquity?

No, my Soul, you are Christ’s, and sin has no right to you. Sin shall not have dominion over us, for we are not under Law but under Grace. Christ has bought us and paid for us! God has willed us over to Christ. We belong to Him! We are His portion and His reward. Sin has no legal right, then, but it has possession—and you know that is nine points of the law. But we will dispute the nine points! We will bring the one grand point— that God, the Judge of all, has decided that the blood-bought belong to Christ! And we will fight it out even to the death against these, our sins!

We are told if we read this chapter in a spiritual sense that we must in no way suffer any kind or sort of truce with sin. I believe that many Believers—I hope they are Believers—have given up warring with a part of their sins. They are not drunkards, they are not thieves. They are not given to uncleanness of walk or language. But theirs may be a hasty temper and they do not try to subdue that. They think that that is constitutional, and they plead for it as though it must be spared! This one tribe— these Jebusites—must be spared according to their sinful talk.

But oh, Beloved, I have no more right as a Christian to suffer bad temper to dwell in me than I have to suffer the devil himself to dwell there! I know it has been said very often that Divine Grace is often grafted on a crab tree stock. So it is. But in this spiritual husbandry the graft will influence all below as well as that which is above it. What is the fruit of it? Is it a crab tree? No! The fruit does not come from the crab tree, but from the better nature! And though I am grafted upon a crab tree, yet my fruit must partake of the new nature, and I must bring forth sweet fruit.

Some people think—or perhaps they may not know it—that they are naturally troubled with pride, that they have naturally a high spirit, or a haughty temper. And when they are told of it they grow rough with whomever dares to mention it! And they think this is not a sin. But, oh, Beloved, pride in a Christian is one of the most loathsome vices! What can there be in you and in me to be proud of? Owing all we have to the gift of God—having nothing but what He gives us, and going back to our own poverty unless God keeps us—how dare we lift up our head?

God smote Nebuchadnezzar and made him go and eat grass like the ox, and his hair grew like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds claws—all because of his pride! And some of God’s dear children have been suffered to make dreadful falls of it, and all because they were lifted up and said, “I shall never be moved, my mountain stands firm.” We must beware of these sins and not make a truce or parley with them! I must not say of any one sin, “I cannot help it, and therefore I will not contend with it.”

Beloved, down with them! Down with them all! In the name of God we must destroy them, or else they will destroy us! I may say of our sins what a Scotch officer said to his soldiers when taken in an ill position. Said he, “My lads, there are the enemy! Kill them, or they will kill you!” And so must I say of all sins. There they are! Destroy them, or they will destroy you! Your only way of entering into eternal life is by being more than a conqueror through Him who has loved you. You know how it is written, “To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the hidden manna,” but to such only. “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”

And as we are not, thus, to excuse some sins and permit them to live, so, above all, we must not fall into a dispirited state of mind and suppose we never can drive sins out. I do not think we shall ever be perfect in this life, but how near to perfection a Christian may come is a question which I should not like to discuss in words, but prefer endeavoring to find out in practice. How much a Believer may be like Christ I will not venture to affirm, but certainly there have been some men upon earth of whom we might say, without exaggeration, that you might take them for an example, for their Master seemed to live again in them.

There is no need that you should always give way to pride, or sloth, or covetousness, or any other form of sin. You are able to overcome them— not in your own strength—the weakest of them would be too much for you in that. But you may overcome them through the blood of the Lamb! “This is the victory which overcomes the world, even our faith,” and our faith will be able to subdue these sins. Just as faith of old put to flight the armies of the aliens, so it can even to this day. Do not, then, dear Friends, ask, “How shall I dispossess them, for they are greater and mightier than I?” Go to the strong for strength and wait humbly upon God, and He, the mighty God of Jacob, will surely come to the rescue and you shall have to sing of victory through His Grace!

There is a word of encouragement given in the chapter to those who have a tendency to doubt in this matter. Israel was reminded that God brought them out of Egypt. He delivered them from the house of bondage. And you are reminded, dear Friends, that you are saved! Christ has done a greater work for you than remains to be accomplished in you. To bear the weight of your sins and to break the iron yoke of spiritual bondage from off your necks required that Christ should die! And that being done, it is, comparatively, but a light work to deliver you from indwelling sin. The greater work is done!

Jehovah became Man in human flesh. He lived on earth. God, the Word, was made flesh and dwelt among us, and in due time stooped, in His obedience, even to death, the death of the Cross! All your sins have been destroyed by Christ and there is no condemnation for you to dread since Christ has died. You are forgiven! The yoke is snatched from off your shoulders! You are made free by the Son, and you are free, indeed! You are in the wilderness, it is true, but you have come through the Red Sea where your sins have been drowned. Your enemies, your old sins, you shall see no more! The manna falls about your camp. The fiery, cloudy pillar leads you through the wilderness.

And since you have seen what God has done, will you be afraid as to the future? Courage, courage! He never begins without intending to finish. It shall never be said of Him, “This man began to build, but was not able to complete the structure.” Courage, courage! He has not brought you out of Egypt that you may be destroyed. What would the heathen say concerning your God, if, after all, you should fall and perish? You shall win the day! You shall have every inch of the promised land—only be strong and be very courageous—for the Lord will surely drive out your sins and take your body, soul, and spirit as a consecrated and holy possession forever.

But there is a notion among some Christians who are but little instructed, and who, knowing nothing of experience, that sanctification is an instantaneous work. There are some who think that the moment they believe in Jesus they shall never be troubled with any sin again, whereas, it is then that the battle begins! The moment sin is forgiven it ceases to be my friend and becomes my deadly foe. When the guilt of sin is gone then the power of sin becomes obnoxious and we begin to strive against it. Every now and then we hear of friends who cannot understand my teaching on this point. They say they do not feel any sort of uprising sin within themselves.

Oh, Beloved, I wish you did! For I am afraid you know nothing of the Gospel life if you do not. I will not give a penny for your religion if it has no inward conflict. Even virtuous heathens have got farther than that—for some of them have written that they felt themselves to be as two men contending or fighting—and surely Christians have got farther still, or ought to have! This, I know, be it what it may with you—I have to fight every day to get but one inch nearer to Heaven! And I feel I will be wrestling at the last moment—that I shall have a scuffle upon Jordan’s brink with my corruptions.

Remember how John Knox had it! He had fought with men—I may say he had fought with beasts at Ephesus—and yet at his last expiring moments he had the sternest struggle he had ever known with selfrighteousness. You would have thought, “Surely John Knox could not be self-righteous!” The man who had denounced all trusting in good works was yet vexed with the very same thing he had denounced. And so it will be with you. No matter how near you live to God, or how closely you follow Christ, you will have more or less of evil to contend with still. No, I must say the more holy you get, the more you will have to fight against sin. The whiter a garment becomes, the more easily is a spot seen—and the more you get like Christ the more you will detect how unlike Him you are!

A spiritual sense will be quickened so that you will discover that to be sin which you did not think to be evil. And you will often feel, when you are most progressing in Grace, you are not growing at all, or if so, certainly it seems to be downward. When I think myself most unholy, I am most holy—and when I bemoan my own sinfulness, then am I most likely to be accepted of God! It is best to think little of one’s self. But whether you do or not, take this for granted—you will have to drive out your sins little by little—they will not all be cast out at once—it will be a life’s work. And you will never have to take off your armor or sheath your sword till you go to the warrior’s bed and rest in the grave.

I now wish to call your attention specially to the verse before us. It appears that after a long conflict with Canaan, some of these old inhabitants still existed. They hid themselves in caves, and so on—but they were to be fetched out by a very singular means—hornets. These hornets were to discover them and bring them out—perhaps sting them to death, or, if not, make them come out to be slain by the children of Israel.

Three things are to be noticed, then, this morning. The first is sins which are left and saved in us—even in us who have for many years been followers of Christ. Secondly, a singular means of destroying them. And then, thirdly, a suggestive lesson for us all—teaching us to examine our own hearts for these secret sins.

I. And first, dear Friends, SINS WHICH ARE LEFT AND HIDDEN. John Bunyan very wisely describes the town of Mansoul after it had been taken by Prince Immanuel. The Prince rode to the Castle called the Heart and took possession of it and the whole city became His. But there were certain Diabolonians, followers of Diabolus, who never left the town. They could not be seen in the streets. They could not be heard in the markets. They never dared to occupy a house, but lurked about in certain old dens and caves.

Some of them got impudent enough even to hire themselves out for servants to the men of Mansoul under other names. There was Mr. Covetousness who was called Mr. Prudent Thrifty. And there was Mr. Lasciviousness, who was called Mr. Harmless Mirth. They took other names and lived there, much to the annoyance of the town of Mansoul. They skulked about in holes and corners, and only came out on dark days when they could do mischief and serve the Black Prince.

Now in all of us, however watchful we may be, though we may set Mr. Pry Well to listen at the door and he may watch, and my Lord Mayor, Mr. Understanding, is very careful to search all these out, yet there will remain much hidden sin. I think we ought always to pray to God to forgive us sins that we do not know anything about. “Your unknown agonies,” says the old Greek liturgy. And there are unknown sins for which those agonies make atonement. Perhaps the sins which you and I confess are not a tenth of what we really commit. Our eyes are not sufficiently opened to know of the heinousness of our own sin—and it is possible that if we could fully know the extent of our own sinfulness it would drive us mad!

It is possible that God, in His mercy, suffers us to be somewhat blind to the abominable accursedness of sin. He gives us enough of it to make us hate it, but not enough to drive us absolutely to despair. Our sin is exceedingly sinful. Now allow me to suggest that among the sins which lurk in us there is the old one of unbelief. You have had a very great deliverance, my dear Brothers and Sisters, and you think you have no more unbelief left in you. You do not know that old villain, Unbelief, is never to be taken by the heels, or if he is put in the stocks, he soon manages to escape.

You will have unbelief this very afternoon, if you happen to meet with any trouble, and though now you say, “I never can stagger at the promise through unbelief,” I should not wonder but what a little depression of spirits, perhaps weariness in God’s service, might make you to be as doubting as ever you were in your life! Do not harbor the pleasing delusion that your unbelief is dead. It is hidden, but it will come out again. Especially among these lurkers I must mention pride. Oh, we think, “How could I be proud? Why I have been through such an experience of my own weakness and sinfulness that I cannot be proud.” We little think that all the while we are talking we are saying about the proudest thing that we could possibly say!

I talked once, I remember, with a man who thought himself a very eminent Christian. He told me that what with affliction and experience the Lord had wiped pride completely out of him. I said, “He must have hit you very hard, Brother.” I thought, while he was talking, he was the incarnation of pride, but I did not remember that I, myself, was probably quite as bad for thinking I should not like to have talked as he did. Pride is such a cunning thing! It likes to wear the robes of a prince but it is satisfied to wear the rags of a beggar if it cannot. So long as it may get into our hearts it cares not what shape it assumes.

That detestable sin of pride—we can all condemn it in other people— and yet probably we have, each one, got a leaven of it, even in our spirits, at this very moment. You are a proud thing, my Brother. You are a proud thing, my Sister. There is still pride lurking in us all! And beside these there is also a great amount of wrath and ill temper in us. Oh, we think there is no one so good-tempered as we are—we have not betrayed ourselves into an angry word for months! Yes, but it is very easy to be goodtempered when you have it all your own way. It is a very easy thing to be amiable, and kind, and loving, and never to be angry when the wife is so kind, and the children obedient, and the servants attentive, and business prospers!

But, my dear Brothers and Sisters, how would it be if matters were to change, and they may very soon? Suppose you were irritated as Brother So-and-So is—what then? Yon know we are not to judge the man by the circumstances—we must judge him intrinsically by himself. A barrel of gunpowder is not very dangerous to sit upon or to have under one’s bed at night, or to make a pillow of. It is a very safe thing, indeed, provided that there is no fire anywhere about. It has not blown up, and yet it has been under one’s couch all the while. Ah, but if the sparks had happened to fly, as they do fly in your neighbor’s house across the road, can you say that your powder is quite different from his powder?

And I think sometimes when we think we have destroyed anger, and put down the tendency of wrath, it is only because the Canaanite has hidden himself and we cannot see him! But he is still there and may come out again one day. So is it often with our discontent and rebellion. I do not know that I am discontent—several of you can say the same. You feel happy this morning, grateful and thankful. You can sing—

*“I would not change my blest estate  
For all the earth calls good or great.”*  
Yes, but you must not be too sure that you have no discontent left in

your heart. Now suppose—and the supposition is so easy to make— suppose your best beloved should sicken and die? You can bless a giving God—could you bless a taking God? Suppose that your riches took to themselves wings, and every one of them should fly away? Could you still praise the God who is as good when He takes as when He gives? Brethren, we know not of what spirit we are. When we fancy we could run with the horsemen, it were well to remember that we have not always been able to run with the footmen! And when we fancy such-and-such a friend behaved ill in deep affliction, it were well if we remembered ourselves often, lest we also should repine—for discontent may be one of the sins lurking in our soul.

Moreover, idolatry is a sin that is often found there. You do not know that you idolize your child, and you will never know it until that child dies—but then you will find it out. You do not know that you idolize your substance. But if it were gone, or you had to give it up and were ready, like Job’s wife to say, “Curse God and die,” you would then discover that it was your golden calf. Idolatry has been the sin of all ages and all times. Those dear children of God, whose hearts should tell of Jehovah, and Jehovah alone, have need to keep careful watch lest at the same time they indulge self-confidence which is only another form of idolatry—the worship of ourselves instead of God.

Let us beware lest we indulge in self-satisfaction, and think that our righteousness is something satisfactory after all. It is a blessed thing to find idolatry out, but it will hide itself if it can. It is well to consider the question, “How is it these things hide themselves in us? Other people find them out—how is it we cannot find them?” It is certain that you can detect other men’s faults, but you cannot detect your own! The lookers-on often see more than the players, and we sometimes perceive more at a distance than when we approach near.

The fact is that partiality to ourselves blinds us to our own imperfections and makes us see the mote in our brother’s eye though there is a beam in our own! In many cases this ignorance arises from want of searching. It is not pleasant work to seek out faults—“take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines.” It is not easy work. We do not like finding out sin. Too many of us are lazy about religion—we do the work of God deceitfully, we do not search our hearts with candles and try ourselves as with crucibles as in a furnace—we are not purified seven times over, and so sin escapes for want of a hearty search to find it out.

Besides, sin is so subtle it changes its shape. If Satan cannot shoot us from above, he will do it from below. If he cannot assail us in the head, he will seek to cast us down by tripping us with the foot. Sins of every shape, form and hue come upon us, and the great probability is that in trying to kill one sin we shall fall into another. Often in aiming to attain to a virtue we have overshot the mark and gone into a vice. We have wanted to honor God and humble ourselves, and then we have grown mean in spirit. We wanted to be noble and bold, and have grown intimidating. We wanted to be loving, and we grew to be falsely charitable, tolerating sin. We wanted to be stern against sin, and have grown bitter against friends who have fallen into it. We mistake the narrow road and break the hedge either on the right hand or on the left.

It is the subtlety of sin that makes it so hard for us to find it out. Besides, Beloved, we have fallen into the bad habit of comparing and contrasting ourselves with others. We are constantly indulging in the supposition, “Oh, well, I am better than some.” We look at our fellow Christians and see their inconsistencies, and say, “Well, I do not do that.” The Pharisaic prayer is very common, even among Christians, I am afraid, “Lord, I thank You that I am not as other men.” The preacher himself, though he might preach humility to you, sometimes gets to comparing himself with other preachers, and his hearers, he doubts not, do the same.

“Oh,” you think, “I am more quick in God’s work, more earnest than some Christians. I wish they would wake up, too.” But, while we are censuring them, we are really laying a flattering unction to our own souls by supposing we are so much better and that we have cut off so much of our own sins. Oh, Beloved, take heed of comparing yourselves with others, for this is not wise!

Come to Christ and look at Him, and then your faults will be apparent. View His perfection, and in the light of that your own infirmities will soon be discovered. But if you look at your Brother’s righteousness, which is but little better than yours, and perhaps not as good, you will be apt to get proud and lifted up—and so fall into sin. I shall not, however, enlarge upon this point. There are, no doubt, in all of us, Canaanites still dwelling in the land that will be thorns in our side.

II. Now, secondly, A SINGULAR MEANS FOR THEIR DESTRUCTION— “YOUR GOD WILL SEND THE HORNET AMONG THEM.” These fellows resorted to caves and dens. God employed the very best means for their destruction. I suppose these hornets were large wasps—two or three times, perhaps, as large as a wasp—with very terrible stings. It is not an unusual historical fact to find districts depopulated by means of stinging insects. In connection with the journey of Dr. Livingstone, we can never forget that strange kind of guest which is such a pest to the cattle in any district that the moment it appeared they had either to fly before it or to die.

The hornet must have been a very terrible creature. But it is not at all extraordinary that there should have been hornets capable of driving out a nation. The hornet was a very simple means. It was no sound of trumpet, nor even the glitter of miracles—it was a simple, natural means of fetching these people out of their holes. It is well known that insects in some countries will sting one race of people and not another. Sometimes the inhabitants of a country are not at all careful about mosquitoes, or such creatures, when strangers are greatly pestered with them.

God could, therefore, bring hornets which would sting the Jebusites but not molest the Israelites, and in this way the Canaanites were driven out of their holes. Some died by the stings of hornets and others were put in the way of the sharp swords of the men of Israel, and thus they died. The spiritual analogy to this is the daily trouble which God sends to every one of us. I suppose you have all got your hornets. Some have hornets in the family. Your child may be a hornet to you—your wife, your husband, your brother, the dearest friend you have—may be a daily cross to you. And, though a dead cross is very heavy, a living cross is heavier by far.

To bury a child is a great grief, but to have that child live and sin against you is ten times worse. You may have hornets that shall follow you to your bedchamber—some of you may know what that means—so that even where you ought to find your rest and your sweetest solace, it is there that you receive your bitterest stings of trouble. The hornet will sometimes come in the shape of business. You are perplexed—you cannot prosper—one thing comes after another. You seem to be born to trouble more than other people. You have ventured on the right hand, but it was a failure. You pushed out on the left, but that was a breakdown.

Almost everybody you trust fails immediately and those you do not trust are the people you might have safely relied upon. You seem to be infested with those hornets in your business to make everything go ill with you. You have perplexity upon perplexity—nothing so serious as to be your ruin—but a deal of fretful trouble which keeps you uneasy. Others have hornets in their bodies. Some have constant headaches—aches and pains pass and shoot along the nerves of others. If you could but be rid of it, you think, how happy you would be! But you have got your hornet and that hornet is always with you.

If I tried to get through the whole list of hornets I should need all the morning, for there is a particular grief to every man. Each man has his own form of obnoxious sting which he has to feel. You will come running to your friend sometimes, and say, “Oh, I have such trouble! So-and-So has been saying such-and-such a thing of me. If I had not so many bad neighbors I should get on. This is the worst trouble a man could have.” You do not know, you do not know. The heart knows its own bitterness. There is a skeleton in every closet. Every man has a shoe that pinches more or less—and there is not a Christian on earth who has not a hornet!

But what are they for? They are sent with the same object with which God sent hornets into Canaan, namely, to drive out the Canaanites! And I shall have to show you that they do so. Your hornets drive you to prayer. Just put in the word hornet into the verse we have been singing—

“ **Hornets make the promise sweet,  
Hornets give new life to prayer,  
Hornets bring me to His feet,  
Lay me low and keep me there,”**

and you have got the drift of what these daily hornets do. You would not pray if you had not trouble! I am afraid you would grow lax, cold, indifferent—but these sting you, and you say, “I must go to my God for comfort under this pest, this nuisance.”

Why, what a blessing that is for you to be stung to your Father’s feet— blessed sting that brings you there! You would not value the promises half as much if it were not for the hornets. You turn to some precious Word of God that just suits your case, and you say, “I never saw such sweetness in that as I do now. Blessed be God for sending a passage so suitable to my condition.” The hornets take you to the promise, and seem to point you to the place where the milk and honey flow.

And how they also tend to lay you at His feet after you have been hasty in temper! After you have felt how proud you must have been, all because of the hornet that brought the pride out, you have gone to God and said, “Lord, I did not think I was such a fool. I should not have believed it. If anyone had said to me yesterday, ‘You would do so-and-so,’ I would have said, ‘Is your servant a dog that I should do such a thing?’ But this has so troubled me, bit me in a sore place, irritated me, that I could not bear it that I have done what I would not have done for all the world.”

That just shows what there was there before. You see, if sin had not been in you, it could not have come out! All the trouble in the world does not put sin in the Christian—it brings it out. And just as disease is all the better when it is fetched out to the surface, that so its power in the interior may be destroyed, so is it a blessing—a painful blessing—when the hornet comes and makes us see the evil that otherwise would have lain hidden in us. You know, my dear Friends, practically, I dare say what I mean.

The other day you were in such a heavenly frame of mind—you had had half an hour alone, or had just come home from Tabernacle and enjoyed the service, and something patted you on the back and said, “How you are grown in Divine Grace!” You did not say it in words, but you did think, “Well, I am getting on. There is something good in me after all.” When you got home, perhaps the meat was badly cooked, or there was something done the very opposite to what you had wished, and it seemed to be done on purpose to irritate you. You thought so, and without a moment’s consideration you said some very strong words—very strong, indeed!

Then something came and touched you on the other shoulder and said, “Ah, is this growing in Divine Grace?” And you felt very humbled, taken down a great many notches. And when you went upstairs to bed, if you had gone up there without that hornet, your prayer would have been a Pharisee’s prayer! But as it was, when you got there all you could say was, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” The hornet had done you a world of good! It might have fetched out a little bad temper, but for all that it had fetched out your pride and self-conceit.

The daily troubles we have are meant to drive us to God, to drive us to the promise, and also to show us where our weak points are in order that we may contend with all our might against them. I believe, my dear Friends, that the hardest-hearted, most cross-grained, and most unlovely Christians in all the world are those who never have had much trouble! And those who are the most sympathizing, loving, and Christ-like, are generally those that have the most affliction. The worst thing that can happen to any of us is to have our path made too smooth, and one of the greatest blessings that ever the Lord gave us was a cross.

“I should never have been able to see,” said one, “if I had not been blind.” And said another, “I should never have been able to run the race set before me if I had not broken my leg.” Our infirmities are channels of blessing! Our difficulties, trials, vexations, and perplexities are most sweet and blessed means of Grace to our souls. I think we ought to be very thankful to God for the hornet. Says one, “I am not.” “No trial for the present seems to be joyous but grievous. Nevertheless afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”

When you are in a sane mind, my dear Brothers and Sisters, and God the Holy Spirit really teaches you to be wise, you will go and thank God for hornets. “Lord, I bless You that You have not left me unchastised. I praise You for the cares and troubles which are so unpleasant to my flesh, by which that flesh is mortified. I thank You, Father.” You never hear a child say this, but if it were a wise child it would. “I thank You, my Father, for the rod. I thank You, O my God, that You have not let me have my own will, that You have blighted my prospects, crossed my hopes, marred my plans, cast down my expectations, taken away my joys. I thank You, O You great Liberator, for having broken the golden bars of my cage to give my spirit liberty, and for having snapped the bonds of my captivity which bound me to the earth, that I might be able to mount upwards to Yourself.” Whenever you are singing God’s praise, say, “He sent us hornets, for His mercy endures forever: let Him be blessed evermore.”

There is one point I want you to notice in the text. It would be guilt on my part to pass it without observation, and that is we are expressly told the hornets came from God. He sent them. “The Lord your God will send the hornet.” This will help you, perhaps, to bear their stings another time. God weighs your troubles in scales and measures out your afflictions, every drachma and scruple of them. And since they come, therefore, directly from a loving Father’s hand, accept them with grateful cheerfulness! And pray that the result which Divine Wisdom has ordained to flow from them may be abundantly realized in your sanctification—in being made like Christ.

III. And now I have to close by observing that we have here A VERY SUGGESTIVE LESSON TO OURSELVES, a lesson which we have already anticipated, but let us repeat it. It is this. What is my particular besetting sin? Have I been careful in self-examination? Have I issued a constant search warrant against the subtle forms of evil? If not, I must expect to have the hornet. God never punishes His children for sin, but He chastens them for it paternally. You may often discover what your sin is by the chastisement, for you can see the face of the sin in the chastisement—the one is so like the other.

Dear Friend, what is your particular trouble today—what hornet stings you? Go to God with Job’s request, “Show me why You contend with me.” If the consolations of God are small with you, it is because there is some secret sin in you. Look at the trouble you have today and see if you cannot discover the sin. A disobedient child—is it possible that you also are living in some act of disobedience to your heavenly Father? Is it a servant who annoys you? Is it possible that you also are an ill servant of the King, idle and indifferent to His command?

Is it a loss in business? May it not be possible that you are not attending to God’s business, and therefore His Church is a loser and therefore He makes you a loser in your own business? Is it sickness in the flesh? May there not be some spiritual sickness there which is necessary to keep in check and to subdue? Has someone else treated you haughtily? May you not also be haughty? Has another slandered you and are you smarting under it? Have you ever spoken against the children of God? May you not have an itching tongue, too, and God is making you feel the smart of it so that you may mind how you remove the bridle from the unruly tongue?

Has someone undervalued your labor and spoken depreciatingly of your motives? May you not also have had hard thoughts concerning some of your Brethren in Christian labors? Do you feel, just now, under great depression of spirit? Is it not possible that you have neglected to enter into fellowship with Christ in His suffering, and therefore He is bringing you down into it by force? I know not how it may be with you, Beloved, but this I know—I have not searched my own soul as I would desire to do in the future. I would wish to find out everything that is within me that is evil—that it may be dragged forth and executed at once!

It is stern work. It is work that never could be done if it were not for that precious assurance that God is with us. God, the mighty God of Jacob, will have us to be His people. He has prepared a Heaven for a perfect people and He will make us perfect that He may neither lose us, nor the place He has prepared for us. He has sworn by Himself He will never leave you. He will, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm drive out your lusts and corruptions till you shall be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect!

Come, then, you men of war, take to your harness and buckle on your armor, and nerve your souls for combat! “You have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin.” “Consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest you be weary” in yourselves. And now—from now on, and forever—fight the good fight for the crown that fades not away.

I have been speaking to saved ones, and to saved ones, only. But you that are unsaved will have the hornets, too. Only those hornets will be of no use to you! They will sting you away from God, rather than to Him. Your troubles will only make you dislike and hate the Most High the more. Oh that His Grace would visit you and change your heart! And then, maybe your trials might be sanctified to fetch you to your Father’s face. May it be so, and His shall be the glory evermore. Amen.

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MOSES’ DYING CHARGE TO ISRAEL  
NO. 2345

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, JANUARY 28, 1894. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JUNE 17, 1888.

**“And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you, and to prove you, to know what was in your  
heart, whether you would keep His commandments, or no.” Deuteronomy 8:2.**

These are the words of Moses, the man of God, when he was near his departure. They make up a part of what has been called his “swan song.” He did not often sing—he did give us at least one song, but when he came near the time he was to die, like the fabled swan, he began to sing—and most sweetly did he sing!

Notice the intense earnestness of this address. It is, every way, that of a saint who has spent his life in loving anxiety for the people committed to his charge. And the ruling passion is very strong upon him to the last. He knows that he is about to depart from them, for he has had his marching orders—“Get you up into the top of Pisgah and lift up your eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with your eyes, for you shall not go over this Jordan.” Knowing that he is about to leave the people, he is very anxious about their welfare and he addresses them with this deep earnestness.

Note, also, how practical his earnestness is—it is concerning their lives that he speaks to the children of Israel. He knows how liable they are to fall into the superstitions of their neighbors, how likely they, who made a golden calf and angered the Lord and His servant, will be to turn, again, unto graven images and strange gods. And so he beseeches them, as with his dying breath, to observe all the Commandments of the Lord and to cleave closely unto Jehovah, their God.

Then, like an old man, again, for this is a point that would be sure to come out in a venerable, soon-departing saint, he talks about the past. He has been preserved by his God for 120 years and, during the last 40 of those years, he has been king in Jeshurun and the Lord has made him ride upon the high places of the earth in the wonders that he has worked by His hand. And he cannot help reminding the people that the marvels God has accomplished must not be dead things to them, not things to be laid by like mummies wrapped up in sere clothes—and hidden away in a sarcophagus—but they must be living mercies to them, still, since they came from a living God and they must continue to produce in them living gratitude and living service. I like this thought—it seems to teach us how, as we mature in life, we shall become more and more anxious about practical holiness and we shall, more and more, draw the argument for it from our own experience of the goodness of God. With the Psalmist, we shall cry, “Bind the sacrifice with cords, even with cords to the horns of the altar,” and what cords can be stronger than the cords of love and the bands of a man, even gratitude at the remembrance of all the loving kindness of the Lord? I cannot imagine that the iron chains of necessity, or the steel bonds of fear can ever hold men so firmly to duty and virtue as these silken bands of thankfulness at the recollection of all the Lord’s Grace and mercy to us. May we feel these love-bands about us as we meditate upon these words of Israel’s great leader!

I invite you, then, first of all, to consider the leading of God which is to be remembered. And, secondly, the objectives of that leading, which also are well worthy of remembrance.

I. First, then, consider THE LEADING TO BE REMEMBERED—“You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God led you these forty years in the wilderness.” Some of you can knock out that word, “forty,” and put in, “fifty,” or, “sixty.” I know some here who can say, “seventy!” I can even see some who can put in, “eighty,” years, not of life, merely, but of Divine leading, for there are some, here, who have been led of the Lord, in their own experience, no less a space than that longest period I have named!

The first thing that we note, here, about the children of Israel is that they had a God. And the first thing for us to remember, tonight, is that God ever had anything at all to do with us, that we ever had a God. “You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God led you.” We have not been led by a stranger, but by our own God! And we have not been led by a human shepherd, but the Lord has been our Shepherd! Though He counts the number of the stars and calls them all by their names, and leads the hosts of Heaven in their marches through illimitable space, yet has He not disdained to lead us! Unhappy men, who have no God! Saints are poor, sometimes, but they do not know the poverty of the man who has no God! No gold, no silver—this is an inconvenience, but no God—this is death in the midst of life! Glory be to God, there are some of His people who, though they have barely sufficient food and raiment, and though scant is the portion of their lot below, yet they have a God—and he who has a God is rich to all the intents of bliss! There are infinite mines of unfailing wealth just beneath his feet—he has but to dig a little to find all that he needs in God. It is a blessed thing to have God when you have all things beside, and to find God in all things, but it is an equally blessed thing to have God when you have nothing else and to find all things in God! There is but a slight change in the order of the words and I think there is not much change in the real sense as to true happiness.

Oh, Brothers and Sisters, what a wonder it is that God should have looked upon you and me with eyes of love! Well, I can leave off wondering that He should have loved some of you, but I never shall leave off being astonished that He should ever have regarded me with complacency and love! Nobody in this place sings with greater emphasis than I do, that verse of which many of you are also so fond—

*“What was there in you that could merit esteem, Or give the Creator delight?  
‘Twas even so, Father,’ you always must sing, ‘Because it seemed good in Your sight.’”*

The Sovereign Mercy of God, born in His own bosom, nurtured from His own heart, could only have induced Him to look with love upon us!

But what love it has been! No commonplace love, no ordinary affection. Mothers have loved us, fathers have loved us. We know the love of a fond spouse and the love of children and of friends, but these are only like twinkling glowworm sparks, while the love of God seems, to us, to be the very sun, blazing in full glory in the heavens! He loved us—to what shall I compare His love? He loved us as He loved His only-begotten Son. No, He seemed to love us even more than that, for He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. He loved us better than He loved Himself, for, in order that we might live, He put Himself to that great loss of tearing His Only-Begotten from the place of His everlasting abode in peace. Oh, wonder of wonders, that God should ever have loved us so! “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This glorious Truth of God is enough to make us all spring to our feet, feeling that we are in the Presence of the miraculous and the Divine, as, indeed, we are!

More than that, if more can be, we have to tell the wonderful story of the love of God, the Son, and of the love of the Spirit, which made the love of the Father and the love of the Son to be effectual, for the Spirit came to us and turned our hearts into the way of faith and we embraced the Son, whom, in our blindness we had despised. Oh, let us tell, tonight, tell to our own hearts if we cannot speak it out, the wondrous love which has given us a God at all, that Father, Son and Holy Spirit should have such condescending dealings with us!

In the next place, Moses not only said that Israel had a God, but that God had led them. I am not going to preach, to-night—I am only going to try to get you to think of how God has led you—and you will do that all the better if I keep gratefully thinking in my own mind of how He has led me. Oh, how He led some of us—

*“When Satan’s blind slaves,*

*We sported with death”!*  
We would have damned ourselves before conversion if we had been left to ourselves, but God, every now and then, held back our rebellious hand and checked our wayward will. “I girded you,” said He to Cyrus, “though you have not known Me.” And so it was with us, full often, the Lord girded us—what if I say that He put the bit in our mouth when we were like leviathan and a hook in our jaws when we were like a crocodile and wildly refused to know anything that could tame us? He held us back from evil and led us in the right way and oh, the sweet way in which He led us to the Cross! He drove us and he drew us/ With the Law He sternly lashed us. With His love He deftly drew us. And oh, the Glory of the Light when He brought us to it! Yet we shut our eyes and rushed back into the darkness!

But He would have us see the Light of God, so we were sweetly forced to come and the scales dropped off our eyes and we saw that sight, the like of which we have often seen since then, but the like of which we never imagined in our blind estate! Oh, to be led to Jesus! If there were nothing else for us but just to be led to lie at His feet and weep ourselves away in penitence, and get back, again, to joyous communion with Him by a believing confidence—If there were no other leading than that, we might well ask for a well-tuned harp and never wish to rest our fingers, but continue forever to smite its strings in sweetest minstrelsy of praise!

Many days have passed since then, Beloved, with some of us, since those early days when we hoped for salvation, when we grasped the promises, when we rested on the finished work of Christ, when we had our first trembling joy in believing—and all the way we have been led so singularly. I could not tell you how I came to be where I now am except by saying, “He leads me! He leads me!” Could you tell how you came to be where you are? Was there not a time when, if anyone had said you would be what you are, and where you are, you would have despised him, for you hated the thought of it? And was there not another time when you would have laughed outright and said, “It can never be. What? I have a good hope of Heaven? I who now stand trembling on the brink of the abyss? What? Be numbered with the children, when it will be a marvel of mercy if I am ever allowed to eat a crumb with the dogs under the table?” Yet it is so and the Lord has led you. He has led some of us where the track was as narrow as a razor’s edge. He has led us where black darkness was on either side and with half a slip we would have been in Hell! He has led us where we could not see our way and where, if we could have seen it, we might have swooned for very fright, yet we are safe. He has led us through the furnace and not so much as a smell of fire has been upon us! He has led us when we have been, like Jonah, in the depths of the sea in very despair! And yet we are safe on dry land. Glory be to the Divine Leader who has led us by a right way, bringing us by a way that we knew not, thus far en route for the City that has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God! We praise Him tonight for having led us thus far.

But that is not all. Moses bade the Israelites remember that they had a God and that He had led them. But he also wanted the people to remember that their way had been through the wilderness—“You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God led you these forty years in the wilderness.” So far as any ministry to our spiritual needs is concerned, this world is a wilderness. There is every temporal comfort provided for us and yet, with all those temporal comforts, there is such a thing as having a starved soul. What is there in this world that can minister to the requirements of a spiritual man? Nothing! As well might Israel in the wilderness have devoured the stones of the desert as any man live upon what this world can furnish him of spiritual meat. It is a wilderness and there are scorpions in it, perhaps one of them has bitten you today. And there are fiery serpents—you may meet a lot of them tomorrow. And there are Amalekites that seek to destroy the hindmost of us!

And there are all kinds of other evils and mischiefs in this wilderness. Do not let us imagine that we have got to Heaven just yet! I think I have known some Brothers and Sisters who have thought that they were almost there. They have taken off their winterproofs and overcoats, and laid them by, thinking they would never need them again. Ah, my good mariner, you will need that oilskin suit yet! There may be many a rough night for you, yet, before you cross the narrow sea! We have not yet come unto the fair havens of eternal peace. You sing, sometimes—

*“My willing soul would stay*

*In such a frame as this.”*  
Well, perhaps you would like to stay there, but you are not to do so. “Go forward,” says the Lord, and in going forward, you may have to endure many trials of which you have never dreamed—for it is still a wilderness through which you are journeying.

Now, I want you to remember that all these years God has led you through the wilderness and, still being in the wilderness, this fact ought to comfort you. If you should be in the wilderness for another 20 years, the God who has led you 40 years can lead you another twenty. The God who has led some of you dear Sisters here present 80 years—can you not trust Him for the other four, five, 10, or whatever number it may be? You do not expect to reach a thousand years old, I am sure, but if you did, the God who kept Methuselah could also keep you! And if Enoch could walk with God for 300 years at a stretch, so may we, with God leading us! If we live as many years as there are days in the year, God has said, “As your days, so shall your strength be,” and He will bring us safely through. Let us not forget that.

Then we have to remember something more about the children of Israel and that I have already anticipated, namely, that God had led them forty years in the wilderness. It is often the length of an experience that is the trial of it. “In the wilderness”—that is bad enough, but, “forty years in the wilderness”—that is the test of endurance! Plenty of people seem to start rightly but they have no staying power. With all the foes we have to face in the wilderness, who is able to endure? Who? Why, the man who has God with him and God within him! He will endure to the end and, “He that endures to the end shall be saved.” But here is that which makes a long life so trying—that all the while you are in the wilderness. Yet here is, also, your consolation, for, long as your life has been, yet the Lord has led you through that very respectable period of 40 years. Surely you cannot, now, doubt as to His ability to lead you and keep you even to the end! Remember those past 40 years—do not forget them, I pray you. If you have an old friend whom you have tried and tested for a long period, if you are a wise man, you will grapple him to your soul with hooks of steel and, as to your God in Heaven, who has been with you all these years and kept you from childhood, even until now, you will say, “I cannot doubt Him! I cannot look elsewhere for a leader. I remember the God who has led me through the wilderness these 40 years.”

Again, according to the text, all the way that God had led His people was worth remembering—“And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God led you.” “All the way.” It is always a pity to look at things only in parts. If we would see them aright, we must examine them as a whole. Sometimes it is our lack of dealing with things as a whole that leads us to make mistakes. “All things work together for good to them that love God.” Not this thing, that thing and the other thing, by themselves, but all things put together work together for good. Now, remember, “all the way” whereby the Lord has led you. I know you remember the day when God led you by that grave, where half your heart and all your joy seemed buried—you went to see it, the other day, in the cemetery. Now you remember that part of the way—but the exhortation is to remember, “all the way,” whereby the Lord has led you. Put this and that together, and you will have something more to remember than that one grave and that dark day when they said that everything was lost—when your household goods were sold and you were left penniless. Yes, and the Lord led you through even that trial! You must remember all the way He led you—how He helped you and brought you through that dark day into the light again— “Remember all the way which the Lord your God led you.”

I would desire, tonight, to think of all the loving kindness of God. I think it is worth while to remember those rough bits of road, for we are to remember all the way, but remember, also, those beautiful walks by the river of the Water of Life and those happy climbs to the top of Mount Clear. Yes, you may remember Giant Despair’s Castle and By-Path Meadow, to sorrow over them, but then God did not lead you there! You had better remember the Interpreter’s House and the Delectable Mountains where He did lead you, for where He led you all was well! As to where you went of your own accord, the only leadings that you can remember with joy were those in which He led you back with weeping and supplication, till you were almost glad to kiss every flint that cut your feet, so long as you really felt that you were back in the old road, again, for there you loved to be, and anywhere else you knew you were in great danger! Let us sing of mercy and of judgement! Unto You, O God, will we sing with mingled strains! We will run up the scale to the highest notes of a joyous Hallelujah and every note shall be for You! But we will go down to the deepest tones as well, and still, every note shall be unto You, O God! “Remember all the way which the Lord your God led you these forty years in the wilderness.”

Observe this one thing more, dear Friends, that the children of Israel were commanded to remember the Lord’s leading, and I do not, this evening, merely invite you to remember all the way that the Lord has led you, but, as my text puts it as a command, so I give it to you as a command from God! There is a, “you shall” to it and, therefore, I leave my text in your hands, not to be accepted or rejected at your option, but as a positive command binding upon every man, woman, or child who has been led of God. If you are, indeed, the sheep of His pasture, this command comes to you with all the force of Divine authority!

II. Now, in the second place, I ask you to think upon THE OBJECTIVES OF THAT LEADING THROUGH THE WILDERNESS—“To humble you, and to prove you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His Commandments, or no.”

God has led you and the time—the 40 years. The place—the wilderness. And the method of His leading have all co-operated to erect two purposes.  
First of all, to humble you. In the review of your life of mercy, do you not feel humbled? I think that there is everything about it to make us all feel humble.  
The first thing to humble us is the remembrance that we have, all along, been receiving gifts. That is always a humbling experience. We like better to give than to receive. There is great pride about giving, but all this while, as far as God is concerned, we have been what one called, “gentlemen commoners upon the Lord’s bounty.” We have been pensioners at His gate, we have been beggars at His door and the only garments that we could put on and call our own are the garments of a beggar. We have been allowed to beg and we have always had alms given to us according to our faith. That ought to humble us. We have not earned a penny, but have been always living on charity. We have been supported on Divine alms all this while.  
I will tell you what often humbles me. If I attempt any work for God and I do not succeed at it, I am disappointed, but I make up my mind to try again. But if I succeed, then do I not begin to boast? Certainly not! Have you ever noticed what Peter did when he went fishing and got his boat full? The boat began to go down as soon as it was loaded with fish—and so did Peter till he went down so low that he cried out to Jesus, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!” He felt that he was not worthy to have Christ in the same boat with him! The more God blesses you, if you are a man of God, the humbler you will be. It is His mercies, His favors, His loving kindnesses that will tend to humble you, and make you say with Jacob, “I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which You have shown unto Your servant.” God humbles some of His people with favor and love. Others, who may not be humbled that way, have to be brought low in another manner.  
Now, in looking back, do not your prayers humble you? Is there one prayer you have prayed of which you dare to be proud? Do not your sweetest communings with God humble you? In hearing of Him by the hearing of the ear, you may not be humbled, but when your eyes see Him, you lie low, with Job, and abhor yourself and repent in dust and ashes. Are you not humbled at the recollection of what you have not done, your sins of omission? How many they have been! Are you not humbled at the thought of the many other people’s sins, as well as your own, that are laid to your charge—sins that grew out of your example, or that were not rebuked as they ought to have been—so that you became, by your negligence, a partaker in them? Ah, dear Sirs, if we have anything of which we think we could glory for a moment, it must be because we have forgotten all those 40 years in the wilderness, for there is a crowd of memories that will come before the mind of any thoughtful man to humble him!  
The point that humbles one most is to think that we should need all this humbling, that God should have to put us in a wilderness for 40 years to humble us! What proud wretches we must be—pride must be ingrained in us if we need all this discipline to get it out! The children of Israel were proud and when I mention the ways in which they manifested their pride, I think that I shall only be holding the mirror up to ourselves. They were proud because they murmured. As soon as they began to be a little thirsty or hungry, they complained—and what was that murmuring but a proof of their pride? “I am such a very great person that I ought not to suffer hunger! I am such an important individual that I ought not to endure thirst!” That was part of the Israelites’ pride. And then they began to doubt God. They had scarcely heard the last rattle of the chariots of the Egyptians when they said to Moses, “Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness?” They pretended that they knew better than God! And unbelief is only a kind of veiled pride in which we begin to set up our own judgment against the wisdom of God. They were also very proud because they were so hot and fiery—and passionate and eager. Moses had only been gone from them 40 days when they said to Aaron, “Up, make us gods which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him.” So they must have a god of their own making, a molten calf, to take the place of Jehovah who had delivered them from the hand of Pharaoh! If God waited, they could not wait—not they! All this was the effect of pride.  
Now, do you not find murmuring, unbelief and a wicked impetuosity still clinging to you? Well then, that is what God is trying to get out of you. All the experience of the 40 years in the wilderness has been meant to humble us and if it does not humble us, what is to become of us? If our experience of God’s love and of our own frailty does not lay us in the dust, what must we be? O God, by Your blessed Spirit, cause all these experiences to be effectual that we may be really humble before You! Yet I am afraid, that, if the Lord does not work another miracle, we shall still get more proud, for we are very apt, as we grow in years, to think, “Well now, I am an experienced person. I shall not fall like those silly boys.” The man who talks like that is the very man who does fall! I have often had to tell you that, in Scripture, you have scarcely an instance of a young Believer falling into sin, but nearly all the cases of backsliding recorded are those of old men and, “old fools are the worst fools.” We who are getting on in years and have had a long experience are just the kind of stone that the devil likes to carve into monuments of our own folly! Do not, therefore, think that because any of you know more than you did, and are walking nearer to God than you used to, there is anything for you to glory in! No, the distinct tendency of all this should be, by Divine Grace, to make us more cautious, more timorous, more trembling, more fearful of ourselves and, at the same time, more confident in God, more humble and, therefore, more believing, for I think that until self-confidence is emptied out of us, there is no room for confidence in God. Pride is the enemy of faith and humility is the brother of true assurance. God bless, then, all our wilderness experience to our humbling!  
The second objective of the Lord’s leading appears to be, according to our text, to prove us. Does not the Lord know us? Yes, He does, but He still wants to know us, in another sense, by actual tests. God has given us these 40 years in the wilderness on purpose to test us. Will Richardson, a friend of mine, an old farm laborer in Essex, said to me, once, “Do you know, Sir, all through the winter I am thinking that when the hay-time comes, I will earn a good lump of money at hay-making. I am thinking about how well I will use my scythe and make a long day’s work. And then I think I will reap many an acre when it gets to harvest-time. But,” he added, “I have not been in the field above half-an-hour before my poor old back aches and I begin to find that Will cannot do much, now that he is getting on to eighty-six.” He said, “It is wonderful what strength I have when there is not any grass to cut and when there is no corn to get in.” So is it with many of us—we have a lot of faith till the trouble comes—and God, therefore, leads us, again, into the wilderness, and leaves us there, just to prove us and to show us that we are not the rich people, the great people and the believing people that we fancied we were! Thus the Lord tests us and, in the testing, 99 parts out of a hundred evaporate, perhaps 999 parts out of a thousand vanish away, and we have to bless God if there is even a thousandth part left of what we thought we had!  
Well, Brothers and Sisters, beside this testing of our faith, and our love, and our graces, of which I have not time to speak, the Lord also leads us through the wilderness in order to point out to us something of the mischief that lurks within our nature. We have no idea what bad folk we are. I do not think there are any men or women here who have the slightest idea of what evil they may be capable of if they are only put under certain conditions and the Grace of God is taken away from them! Blasphemies, murders and foul lusts still lurk within that old mind of the flesh that abides even in the nature of the regenerate! And if those vile dogs once get loose, oh, Sirs, they will bite like the dog of the most unrenewed man! Every now and then, even we who are God’s children find out what we can do, what we can say, and what we can feel. Oh, I wish we would believe in the sanctifying power of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit—and have no confidence in self at all—but cry for its mortification, its death and its burial with Christ, for that is the only thing to be done with it! While there is any life in the old flesh, the flesh is still flesh and none of us can tell what evil it will work if it once gets the opportunity! God leads us through the wilderness that we may discover this.  
And, once more, I’m sure that the Lord also leads us through the wilderness as He led Israel, that He may see whether we really will keep His Commandments, or not. Yes, you have behaved well as an apprentice, so the Lord lets you become a journeyman. You have done well as a journeyman, but yet you may fail when you come to be a master. There was a young man who attended this House of Prayer regularly. He was much persecuted by his father and mother, but all the while he seemed wonderfully earnest. His parents are dead and he is his own master and the possessor of a good deal of wealth but, alas, I do not think he ever goes to the House of God, now, or has any care about it. I have often noticed that persons, downtrodden and oppressed, will hold on to Christ—but when they get their liberty, they will run away from Him! It is an amazing thing, but it is true.  
Some seem to change their religion with their coats. When their coat is half-worn out, they do not mind mixing up with all classes of people that worship God. But when they wear respectable broadcloth and especially when Her Ladyship puts on satin, then they want to go somewhere else. Now, the Lord leads people about, up high and down low, to see whether they will keep His Commandments, for that religion that will not stand the test of all weathers is worth nothing! If we do not so love God that whether He puts a hedge about us, or whether He permits Satan to break through the hedge and take away all that we have—if we do not still cling to Him, fair or foul—we do not love Him at all! And to separate between the precious and the vile is often the reason of the working of the hand of the God of Providence towards professors of religion. O God, help us to know ourselves and to know You—and make us right towards You!  
I have not spoken much directly to unconverted people, tonight, yet my subject has all been for them as well as for the Lord’s people. I should like them to look back over the years in which they have lived without God, yet God has not left them, altogether, and He has, tonight, brought them into this Tabernacle where there sounds forth a silver trumpet of which this is the note, “Turn unto Me and live! Whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ has everlasting life! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. 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.” May you, tonight, as you take a review of your past life, be moved to feel, “Surely, God must mean to bless me, or He would not have been so good to me!”  
I was speaking with an officer who rode in the charge at Balaclava, one of the very few who came out alive, and, though I had not seen him before, I could not help putting my hand on his shoulder and saying to him, “Surely, the rest of your life, so strangely spared, must be dedicated to God.” It may be that you have been in a shipwreck and that you barely escaped. Or you were in a terrible collision on the railway. Possibly you have had typhoid fever. It may be that you were laid low the last time the cholera was raging here, or you have been kicked by a horse, or you have escaped from all sorts of tragedies—yet here you are. Should not the life which has been so specially spared be dedicated to God? We read of John Bunyan, that in his godless days he was foolhardy to the last degree, and once, when a serpent came in his way, he took it up and plucked out the poison gland from it. It was a wonder that he was not stung, but he was not—and the reason was that God meant him to write The Pilgrim’s Progress—and he could not die till he had done that.  
And I believe that the Lord has some design of love towards some of you who are here, tonight. Go and seek His face and cry to Him for mercy and He will grant it to you tonight! We prayed that all who came in here might be saved. I trust they will be. I believe they will be. What a joyous thing it would be for all of us to be bound for Glory! Let us begin to praise the Lord’s name that all of us are to go to Heaven in answer to that prayer! Well, as you are going there, you had better begin to learn something about it and get ready for it—and I invite you to do so. Let us begin the music of Heaven by singing this one verse—  
*“All hail the power of Jesus’ name,  
Let angels prostrate fall!  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown Him Lord of all.”*

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 139:1-18.**

Verse 1. O LORD, You have searched me, and known me. “You have explored me, as men dig in mines and make subterranean excavations. You have searched into my secret parts and known me.”

2. You knew my sitting down and my raising up. “My simplest acts, those which I scarcely premeditated.”  
2. You understand my thoughts afar off. “Before I think it, when I think it, and when I forget it, You understand my every thought.”  
3. You compass my path and my lying down. “Making a ring around me, so that I am entirely under Your observation. My roving and my resting are both known to You.”  
3. And are acquainted with all my ways. “My habits, and the exceptions from my habits, are all known to You.”  
4. For there is not a word on my tongue, but, You, O LORD, You knew it altogether. “When it is on my tongue, and not spoken, like a seed sown, hidden away, not yet sprouted, You, O Jehovah, knew it altogether!”  
5. You have beset me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. “I am like a prisoner, with guards before me and behind me, and the officer’s hand upon my shoulder all the while. You have arrested me, O Lord. I can never get away from You.”  
6. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain up to it. “I believe it, but I cannot understand it; even my imagination cannot picture it to me.”  
7. Where shall I go from Your Spirit? “If I want to do so. If I desire to avoid You, where can I go to escape from Your Omnipresent Spirit?”  
7, 8. Or where shall I flee from Your Presence? I ascend up into Heaven, You are there. The true glory of that bright world.  
8. If I make my bed in Hell, behold, You are there. “The terror of that place of woe, in the land of death-shadow and darkness, You are living, whoever else is dead. If I make my abode in Hades, in Hell, You are there.”  
9, 10. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Your hand lead me. “If the breath of the morning breeze should bear me far away across the pathless sea, You are there before me. If I ride upon a flash of light, You are swifter than the sunbeam—even there shall Your hand lead me.” The lone missionary in the furthest parts of the earth is led by God. When he knows not his way, God leads him, and when he has no companion to cheer him, God’s hands upholds him. What a comfort to any of you who have to journey far away from your kindred! You cannot be alone, for God is there! Be of good comfort and go as bravely as if you walked the crowded streets of this great city!  
10-12. And Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darknesses cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yes, the darkness hides not from You, but the night shines as the day: the darkness and the light are both right to You. It is impossible to conceive that God should need the light in order to see. He can see as well in the midnight shades as in the blaze of noon. Let no man think that he may sin in secret because he is not seen of the eyes of man—God’s eyes are on him in the dark as much as in the light.  
13, 14. For You have possessed my reins: You have covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Your works; and that my soul knows right well. He was no Agnostic, he never dreamed of being a know-nothing.  
15-17. My substance was not hid from You, when I was made in secret, and curiously worked in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in Your book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious, also, are Your thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! How sweet to be thought of by God! How charming and how cheering to be the perpetual object of the Lord’s thoughts! The Psalmist does not tell us how precious are God’s thoughts, but he sets a note of admiration to them—“How precious, also, are Your thoughts unto me, O God!” He does not try to calculate the total of their value, but he says, “How great is the sum of them!”  
18. If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with You. “You have thought of me when I was asleep— and when I wake, I think of You.” Happy living, happy dying, to feel that, if we never wake again on earth, we shall wake up with God! How precious it is to think that when good and useful men fall asleep, when they awake, they are forever with the Lord! Our turn will come soon, my Brothers and Sisters. May it be our portion to die in harness and to be taken away while yet we have the Light of God’s sustenance resting upon our work!

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—214, 139 (SONG I), 1035. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2577 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

LIVING ON THE WORD  
NO. 2577

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JULY 3, 1898.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 15, 1883.

**“Man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD does man live.”  
Deuteronomy 8:3.**

THE main thing for every one of us is life. What would it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own life? Of what use would riches be if life were gone? What is the value of broad acres to a dead man, or the applause of nations to one who lies in his sepulcher? The first thing, therefore, that a man is to look to, is life. There are some persons who take this Truth of God in a wrong sense and so make mischief of it. They say, “We must live,” whereas, in the sense in which they mean it, there is no such necessity at all! That we must continue to live here is not at all clear—it were better far for us to die than to live by sinning. Martyrs have preferred to suffer most fearful deaths rather than, even by a word, to bring disgrace upon the name of Christ. And every true Christian would prefer immediate death rather than dishonor his great Lord. and Master.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, according to our common notion, if we must live, we must eat. We must eat bread which is the staff of life and, sometimes, when bread is scarce and hunger sets up its sharp pangs, men have been driven to put forth their hand unto iniquity to provide themselves with necessary food. You remember how our Divine Lord, who is our perfect Exemplar in all things, acted when He was in this situation? When He had fasted in the wilderness 40 days and 40 nights, He hungered and then the Evil One came to Him and said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones be turned into bread.” This was, in effect, saying, “Leave off trusting in Your Heavenly Father. He has evidently deserted You—He has left You in the wilderness among the wild beasts and though He feeds them, He has not fed You! He has left You to starve—therefore, help Yourself—exercise Your own power! Though You have put it under God’s keeping and, being here on earth, You have become Your Father’s Servant, yet steal a little of Your service from Your Father and use it on Your own behalf. Take some of that power which You have devoted to His great work and employ it for Your own comfort. Leave off trusting in Your Father—command these stones to be made bread.” At once this text flashed forth, as the Master drew it out, like a sword from its scabbard—“It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” It was only by the use of this “sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God,” that the arch-enemy was driven off from Christ! And I want to use that weapon now. I may say of it what David said of the sword of Goliath, “There is none like that; give it me.” That sword, with which Christ won the victory, is the best one for His servants to employ!

This answer of our Lord to the tempter teaches us that the sustenance of our life, although naturally and according to the ordinary appearance of things depends upon bread, yet really depends upon God! It is God who gives the bread the power to nourish the man. To me, it seems a great mystery that bread, or any other kind of food, should do this. I can understand how, being matter in a certain form, it tends to build up the material structure of the body, albeit that the process is a very amazing one by which bread turns into flesh, blood, bone, muscle, hair and all sorts of things, by a perpetual working of the Power of God. But it is more remarkable, still, that this material should seem, at any rate, to some extent, to nourish man’s heart, so that the very soul and the living principle within him should be dependent upon its being sustained by the food of the body! Can any of us tell how it is that the inner spirit sets in motion the muscles of the hand and the nerves that communicate with the brain? How is it that the impalpable spirit—a thing which you cannot see or hear, which is not, itself, at all material—yet possesses powers by which it controls the materialism of this outward body? And how is it that the material substance in bread somehow works to the keeping of our spirit in connection with this flesh and blood? I cannot explain this mystery, but I believe it to be a continual miracle worked by God. I am frequently told that miracles have ceased. It seems to me that miracles are the rule of God’s working and that, everywhere, things of marvel and of wonder are to be perceived if we will only look below the outward appearance! Dig for a while beneath the mere surface and we shall see—

*“A world of wonders: I can say no less.”*

According to our text, we are called upon to observe that the power which keeps us alive is not in the bread, itself, but in God, who chooses to make use of the bread as His agent in nourishing our frame. I do not infer from this Truth of God that, therefore, I ought never to eat, but to live by faith because God can make me live without bread. Some people seem to me to be very unwise when they infer that because Goal can heal me, therefore I am never to take fit and proper medicine for a disease because I am to trust in God. I do trust in God, but I trust in God in God’s own way—and His way of procedure is this—if I wish to satisfy hunger, I must ordinarily eat bread. If I wish to be cured of any malady, I must take the remedy He has provided. That is His general rule of working, but still, it would be an equally grievous error and would show another form of folly if we were to say that it is the bread or the medicine that does the work! It is the bread that feeds, it is the medicine that heals—but it is God who works by these means, or, if He pleases—who works without them! If it were necessary that His child should live and He did not choose to put ravens into commission to bring him bread and meat, or if He did not command a widow to sustain His servant, yet He could support him without any means, for, “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” When the Lord speaks and bids him live, he lives! God spoke the world into existence— His Word still keeps the whole fabric of the universe upon its pillars and, surely, that Word is able to sustain our soul in life even without the use of outward means, or by means as long as God pleases.

That, I think, is the meaning of the text. God took His people into the wilderness where there was no sowing, no reaping, no making bread— and they seemed as if they must be famished there. But, then, God made the manna drop from Heaven, to show that if not by one means, yet by another, He could sustain them. He took them where there were no rippling brooks or gentle purling streams of water, but His servant struck the flinty rock and the water came forth to show that God could give men drink, not only from the fountains of the deep, below, or by rain from the clouds above, but from the solid rocks if He so pleased! God can give you bread to eat, my Friend. Though not perhaps in the way you hope, it may come in a fashion of which you have never even dreamed! I have read of one who was condemned to be starved to death and, as the judge pronounced the sentence, he said to him, “And what can your God do for you, now?” The man replied, “My God can do this for me—if He pleases, He can feed me from your table.” And so it happened, though the judge never knew it, for his own wife sent food to the poor man and kept him alive until, at last, he regained his liberty! God has a way of using most unlikely instruments to effect His purpose. He can, if He pleases, make the waters stand upright as a heap until the chosen nation has passed through the midst of the sea. Or He can permit the fire to blaze around His people and yet keep them from being burned, as Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego came forth unharmed from Nebuchadnezzar’s burning fiery furnace—and not even the smell of fire had passed upon them!

I now come to the more spiritual meaning of the text and I pray God to make it to be rich food for your souls. I ask you to notice, first, the Word. “Every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.” Secondly, consider the use we are to make of the Word. We are to live upon it! And then, thirdly, note the adaptation of that Word to our use—every word of it, for, according to the text, we do not live upon some words that come out of God’s mouth, “but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord does man live.”

I. First, then, let us think a little about THE WORD OF THE LORD. What do we mean by the expression, “the Word of God”? God deigns to use figures of speech such as we can understand, for we are like little children who have to learn by pictures. Now, with regard to a man, his word is often the expression of his wish. He desires such-and-such a thing to be done and he says to his servant, “Do this,” or to another, “Come here,” or, “Go there.” His word is the expression of his wish. Alas, with us, our wishes are often strong and our words are feeble! We order such-and-such a thing to be done, but it is not done. We have, perhaps, a thousand wishes in our hearts which, if we were to utter them, would be to make ourselves appear ridiculous! We may wish to do this and that, but if we were to say, “Let these things be done,” they would not be done in spite of all our saying, for, often, where the word of a man is, there is weakness. It is only where the Word of God is that there is power! Speaking after the manner of men, when God wills a thing, He says, “Let it be,” and it is immediately! Power goes forth from God with His will. He said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. God said, “Let the waters under the Heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear. And it was so.” God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth: and it was so.” He has but to will anything and it comes to pass! His Word is His will in motion, His power put into action—that is the common and emphatic sense of the term.  
God’s Word is also the expression of His Truth. A man says to us, “I promise you so-and-so,” and we say to him, “We rely upon your word.” A man’s honor is involved in his word. He who does not keep his word is not a man of honor and he soon falls, very naturally and very properly, into disgrace with his fellows. Men will not trust one whose word is not reliable. Alas, the words of men are not only feeble, but they are often fickle and false! But the Word of God is the promise of One who knows what He is saying, who is able to perform what He promises and who will never change nor ever be untrue. So that, if we look at His Word as being the expression of His Truth, we see His faithfulness. And upon these two—the power that can keep the promise, and the will which is faithful to keep it—we may rest with joy and confidence.  
Again, if a man is a true man, his word is a revelation of himself. One of the ancients said of a very beautiful boy or young man, when he had looked at him, “Speak, boy, for then I can see you.” And we often see a great deal more of a person’s character when he speaks than when we simply look at him. There is many a pretty face that has been admired because of its appearance, but when its owner’s not very pretty tongue has begun to chatter, love has been almost driven to its wits’ end to find any cause for admiration! There are some people who talk in such a way that when we see their inner selves, they appear as unlovely as their outer selves seem to be comely. But a true man reveals himself by his words. Hence it is that the Lord Jesus Christ is called, “The Word of God.” Jesus Christ is God speaking. God thinks what He says, and the thoughts of God are embodied in the Person, work, life and death of Jesus Christ, His dear Son. With all reverence, we say that God never could have revealed Himself so fully in any other way than by giving “His onlybegotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Well did Dr. Watts sing—  
*“Nature with open volume stands,  
To spread her Maker’s praise abroad.  
And every labor of his hands  
Shows something worthy of a God.  
But in the Grace that rescued man  
His brightest form of Glory shines  
Here on the Cross, ‘tis fairest drawn  
In precious blood and crimson lines.  
Here I behold His inmost heart,  
Where Grace and vengeance strangely join Piercing His Son with sharpest smart,  
To make the purchased pleasures mine.”*  
So, you see, dear Friends, the expression, “the Word of God,” has a very wide range. But my text bids me remind you of something very sweet—“Man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD does man live.” It is beautiful to think of the Scripture as proceeding out of the mouth of God. Do not look upon that scroll of parchment on which it is written and over which the critics quibble and quarrel. They stumble at almost every letter and word of it and so miss its meaning and spirit, but, as for you, pray the Holy Spirit to speak it into your heart as coming immediately from the mouth of God! When Cowper looked up at his mother’s portrait, after, to his great sorrow, she had long been gone from earth, he cried—  
*“O that those lips had language!”*  
Well, you are to regard this Word of God as constantly coming forth fresh from His lips. The Holy Spirit puts into the Word a power which makes it go right into your heart with the very tone and majesty of the God of Grace, the Father of your spirit! This manna falls ever fresh from Heaven. The Israelites never had stale bread in the wilderness. They gathered the “angels’ food” new every morning, just as it came down from the skies. In the same way, take every passage of God’s Word as coming to you fresh from God. Regard it as your Heavenly Father speaking it straight to your heart!  
I was reading, one day, in one of Mark Guy Pearse’s books, a pretty thought that I had never noticed before. He puts into the mouth of a very simple but godly man, who is talking about his Heavenly Father, words something after this fashion—“I am quite sure my Father will take care of me. He never rested during the six days of creation till He had fitted up a place for His child to come and live in. Until He had put the finishing stroke on it and got the house all ready for Adam, He would not rest at all. And now my Heavenly Father will not rest until He has made Heaven ready for me—and made me ready for Heaven—and all that I need on the way, He will surely give me.” When I read that, it came just as fresh to me as if I had seen the second Chapter of the Book of Genesis written! It did not look to me like an old, stale record, but a fresh and living message proceeding out of the mouth of God—then and there! And there is many a dear child of God who, taught of the Spirit, has given new readings to old texts and, as it were, hung the old oil paintings in a better light, till we have said, as we have looked at them, “Can they be the same pictures? They seem to have fresh beauty and fresh force put into them!” This is what you are to feed upon, dear children of God—His own Word, as you have it here. But you must feed upon it as continually coming forth out of His very mouth.  
The text further says, “by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD does man live.” Don’t you be at all disturbed, dear Friends, concerning the Doctrine of Inspiration, as to how the Bible is Inspired, whether by this process, or by that. I do not much mind how it is—I know that it is Inspired and that is enough for me—and I believe that it is verbally Inspired. I find the Apostle Paul hanging a weighty argument upon the use of a singular or a plural, where he says, “He says not, And to seeds, as of many but as of one, And to your Seed, which is Christ.” I find the Apostle Peter dwelling upon a word spoken by a woman and making it teach an important lesson—“Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him, lord,” and so forth. And, you remember that, not long ago, we had the text, “And it shall be at that day, says the Lord, that you shall call Me Ishi; and shall call Me no more Baali. For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name,” in which a great Truth of God was involved in the use of two words that were somewhat similar in meaning. [See Sermon

#2571, Volume 44—The Climax of God’s Love—read/download the entire sermon free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org .]

I do not say that either of our English versions is Inspired, for there are mistakes in the translation, but if we could get at the original text, just as it was first written, I am not afraid to say that every jot or tittle— every crossed “t” of it and every dot of each “i”—was Infallibly Inspired by God the Holy Spirit! I believe in the Infallibility and the Infinity of Holy Scripture! God Inspired the whole record, Genesis as well as Revelation, and all that is between—and He desires us to believe in one part of the Word as much as another. If you do not believe that, it will not be food to you. I am sure that it will not—it will only be a kind of emetic to you and not food. It cannot feed your soul as long as you are disputing about it. If it is not God’s Word, then it is man’s word, or the devil’s word—and if you care to live on the devil’s word, or on man’s word, I do not! But God’s Word is food for the soul that dwells with God and it cannot be satisfied with anything else.

II. Now let us pass on to our second point which is THE USE WE ARE TO MAKE OF GOD’S WORD. We are to live on it.  
I was sitting, one day, in the New Forest, under a beech tree. I like to look at the beech and study it, as I do many other trees, for every tree has its own peculiarities and habits, its special ways of twisting its boughs and growing its bark, and opening its leaves and so forth. As I looked up at that beech and admired the wisdom of God in making it, I saw a squirrel running round and round the trunk and up the branches, and I thought to myself, “Ah, this beech tree is a great deal more to you than it is to me, for it is your home, your living, your all.” Its big branches were the main streets of his city and its little boughs were the lanes. Somewhere in that tree he had his house and the beech mast was his daily food—he lived on it. Well now, the way to deal with God’s Word is not merely to contemplate it, or to study it, as a student does, but to live on it as that squirrel lives on his beech tree! Let it be to you, spiritually, your house, your home, your food, your medicine, your clothing— the one essential element of your soul’s life and growth.  
There are some whom I know who take God’s Word and play with it. They are interested in its narratives—they study its histories in the light of modern research—and so on. But it was not meant merely for such a purpose as that. Loaves of bread are not put on the table for you to carve them into different shapes simply to look at—they are intended to be eaten. That is the proper use for bread and that is the proper use for God’s Word!  
Some do even worse than this—they do not so much play with the Bible as fight over it—they contend fiercely for a Doctrine and condemn everybody who cannot accept their particular interpretation of it! I think that I have heard preachers who have seemed to me to bring out a Doctrine on purpose to fight over it. I have a dog that has a rug in which he sleeps and when I go home, tonight, he will bring it out and shake it before me—not that he particularly cares for his rug, but because he knows that I shall say, “I’ll have it,” and then he will bark at me and, in his language say, “No, you won’t.” There are some people who fetch out the Doctrines of Grace just in that way! I can see them trotting along with the Doctrine of Election just in order that some Arminian may dispute with them about it and that they may then bark at him! Do not act so, Beloved! The worst implement with which you can knock a man down is the Bible! It is intended for us to live upon—not to be the weapon of our controversies—but our daily food upon which we rejoice to live.  
I do not think that our Bibles were given to us that we might merely employ them as telescopes to peer into the heavens, to try to find out what is going to happen in 50 years’ time. I am weary with the prophecies and speculations that, as a general rule, end in nothing! I know some brethren with whom one cannot talk about any passage but they say, “Oh, you have not seen the last little book of R. B. S. (those are not the real initials of the good Brother), in which he says that this passage does not apply to us, it is meant only for the Jews.” Or else, “That was only for the Church in the wilderness, and not for us in these days.” Let us not so misuse the Word of God, but prize it as the bread upon which we are to live! “Man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord does man live.”  
“But how can we live on words?” asks one. You have spoken well. We cannot live on words if they are the words of men. But there is nothing like the Word of God to live upon! To that Word we owe our life. He spoke us into being, He spoke the soul into our body. By that Word of God we are daily kept alive—let God but reverse it and say, “Return, you children of men”—and we must at once go back to the dust from where we came.  
Certainly, it is by God’s Word that we began to live spiritually—we believed on Christ through the effectual working of His Word. The living and incorruptible Seed was sown in our heart and by it we began to live. And it is by that same Word that our soul has been sustained in life. Up to this moment you and I have received no nutriment from the Holy Spirit except by that Word of God which is the food of the spiritual Israel in the wilderness of this world. Christ said, “My flesh is meat, indeed, and My blood is drink, indeed.” And it is by Him, as the Word of God, that our life is yet further to grow. There is no development of the Christian that will come to him in any way but by God’s Word—Incarnate or Inspired. He who spoke us into being must speak us into yet stronger being! Faith is God’s gift, but so is assurance. The very first spark of life is the gift of God’s Grace, but so is the seraphic flame of zeal. That all comes from God’s Word and when we are about to enter Heaven, the last touch that shall perfect us will be given by no engraving tool, but the Word of God! Our Lord prayed for His disciples, “Sanctify them through Your Truth; Your Word is Truth.” And that Word shall complete the entire process! See, then, Beloved, on what your inmost spirit must live— God’s holy Word!  
Brothers and Sisters, may I ask you whether you are all sufficiently aware of this great Truth of God? You never received spiritual life by your own feelings. It was when you believed God’s Word that you lived! And you will never get an increase of spiritual life and grow in Grace by your own feelings or your own doings. It must still be by your believing the promises and feeding on the Word! There is no other food for your souls—all else, in the end, will prove but husks. Therefore, are you hungry? Come and feed upon the Word! Have you backslidden? Come and feed again upon the Word! God heals His people by feeding them. “How so?” you ask. When the church at Laodicea was neither cold nor hot, so that Christ felt that He must spew her out of His mouth, yet even then He said to the angel of that church, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with Me.” I am bold to say, “There is no cure for lukewarmness like a good supper with Christ!” If He enters in and sups with you, and you with Him, your lukewarmness will disappear at once! Do not begin to be saved by faith and then go on to be saved by works—do not try to mix the two! If you are of the house of Sarah, do not bow your knee before Hagar and go back to the bondwoman. If you have lived on the pure, simple Word, crediting it by a living, God-given faith, go on to live in the same way and grow by the Word. Feed thereon continually, that you may be “strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.”  
III. Now I come to my last point, which I want to insist upon very urgently, and that is THE ADAPTATION OF THE WORD OF GOD FOR THE FEEDING of our souls. “By every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD does man live.”  
“By every word.” If you restrict yourselves in your food to one or two articles, every physician will tell you that there is a danger that your body may not be supplied with every form of nutriment that it requires. A good wide range of diet is recommended to those who would have vigorous health. And in spiritual things, if you keep to one part of God’s Word, you may live on it, but the tendency will be for you not to attain to complete spiritual health through the lack of some nutriment with which the Word would have supplied you had you used it all. Every Word of God is that upon which man lives in the highest and healthiest state.  
Look, for instance, at the Doctrine in the Word of God. “I do not like doctrine,” says one. Do you know what you are saying? You are a disciple, yet you do not like teaching, for doctrine means teaching. For a disciple to say that he does not like to be taught, is as good as to say that he does not like to be a disciple and, in fact, that he is not one in the true meaning of that term. Whatever Truth is laid down in God’s Word, it is important for us to know it.  
“Oh,” says one, “but there are some Truths of God that are not important.” I do not know of any. In places where they cut diamonds, they sweep up the dust because the very dust of diamonds is valuable. And in the Word of God, all the Truth is so precious that the very tiniest Truth, if there is such a thing, is still diamond dust and is unspeakably precious! “But,” you object, “I do not see that such a Truth would be of any practical use.” You may not see it, dear Friend, but it is so. If I could write out my experience as Pastor of this Church, I could show that there have been persons converted to God by Doctrines that some might have thought unlikely to produce that result. I have known the Doctrine of the Resurrection to bring sinners to Christ. I have known scores brought to the Savior by the Doctrine of Election—the very sort of people who, as far as I can see, would never have come if that Truth of God had not happened to be an angular Doctrine that just struck their heart in the right place and fitted into the crevices of their nature. I believe that everything that is in God’s Word ought to be preached, ought to be believed and ought to be studied by us! Every Doctrine is profitable for some end or other. If it is not food, it is medicine, and children sometimes need a tonic as much as they need milk. Every plant in God’s garden answers some good purpose, so let us cultivate them all, and not neglect any Doctrine.  
Yet, when I come to God’s Word, I find that it is not all Doctrine, and I discover much of precept. Now, perhaps a man says, “I do not care about precepts.” We used to have a set of Christian people, so-called, who, if you preached about any duty of a Believer, said at once, “We cannot bear the word, ‘duty.’ It has a legal sound in it.” I remember saying to one who called me “a legal preacher,” “That is all right. ‘Legal’ means, lawful, and you mean, I suppose, that I am a lawful preacher, and that you are an unlawful person to object to my preaching!” But so it used to be, if you preached good sound Doctrine, if you preached on the privileges of Believers, then they were as pleased as possible. But when you once began to talk about the practical parts of God’s Word, then straightway they were offended. No wonder, for their conscience pricked them for their neglect of those portions of the Scriptures! But, dear Friends, we live upon the precepts as well as upon the Doctrines and they have become to us as our necessary food. You know how David said of the Lord’s Commandments, “More to be desired are they than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter, also, than honey, and the honeycomb; moreover by them is Your servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.”  
Blessed be God, there is also a large portion of this Book that is taken up with promises. Dear Friends, be well acquainted with the promises! I have often found it profitable to consult that little book in which Dr. Samuel Clarke has arranged the promises of Scripture under different heads. It is very helpful, when you are in trouble, to refer to all the promises which are given to those who are in similar circumstances to yours. For instance, to the sick, or to those in poverty, or those suffering from slander. As you read them over, one after the other, you say to yourselves, “This is my checkbook—I can take out the promises as I need them, sign them by faith, present them at the great Bank of Grace—and come away enriched with present help in time of need.” That is the way to use God’s promises, so that they shall minister to the life of our spirit.  
But, dear Friends, much of God’s Word is taken up with histories. Here you have the story of the Creation and of the Fall, of Abraham and of Isaac, of Jacob, of Moses, and of the kings and princes and people of Israel. You ask, perhaps, “Is this food?” Certainly! There are critics, nowadays, who speak very slightingly of the Old Testament and talk as if the Gospels comprised the whole of God’s Word. Even the Epistles are reckoned to be of inferior quality. But this is all wrong! It is by every Word of God that man lives and, often, a history, giving us an example of faith, or a proof of God’s faithfulness in helping His tried people, becomes more suitable food than the promise, by itself, might be! There is more force, men say, in the concrete, than there is in the abstract. Certainly there is more power in a thing put into actual life than there is in that same thing merely stated in words. If ever you go to the picture galleries of Versailles, you may walk through—I was about to say miles of galleries, among portraits of kings and notable men of different ages—but you do not see anybody stopping to look at them! And neither do you care to see them yourself. They are just portraits, but, downstairs there are paintings of the same men, only they are pictured in battle array, or in various positions which show them in action. Now you stand and look at them, for you are interested in the representation of the scenes in which they lived. So, sometimes, God’s promises hang up like pictures on the wall and we do not notice them. But when we see men who have trusted those promises and proved the truth of them, then there is a sort of human interest about them which wins our attention and speaks to our hearts. Never neglect the historical parts of God’s Word, for they are full of food to the children of God.  
It is precisely the same with regard to the prophecies. I once heard Mr. George Muller say that he liked to read his Bible through, again and again, and he liked, especially to read those portions of the Bible which he did not understand. That seems rather an amazing thing to say, does it not? For what profit can come to us if we do not understand what we read? The good man put it to me like this. He said, “There is a little boy who is with his father and there is a good deal of what his father says that he comprehends and takes it in, and he is very pleased to hear his father talk. But sometimes his father speaks of things that are quite beyond him, yet the boy likes to listen—he learns a little, here and there, and, by-and-by, when he has listened year after year, he begins to understand what his father says as he never would have done if he had run away whenever his father began to talk beyond his comprehension.” So is it with the prophecies and other deep parts of God’s Word. If you read them once or twice, but do not comprehend them, still study them—give your heart to them, for, by-and-by, the precious Truth of God will permeate your spirit and you will insensibly drink wisdom which otherwise you never would have received!  
Every part of the Word of God is food for the soul. So, dear Friends, it may be that there is a threatening message which speaks very sharply to you, but which is also most profitable for you. Perhaps some Sabbath you go out of the Tabernacle and you say, “Our Pastor has not comforted us this morning. He seems to have harrowed us and plowed us.” Yes, I know that it is so, sometimes, but it is for your profit, for, as Hezekiah said, “by these things men live.” It frequently happens that we need humbling, proving, testing and bringing down—and every right-minded child of God will say, “Do not let my training be according to my mind, but let it be according to God’s mind.” That sermon which pleases us most may not profit us at all—while the one which grieves and vexes us may, perhaps, be doing us a most essential service. When the Word of God searches you through and through, open your heart to it! Let the wind blow right through your whole being and carry away every rag and relic that ought to be taken from you.  
There are some of God’s Words that are very short, but they contain an abundance of food for the soul. I have sometimes stood still, as I have been looking at a text, and I have felt like Jonathan when he found the honey. I could not eat it all. I could only dip my rod into it and taste it. And I wanted to call you all up, to see if you could clear this forest which was so laden with sweetness. At other times, on my way home, when I have not got much, myself, during the sermon, the Master has given me a feast on the road, and I have laughed to myself, again and again, for very joy of heart over some precious passage out of which fresh light has broken to cheer my spirit and make me glad in the Lord! Oh, keep to the Word, my Brothers and Sisters! Keep to it as God’s Word and as coming out of His mouth. Suck it down into your soul, you cannot have too much of it! Feed on it day and night, for thus will God make you to live the life that is life, indeed!  
If there is a poor soul here that needs to find eternal life, my dear Friend, I bid you seek it in God’s Word and nowhere else. “I thought I would go home and pray,” says one. Do so, but, at the same time, remember that your prayers are of little worth without God’s Word. Hear God’s Word, first, and then go and tell God your own word, for it is in His Word of promise rather than in your word of prayer that salvation is to be found! Remember that grand sentence in the Book of Exodus where God says, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” It is not said, “When you see the blood,” but when I see it! So, when God looks upon Christ’s shed and sprinkled blood, it is then that He looks on you with pity and compassion! Look where God looks and then your eyes will meet His! If you look to Christ, and God looks to Christ, then you shall see eye to eye, and you shall find joy and peace in believing. God the Father admires Christ. Poor soul, do you admire Him, too? Then there will be a point on which you will both be agreed. God the Father entrusts His honor and glory to Christ—trust your soul with Christ—for so you will be agreed. God grant that you may do so this very hour! Remember this one text as you go your way—“He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” God grant that every one of you may have that everlasting life, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—191, 711, 192.  
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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #418 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

BREAD FOR THE HUNGRY  
NO. 418

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 10, 1861, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And He humbled you and suffered you to hunger and fed you with manna, which you knew not neither did your fathers know; that He might make you know that man does not live by bread only but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord does man live.”  
Deuteronomy 8:3.**

THIS notable text shall teach us two lessons this morning. Its first utterance shall be concerning Providence and its second, concerning the life of grace in the heart. Our blessed Lord once used this text with regard to Providence and therefore, we shall be justified in so interpreting it. When the foul fiend suggested to the hungry Savior that He should work a “preposterous miracle” to supply His needs, saying, “If you are the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread,” the Master met him, not with the wooden sword of human reason, but with this true Jerusalem blade, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, replying to him, “It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.”

Our glorious David took this smooth and shining stone out of the clear and silvery brook of Scripture and threw it at Goliath’s head—an example to us to meet temptations with the weapons of Scripture—not with the words or traditions of men.

I. Let us for one moment, that we may get the meaning of this text, with regard to PROVIDENCE, reflect upon the children of Israel in the wilderness. They were an exceeding great host, numbering somewhere between two and three millions. They had come forth out of Egypt on a sudden. They were poor, they were not therefore in circumstances to provide themselves with food even for a long march, much less for forty years. They had each of them brought what provender they had, for we read, “They took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.”

They crossed the Red Sea by miracle. Very soon afterwards all their provisions must have been exhausted. Picture their position—the kneading troughs are empty, the sterile wilderness of Sinai can hardly yield blades of grass enough for their flocks. How could it provide them with any sustenance for themselves? They have a long journey before them and where have they to look? There is no possibility of commerce by which to purchase food, neither can the land yield any. Every door is shut save one and that is the door of Heaven. All means have failed, but the God who works with the means can work without them if He pleases and therefore He opens the windows of Heaven and instead of a shower of rain there is a shower of food.

A substance like coriander seed fell round about the camp—“manna”— so they called it, for they were not sure what it was. They gathered it. They found it dainty to the taste, exceedingly nourishing and wholesome and

they fed upon this bread of Heaven for forty years! Nor did the manna cease till they came unto the land of Canaan where they ate the corn of the land and had no need of miraculous supplies. The hunger which was thus supplied had its design—for, as hunger tames the wild and savage beast—so this was sent to humble the proud and carnal minds of the Israelites—an object of no mean importance.

But that was not the only lesson. The Lord taught them that the sustaining power by which man’s life is preserved is not necessarily in any one substance, but is dependent upon the Word of God. It is true that bread nourishes. And the philosopher would say that there is a nutritive power resident in it. But really there is no power of any sort anywhere but in God. The power of nourishing and sustaining bodily life is of God and He, by a continual flowing of His omnipotence, pours the nutritive quality into bread. But if He chose to, He could pour it into stones. If it were His will, He could make the very dust of the earth nutritious and supply the lack of man by new means, for He is no more shut up to bread now than He was in times that have gone by.

Naturalists speak of laws of nature—there is no power in a law, write it as you like, it has no power—the laws of nature are simply the Lord operating in a certain manner, producing certain effects by certain means. This is what we call Law—it is God in action—and the reason why bread sustains the body is because God puts His potency into it, by which it receives nutritive virtues and the body is sustained. Now the Lord, by the manna, said to the children of Israel, “Man is not fed by bread only. He is fed by God’s power that comes from Him into the bread and when the bread is lacking, He can infuse that power into the very dews of the night. And they, as they distil, shall become manna full of nutritive energy to sustain your frame and you shall know that the power to nourish is not in the second cause, but in the great First Cause—not in the corn, not in the bread—but in the Lord God Himself.” This was the lesson which they were required to learn.

Now, Brethren, this is a doctrine which may be rendered exceedingly useful to us. God has power to supply our needs and therefore there can be no necessity for us to do wrong in order that we may be fed for He is not tied to any means. He can supply the wants of His children, not in one way, but in fifty ways. No, not in fifty ways, but in ways as countless as the sands upon the sea shore. You know how in olden times the Lord occasionally showed this power in miracles. When Moses, Elijah and our great Lord Himself fasted forty days, their natural lives were sustained without food.

How was this? We cannot tell the exact mode, but we can think of several methods. He could have done it by modifying the exhausting processes of nature. He could bid those powers which consume material work at a slower rate and whereas the body now expends itself daily by ounces, he could make it expend itself by drachms. He could prevent, as it were, the furnace of human life from consuming its coal and yet the vital spark need not be quenched. Or if He pleased, He could give the material necessary for the maintenance of the frame by miraculous means. He could fit and square the stones for the temple of the body and put them in their place without those masons—the teeth—or those builders—the digestive organs.

He could give to the different secretive glands just that which they required and find, if it were necessary, the substances in the earth, or in the air, or in the sky so that still without the necessity for bread, man might live. Or He could, if He chose to vary the miracle, increase the nutritive power of the food already received, as in Elijah’s case, so that a man might go in the strength of one day’s meat for forty days. At any rate, God has proved by miracle, that although He chooses to act usually according to certain rules and nourish the body with bread and with meat, yet He is not tied to rules. He is absolute King and Master and can do as He wills. Even in the subtle processes by which food is digested and assimilated to the flesh and blood and bone and sinew, He can work without the means of ordinary chemistries. He can dissolve without distilling devices and fuse without crucibles.

“But,” you say, “that cannot concern us, for He never works miracles now.” Yes, but I reply, it is most marvelous for God to be able to do a miraculous thing without a miracle. Do you comprehend me? I think that the working of a miracle is not so wonderful as when that end is gained by ordinary laws and methods—gained without the cessation of any power in nature—simply by Providence overruling the powers just as they are. To be miraculous without miracles is the miracle of miracles. I have seen many miracles which were not miracles, but yet all the more miraculous.

The poor have lacked bread, stones were not turned into bread for them, but they had their bread as much by miracle as if rocks had crumbled into food. We have seen the poor merchant reduced to distress and he said, “Now I cannot see any hope for me. God must rend His heavens and put His hand through the very windows to deliver me.” No heavens were rent, but the deliverance came.

Now, the Lord can this day without a miracle work such a miracle that we shall have all our wants supplied, for “man does not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” You have heard the story of the martyr who was condemned to die. The judge said railingly—“You will be in prison. I shall make you no allowance for food and what can your God do for you? How can He feed you?” “Why,” said the poor prisoner, “if He wills it, He can feed me from your table”— and it was so—though unknown to his cruel judge. For until his day of burning came the wife of the judge, touched with sympathy, always secreting food and fed him abundantly even from the persecutor’s table.

Perhaps you may have read in “Fox’s Acts and Monuments” the wonderful story of Mr. Samuel who by the Bishop of Norwich was condemned to die. He was tied up by a chain about his middle and then condemned to starvation, having about two mouthfuls of bread and two or three drops of water each day until his frame became dry and shriveled. The pains of thirst and hunger were intense for some days, but after that he said he fell into a kind of swoon and he thought he heard a voice saying, “Fear not, Samuel, for from this day you shall never hunger nor thirst again.” And from that hour, though it was several days before he went to Heaven in the fiery chariot from the stake, he never knew what it was to thirst or to hunger though he had no greater supplies than before.

I have no doubt the physician would tell us it is possible that as nature will often, after excessive pain, become its own balm by deadening sensibility. So in this case, God was pleased not by miracles, but in the ordinary course of nature to cast the man into a peculiar state in which he was not conscious of the wants of his body. And while no doubt all the ordinary operations were going on which cause hunger and thirst, yet he was not conscious of it and so the Lord was pleased without a miracle to work a miracle, proving that, “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.”

There are several very interesting illustrations of this great Truth in the Life of Mr. Henry Erskine. “He was often in great straits and difficulties. Once when he and his family had supped at night, there remained neither bread, meal, meat, nor money in the house. In the morning the young children cried for their breakfast and their father endeavored to divert them. He did what he could at the same time to encourage himself and wife to depend upon that Providence that hears the young ravens when they cry. While thus engaged, a countryman knocked hard at the door and called for someone to help him off with his load.

“Being asked from where he came and what he would have, he told them he came from Lady Reaburn with some provisions for Mr. Erskine. They told him he must be mistaken and that it was more likely to be for another Mr. Erskine in the same town. He replied, No, he knew what he said, he was sent to Mr. Henry Erskine and cried, ‘Come, help me off with my load, or else I will throw it down at the door.’ Whereupon they took the sack from him and on opening it, found it well stored with fish and meat.

“At another time, being in Edinburgh, he was so reduced that he had but three halfpence in his pocket. When he was walking about the streets, not knowing what course to steer, one came to him in a countryman’s habit, presented him with a letter in which were enclosed several Scotch ducatoons, with these words written, ‘Sir, receive this from a sympathizing friend. Farewell.’ Mr. Erskine never could find out from where the money came. At another time, being on a journey on foot, his money failed and he was in danger of being reduced to distress. Having occasion to fix his walking-stick in some marshy ground among the rushes, he heard something tinkle at the end of it. It proved to be two half-crowns, which greatly assisted in bearing his charges home. In days of persecution and poverty, God wonderfully interposes for His people.”

I could myself write a Book of Providences quite as remarkable as William Huntingdon’s Bank of Faith. God does supply His people’s needs. This is not a matter of fancy or superstition. We have tried it and have proved it and we have as much evidence to prove that Truth as to prove any fact which is taken for granted in science or in philosophy. Man does not to this day live by bread alone, not by ordinary channels of Providence—but God does still supply the lack of His children—and none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate.

I have a consciousness that I am addressing someone this morning who little expected to be here, who nevertheless is in such straits that, though a Christian man, he is severely tempted and sternly tried by Satan to do what he knows is wrong, but which he thinks is necessary, because he says, “We must live.” My Brother, let me influence you, as God’s ambassador, do not break a way for yourself. Stand still and see the salvation of God—it can never be right to do a wrong thing. This is a trial for your faith. Oh, let not your faith fail you, but seek help from God this morning, that you may say, “I can starve, but I cannot sin.” And you may rest assured that God who delivered the three holy children out of the very midst of the fire, when they would not bow down before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up, will surely deliver you and if not, yet let your resolution be still firmly fixed—“I will not do this great wickedness and sin against God.”

II. I now turn to the second part of the discourse. The text, evidently enough, has A SPIRITUAL BEARING.  
Man shall not live by bread alone. That does but nourish the mere coarse fabric of clay—he lives by every Word which proceeds out of the mouth of God—that nourishes the immortal spirit, that sustains the heavenly flame which God has put there by the work of regeneration and conversion.  
1. Now, in the first place, the text speaks of a hunger and of its consequences. Very many of you who are now present understand what this hunger means. There was a time when the world suited us well enough—if we had enough to eat and to drink and wherewithal we might be clothed like the rest of the Gentiles. This was all that we sought after. But suddenly God put a new life into us, we knew not how. The first evidence we had of that life was that we began to hunger, we were not satisfied. We were discontented, we were unhappy, we wanted something, we did not know what it was. But this we knew, that it was a something which we must have, or die.  
The soul was conscience of sin and hungered for pardon, conscious of guilt and hungered for purity, conscious of absence from God and hungered and thirsted after His presence. It was that blessed hunger which the Savior spoke of upon the Mount, when He said, “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” Now, speaking of that hunger, you that know of it can bear witness that it was a most painful thing when first we knew it. It was so painful to some of us that we could not rest—it was a hunger that pinched us in our sleep, in our business, in the fields and in the streets. We cried, “Oh that I knew where I might find Him! Oh that I were saved!” And we cried out, “Oh that” and “Would that” and “Ah,” and “Oh!”  
Groans that could not be uttered came up even from our soul after a something which we could not explain. We wanted Christ, we had come to know the meaning of that line of our hymn—“Give me Christ or else I die.” What a painful hunger it was! Never did a starving wretch, who could count his bones and almost see through his hands, suffer more anguish than we knew when God had taken away from us the very staff of life and our soul was melted within us by reason of sore famine and straitness of bread.  
Then that hunger, moreover, was utterly insatiable—nothing could stop it. Friends said, “You must take worldly amusement.” It was like endeavoring to fill a hungry man with shadows. The legalist said, “You must perform such-and-such duties.” It was like attempting to fill a soul with bubbles. Still our hunger cried like the horse-leech, “Give, give, give us something more substantial, more Divine than this.” Oh, how some people try to appease hungry souls with music, pictures, riches, honors, fame. Poor fools! Did they once know what spiritual hunger means, they would renounce their idle and ridiculous attempts. None but Jesus, the Bread of Heaven, can satisfy a hungry soul. Happy are they that have hungered thus, but cursed are they who have never known what it is to hunger and thirst insatiably after Christ.  
Next—this hunger is impetuous. Sometimes it will come at inconvenient seasons. Master Henry Smith—an old preacher at St. Paul’s Cross, preaching upon the text—“As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby”—observes, “When hunger assails infants, they neither regard leisure, nor necessity, nor willingness of their mothers—all excuses and business set apart—as soon as they cry for food, they must be fed.” So is it with a man who has begun to feel the need of Christ. It may be said to him, “You can have your religion at home. You do not want to be moping about the shop with it.” Ah, but he cannot help it. He is hungry and hunger knows no clocks. It comes when it likes and, having come, it will not be turned back.  
It is of no use saying, “When I have a more convenient season I will satisfy you.” But hunger says, “Now, now, now—I must eat, I must be stopped.” So is it with the truly hungry soul—it wants Christ now. If it is not Sunday, if it is not time to go up to worship, it longs to steal away into the cellar, or the attic, or anywhere that it may cry to God its heavenly Father and get some food, for its hunger is of that impetuous character—it is in season and out of season. And then it is so impetuous that the truly hungry soul is like a hungry man, of whom it is said in the Proverb, “Hunger breaks through stone walls.”  
“Oh, it is a wet Sunday!” Ah, but the soul is hungry and must go, wet or dry. “Yes, but the streets are miry and muddy.” Well, but the soul is hungry and must go if it is knee-deep in mud. “Yes, but the place is far off.” If it were ten times as far, it must go. “Oh, but there is another place handy.” Yes, but that is the place where they sell philosophic plaster of Paris and the soul says, “I cannot go to be fed on such stuff as that—I must go where there is milk for babes and bread for strong men.” And then they will crowd the place where the bread of Heaven is dispensed and some say, “Why do they crowd the place so?”  
Oh, if they knew how hungry the people were, they would not wonder. If there were a baker’s shop in the parish and all the people were starving, you would not marvel if you saw them crowd the door in the morning to get bread. It has been always so where the Lord sends a true Gospel ministry. The Lord never sends bread without sending mouths to eat it. Where the Word is preached there will be ears to hear and hearts to receive it. It is no use to try to stop one of these hungry souls—they must have the Word which proceeds out of the mouth of God. This hunger, I may add, is of an increasing character. The longer a man stays, the more hungry he gets—his hunger does not decline. Conviction of sin does not grow less and less, but sharper and sharper.  
Just as hunger gnaws and gnaws the very coats of the stomach, so does this spiritual hunger gnaw into the man’s heart. He is wretched beyond expression, his cry grows shriller and more piercing, till he seems as if he would cut through Heaven itself to get at what he wants. “Mercy, Lord, mercy, mercy, mercy!” And you may say to him, “Why do you clamor thus?” His only answer will be, “Mercy, Lord, mercy, mercy! Give me Christ, give me Christ, or else I die!”  
Now, what is the blessed result of this hunger? Why it makes a man humble. These hungry sinners are never proud—they have not the stomach to play the proud and haughty scorner. Souls that are filled with their own good works and puffed up with their own empty boastings—these high-stomached sinners can boast against Christ and His Gospel—but as for these hungry ones, they are willing to be anything and to do anything so that they may but be saved. But now they love to hear the word “grace”—there was a time when they could not endure it, but now they are so hungry that the word “grace” sounds like a bell that summons them to their needed meals. They love to hear of Divine sovereignty, they are quite willing that God shall be King, so long as they may be but fed.  
Now they have no objection to election, if they may but have an interest in the Covenant of Grace. Now they have no objection to justification by free grace by the righteousness of Christ for they are emptied of anything of their own. They are humble and therefore they are in a proper state to receive Christ, for, “To this man will I look and with that man will I dwell, with him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and that trembles at My word.” Blessed hunger! You that do not have it today, may God soon satisfy you, He will do it sooner or later. And you that have had it, though I hope it will never be renewed to you in all its painfulness, yet I pray that you may always be craving and longing, as new-born babes, desiring the sincere milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby.  
2. And this brings me to notice, in the second place, the heavenly bread and its surpassing excellency. This bread, you see, is the Word of God. Now, the Word is given to us first here in the Bible, as it is written. It is given to us, secondly, from the lips of God’s own chosen and appointed ambassadors. He that despises either of these two will soon find himself growing lean in spirit. The book, the Word, is like the flour, but the sermon is the bread, for it is through the sermon that the Word is, as it were, prepared for human palates and brought so that human souls may be able to receive it. The moment the Church of God shall despise the pulpit, God will despise her.  
It has been through the ministry that the Lord has always been pleased to revive and bless His Churches and you will notice that these revivals in which it was boasted that there were no ministers engaged, have come to nothing before long. For those that stand are those in which God gets to Himself glory and honor, by using instrumentality. It is a wrong idea altogether that God is glorified by putting instrumentality aside. That is not His glory. His glory is that in our infirmity He still triumphs and that with His own right hand He is able to lay hold upon some jaw-bone of an ass and yet slay therewith heaps upon heaps of Philistines. It is the weakness of the instrumentality used that has a tendency to glorify God and hence He very seldom is pleased to work without some means or other. Most Christians who have grown rich in grace, have been great frequenters of the house of prayer.  
But now, why is it that we need this food at all? Why is it that we need the Word of God? I answer first, we need it to sustain the life which we have received. When God planted Eden, He did not leave it without watering it, for you read in Genesis, “There went up a mist to water the garden of Eden.” And yet it is a very strange thing and you ought to notice, too, that God made the grass of the fields before He bade the sun, moon and stars shine upon the earth. So there was the loving thing before there was that upon which it was to depend for its sustenance—to show that He could maintain life without the external means—and that even the grass was not to live by the outward alone, but by the sustaining energy and secret omnipotence of God.  
Now, if Eden in perfection needed to be watered, much more do we. We are plants of the Lord’s right-hand planting, but like roots in a dry ground we need the river of God, which is full of water, to flow hard by our roots. We need the dew which fed upon the mountains of Hermon to moisten us every hour, lest like dewless Gilboa we should be bleak and barren, without any lush greenery to make glad the heart of God or man. As life spiritual depends upon God to give it, so upon God to sustain it. Only He who makes us Christians can keep us so and hence the need of Divine food.  
We need this Divine food not only to keep us barely alive, but to make us grow and as Peter says, “As new-born babes,” we need to grow. Now, how shall we grow without food? Supposing it possible to retain life, do we wish always to be babes? Would we always be little children? No, let us pray that we may become young men in Christ and grow up to the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus. But how shall this be unless the Word of God becomes our spiritual food?—unless in hearing it we see Christ and eat His flesh and drink His blood?  
You do not expect your children to grow without feeding them and you must not expect to grow yourself. Besides, this food is necessary to strengthen us when we have grown up. A full grown man, though he is a perfect man, may still be very imperfect in many matters. He is perfectly a man, but still he is weak. How can we wonder that a man is weak if he does not eat? It is no wonder if Christians find themselves weak in prayer, weak in suffering, weak in action, weak in faith and weak in love if they neglect to feed upon the Word of God. O Souls, there are many among you that are sick and some that are ready to die because you have shut your mouths against the bread of Heaven and have gone day by day without sitting down at the banqueting table and feeding upon the marrow and fatness of the promise.  
Moreover, we need to have spiritual food also for our joy as well as for our strength. How often do you see a man sad and troubled, who, if he had sufficient sustenance would soon have sparkling eyes and a shining face? Many Christians, I do not doubt, are very low and miserable because they do not feed upon the Word. If they ate the roll as Ezekiel did, they would soon find it like honey for its sweetness. If we did but lean more upon the breast of Christ and eat more often from His table and drink from His cup, our peace would flow like a river and our righteousness like the waves of the sea.  
Are you starving your souls? If so, there is no wonder that your joys are dead and hang their heads like wilted and withered things. I trust, my dear Brethren, many of us know what it is to feed to the full upon the Word of God. And do you not bear me witness that it is rich food? There is nothing in the whole world that can so content the spirit as the Word of God. We have read many books, we have listened to the maxims of philosophers, we have gathered up the lessons of experience but put them altogether—they are not equal to one text of Scripture. It is said of one Christian man, who had spent a great part of his life in translating Livy, that when he came to die he wished he had spent that time in reading the Word of God.  
Those who translate the Bible into foreign tongues always say it is a great blessing to them. Instead of growing tired through having to stop long over one word to find out its meaning, they find the word more sweet than before. There is rich food both in the printed Word and in the spoken Word. Then again, what plain food it is! There is nothing like plain food. But some people come in to listen to the Gospel minister and they say, “Ah, it is not intellectual enough for me!” Such infants would like to live on sponge-cakes, or filthy gingerbread. But we think the plainer the food, the better. We had rather have it just as it is, without any flavoring or seasoning, just as we find it here.  
But, while it is plain food, yet to those who know it, it is very sweet food. Though some say, “It is light bread,” as they did in the wilderness, you never loathe this bread. It never palls upon your taste—you are satisfied and you are even satiated with fatness—you are never disgusted through having too much of it. You feel that you would like to swim in a river of such wine as this. You would like to be shut up in a granary of this heavenly corn. You would be but too glad to have nothing else to think upon but Jesus and Him crucified. No other book to read but that Word. No other light to read it by but the light of the Spirit and I think I may add, you would wish to live in no other house but in God’s house— for your desire is, “Lord, evermore give us this bread.”  
The Word of God, then, is rich food, but it is plain food. And let us add, it is wholesome food. The man that feeds on God’s Word will not be puffed up with pride, or sloth, or lust. You may feed on the best of men’s books and soon grow warped in your judgment, but feed on the pure Word of God and you will surely find nothing that is common or unclean in it, but everything that shall make you grow up to be strong men in Christ Jesus. And then, once more, this food of the Word of God is abundant food. Millions live upon it and there is enough for millions more. We have great appetites sometimes and we want great promises. Oh, and there are great

promises for us. *“What more can He say than to you He has said, You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?”*

Our great trials make very great draws upon the treasury, but the treasury never will be emptied for all that. We are great spenders, but bless the Lord, we have great incomes. The great income of the promise is far more than the outgoing of our trials or our afflictions can ever need. There is abundant bread and oh, it is bread that we love. We want no change in it. You have been feeding on it, some of you, these forty years and I might turn to some that have lived on it for sixty years, yet you do not want any new-fangled doctrines—you want none of the neology of the times—you want the old Word as much as ever you did. And I can say, though I am but a young believer in Christ, that that same Gospel note which some twelve years ago made glad these ears, is just as glorious a note as it was then. And I feel as I grow older, a closer attachment to the doctrines of grace, a more complete satisfaction with the written Word and a more intense delight in telling it forth to the ears of the people.

3. And now, lastly, a great privilege involving a consequent duty. We have been made to eat manna, as angels’ food which we did not know. It

was far above our carnal judgments, yet they who feared the Lord said it was like wafers made with honey. Israel found it to be very sweet and indeed it is said by the Rabbis that the manna had such a peculiarity about it, that it was always the flavor that a man wished it to be. And I think it is very much so with Gospel preaching—if a man chooses it to be disagreeable to him, it will be—but if he desires it to be sweet to him, it will be. He will be sure to be fed if he wants to be fed. For so is it with the precious Book—very much of its flavor is in our own mouths and when our mouths are out of taste we think the Bible has lost its savor. But it has not. It is our mouths which are to blame, not the Word of God. It is often your ears that are to blame, not the preacher. Do not be so quick to blame him, but be a little more rapid in examining yourself.

“ Neither did our fathers know.” By nature, however much we may respect them, they are no better than ourselves and they knew nothing about this subtle, mysteriously generous way by which God supplies the needs of the souls of His people. Well now, if God has given us such food as this, Brothers and Sisters, I think the least thing we can do is to go and gather it, for when the manna fell, you know, it did not fall into their tents, much less into their mouths. No, it fell round about the camp so that every man had to get his basket and go forth and gather it. He that gathered much had nothing over, he that gathered little had no lack, but they all had to gather it.

And, mark, they had to gather it every day. They were not, having gathered once, to say, “Now I have all I want,” for it bred worms and stank if they kept it. They must gather it fresh and fresh. Now this is what we ought to do with God’s Word. We ought to read it and having read it once we must recollect that what we have read will breed worms unless we go and read again. It is not what we gathered yesterday that will serve for today, we must gather it today—so we must open our Bibles every morning with this prayer—“Give me this day my daily bread.” We must get some choice text to fill our basket—if we read a chapter we shall have nothing over—if we read a verse we shall have no lack.

Then we put the Word in our memories and we shall surely find, perhaps not the first hour, but some other hour in the day that it will taste like wafers made with honey to us. It is astonishing how much a man may know of the Bible by learning a text a day and how much he may know experimentally by watching the events of the day and interpreting them in the light of the text. If you cannot retain by memory a whole passage, never mind that—take a short text and let it be under your tongue all day—and be looking out for a commentary upon it.

I do not mean Matthew Henry or Scott, or Gill. I mean your own daily experience. Be looking out to see how the Lord translates that text to you by His own Providence and you will frequently see a striking relation between the text that was given you in the morning and the trials or the mercies that are given you during the day. At any rate, let the Word of God be the man of your right hand. Don’t become so busy reading magazines, newspapers and new books and so forth, that you forget this—this new Book, this that is always new and always old—always having a freshness in it.

Like a well, it is always springing up—not with musty, stale water— but with fresh water that has never sparkled in the sun before and in all its virgin luster of purity scatters jewels on the right hand and on the left. Let us go to this fountain and drink fresh and fresh. You will not find the Word of God dropped into your mouth. You must go and gather it outside the tents. Sometimes the Lord will apply a promise without your having read it yourselves, but this is not generally the case. You must dig in this field where lies hidden the pearl of price unknown and digging there you shall discover it to your heart’s delight.

And then let us mind also that we be much in the hearing of the Word as well as in the reading of it. Let us, when we come up to the house of God, come there to be fed. Oh, there are many who think that it is mere form to spend a Sunday in God’s house. I do not know but what these are the worst of Sabbath-breakers, after all, for what do they do? They say the Table of the Lord is contemptible and His house is despicable and they snuff at it and say, “What a weariness it is, what dry dull days Sundays are!” It is not so with the child of God. He comes up to the house of God with this prayer on his heart and on his tongue—“Lord, give Your servant food for my soul today.”

Beloved, when you are in a right state, you are like birds in the nest— when the mother bird comes with the worm, the babies are all stretching their necks to the food, for they are all hungry and want it. And so should hearers be ready to get hold of the Word, not wanting that we should force it down their throats—but waiting there, opening their mouths wide that they may be filled—receiving the Word in the love of it, taking in the Word as the thirsty earth drinks in the rain of Heaven. Hungry souls love the Word. Perhaps the speaker may not always put it as they may like to hear it, but as long as it is God’s Word, it is enough for them.

They are like persons who are sitting at the reading of a will. The lawyer has a squeaking voice, perhaps. Or he mispronounces the words, but what of that?—they are listening to see what is left to them. So is it with God’s people. It is not the preacher, but the preacher’s God that these hungry ones look to. Why, if when you were very poor, some benevolent neighbor should send you a loaf of bread by a man who had a club foot— you would not look at the foot—you would look at the bread! And so is it with the hearers of the Word. They know if they wait until they get a perfect preacher, they will get no preacher at all. But they are willing to take the man, imperfections and all, provided he brings the Master’s bread. And though he is but a lad and can bring but a few barley loaves and fishes, yet since the Master multiplies the provision, there is enough for all and they feed to the full.

But now I am speaking to some who never feel this hunger. Ah, poor Souls, you are all flesh and you have a fleshly hunger and that satisfied, it is enough. Well, remember that it is only spirit that can see the kingdom of God and as there is no spirit in you, where God is you can never come. If there were that new principle in you—the new nature, the spirit—you would have a spiritual hunger. But the natural man discerns not the things that are of God and while you are thus merely what you were born, a natural man, without the spirit, you will never hunger after spiritual things, for the flesh shall be satisfied and that will be enough for you. But in the next world, your hunger will come and your thirst, too.

Scarcely need I remind you of the text, “In Hell he lifted up his eyes being in torment and he said, Father Abraham, send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue.” Better to thirst now than thirst forever. Better to hunger now than to hunger where bread will be denied. Do you feel your need of Christ this morning? Do you confess your sin? Remember, the gate of Heaven’s granary is never locked, it is always open. If there is a soul here that desires to be saved, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” To believe on Him is to let Him be for you what you never can be for yourselves, that is—an atonement for your sin by His blood—a righteousness for your covering by His good works.

Believe in Him—give yourself up to Him—trust Him—be saved according to His way and His will—and if the Lord has made you willing to be nothing that Christ may be everything, you are saved! He that brings a man into such a state as that has brought him into salvation. Trust in Jesus, poor hungry Sinner and faith shall feed you to the full. Empty though you are, open the mouth of prayer and stretch out the hands of faith and He will give you water out of the brook, yes, out of the flinty rock and with bread from Heaven shall He sustain you.

The Lord grant, by His grace, that we may be among those of whom Christ said, “Blessed are they that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!”  
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #939 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE PILGRIM’S GRATEFUL RECOLLECTIONS  
NO. 939

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 3, 1870, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And He humbled you, and suffered you to hunger, and fed you with manna, which you knew not, neither did your fathers know; that He might make you know that man does not live**

***by bread only, but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord does man live. Your raiment waxed not old upon you, neither did your foot swell, these forty years. You shall also consider in your heart, that, as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you. Therefore you shall keep the commandments of  
the Lord your God, to walk in His  
ways, and to fear Him.”  
Deuteronomy 8:3-6.***

OUR aptness to forget God’s mercies, is, alas, too conspicuous. It has been said that the annals of a prosperous and peaceful country are singularly uninteresting. Does this arise from the fact that we do not make memoranda of our mercies, or at least if we do, they are far more readily blotted out than the record of our sorrows? We trace our joys in the sand, but we write our afflictions on marble. We forget the streams of mercy, never ceasing, which flow so continually parallel with our pathway.

If we thus, ungratefully forget, it should cause us serious reflections when we see that God does not forget. Here in this Book He brings to His people’s memories all the mercies they have received, because they were always present before His own mind. The child may forget the kindness of its mother, but the mother does not forget what she bore, and what she has sacrificed for her child. The friend may forget what he has received, but it is not likely that the benefactor will forget what he has bestowed. If God’s memory, therefore, records all that He has given me, let me be ashamed to let my memory suffer these things to slip. What God counts worthy of His Divine recollection let me record on the pages of my memory, and often let me peruse the record.

We are also far too slow to draw the inference of obligation from benefits received. We receive the blessing, but we do not always feel that a proportionate debt is due in return to God, the bounteous Giver of every good gift. Yet Divine Grace has its obligations as well as laws—obligations which honorable minds reckon to be among the first to be discharged. If I do not do what I ought because I fear the Law, at any rate let me prove that I am not so base as to be ungrateful to undeserved mercy and love.

It has been said by some, and there have been others whose lives have almost proved it, that the driving of the Law is more effectual to produce works than the sweet drawings of the Gospel. But it ought not to be so— and if it is so, the fault is in the man acted upon, and not in the principle of gratitude. For with right-minded men, with men educated by the Spirit of God, with men who are lifted up out of the common mass of mankind

and endowed with the higher life, the highest motive that can be suggested even by infinite wisdom is the motive which is drawn from the transcendent love and Grace of God.

Now, Brethren, though we forget our obligations, it is clear from the text that God does not—for here, after giving a summary of His benefits— He concludes by drawing an inference with the word, “therefore,” and He tells Israel that having received so much, they were bound to walk in His ways and in His fear—and to keep His Commandments. If He thus considers, whose wisdom none dare dispute, let us voluntarily, cheerfully, and practically concede that such is the very Truth. And let us ask that He will help us to be obedient, and resolve that, receiving His help, we will say in our hearts and lives——

*“Loved of my God, for Him again  
With love intense I burn;  
Chosen of Him before time began,  
I choose Him in return.”*

I shall now ask your attention to the list of favors given in the text, with the view of enforcing the Divine conclusions from them.

I. LET US PASS IN REVIEW THE FAVORS OF THE LORD, taking what He did for Israel as being typical of what He has done for us.  
1. The first blessing mentioned in our text is that of humbling—“And He humbled them, and suffered them to hunger.” Not very highly esteemed among men will this favor be. And at first, perhaps, it may be regarded by ourselves as being more of a judgment—one of the terrible things in righteousness—than a great favor from the Most High. But rightly judged, this is one of the most admirable proofs of the Lord’s loving kindness, that He does not leave His people in their natural pride and obstinacy, but by acts of Grace brings them to their right mind.  
Note in the text that the humbling was produced by hunger. What makes a man so humble as to be thoroughly in want? It was not hunger for luxury, merely—bread and water failed them. How could the soil beneath them of hot sand yield them a harvest? Where could they find a stream to slake their dreadful thirst which the broiling sun and the arid sand continually increased? To want bread and water is a short way of making a man feel that he is but a man, and that he is dependent, very dependent, upon the Providence of God.  
Their hunger was, no doubt, increased in its power to humble them by their position. They were not hungry, in Goshen, nor in Canaan, but hungry in a waste, howling wilderness, where, let them search as they would, they could find nothing available for sustenance. They were reduced to the most abject condition of spirit, and broken by the most urgent wants. And yet, I say, this was a great blessing to them, for, being humbled, they were put in a position where God could bless them.  
Speaking after the manner of men, there are some positions where God cannot bless us. If we are proud and lifted up, it is not consistent to the Divine honor and glory that He should smile upon us. But when we are laid low at the foot of the Throne, then there is an opportunity for God to come and deal with us in pity and Grace. It was good, therefore, for Israel to be placed where God’s mercy could flow to them. Being there, and being hungry, there were opportunities given for Divine Grace and bounty. A man who is not hungry cannot be fed—why needs he, at any rate, to be fed? And if fed, he will not be grateful as a hungry man.  
But now when they are famishing, now will God work His miracles. The open windows of Heaven shall, to their astonishment, rain down their daily food, and up through those open casements shall their praise and thankfulness ascend to the Throne of God. There is room for mercy where there is misery—space for Grace where there is poverty. Happy was Israel, therefore, to he humbled by hunger, and placed where mercy could glorify itself. They were thus, by their being made needy, brought to receive superior supplies. If they had possessed the corn of Egypt, they would have missed the manna of Heaven.  
If beneath their feet there had sprung up crops of common wheat from which they could have reaped their daily supplies, they would have missed the angels’ food which fell from Heaven around their camp. Absence of meals was more than compensated by the presence of manna. It is a blessed thing to have a famine of the creature, if thereby we are supplied by the Creator!  
Now, my dear Friends, just remember for a minute, that this was your case and mine. Years ago, in the case of some of us, the Lord met with us and brought us into a painful state of spiritual hunger. All our supplies failed us. We had thought before that time we were at feast as good as others, that we might somehow work our way to Heaven, and we were satisfied, after a fashion, with worldly joys. But the Lord suddenly took away our earthly comforts, or took away our rest and enjoyment of them, and at the same time we saw sin and its punishment before us—and we were brought to a condition in which we were like those in the wilderness, who were afflicted with fiery serpents, and bitten with scorpions.  
Our thoughts would not suffer us to rest. Our sins plagued and tormented us. We looked round for comfort, and we could find none. We looked and looked again, and we only found fresh cause to despair. We were driven right away from self. What a mercy it was that we were so humbled, for then the Lord could reveal His love to us! What a blessing it was that we were so wretched, for then there was room for Jesus to come with His pardoning blood, and the Holy Spirit to come with His Divine quickening, and the promise of the Father to come with all its fullness of Grace and Truth. And oh, how blessedly, being deprived of earthly consolations, were we supplied with heavenly ones!  
Our self-confidence, what a blessing it was to lose it, for we had confidence in Christ instead of it! Our carnal security, happy were we to see it wither, for we had security in Christ given us in the place of it and our self-righteousness. Thrice happy was it for us that it was totally dried up, for now we come to drink water out of the living Rock of Christ Jesus, and He has become our joy, our song, and our salvation. You remember well that humbling season—you have had such seasons since. You have been brought, since then, into great spiritual straits, when you found that all the supposed Grace which you had in store utterly failed you, even as the manna which the children of Israel unbelievingly tried to lay by in store— it bred worms and stank.  
You have been brought down to deep spiritual poverty, but that has been a great blessing to you, for each renewed season of soul poverty has been the prelude for a fresh season of Divine manifestation of Grace. When I find myself brought very low in spirit, and made to see the depravity of my heart, and to groan over my own weakness, I have learned to expect better things. I have been thankful for humblings because I have learned by experience that when I am emptied the Lord means to fill me. That when I am brought low it is only a preface to being lifted by the Divine Spirit.  
Surely for these reasons we may reckon our humblings among the choicest favors of Heaven. And as here the humbling stands first in the text, so let it not be last in our song. As it is put here as the frontispiece to the volume of grateful remembrances, let it be prominent in our minds. “He humbled you, and caused you to hunger.” Oh, blessed hour in which he prostrated my soul at His feet! Oh, happy season when He stripped me of what I thought my glory, but which were filthy rags! Oh, thrice memorable period when He wounded me with the arrows of conviction, when He slew me by the Law—for this was but a preparation for healing me with His touch of love, and making me alive with the eternal life which is in Christ Jesus. The first mercy, then, is that of humbling the soul.  
2. I shall have to notice, in the second place, the Divine feeding. We shall now see ourselves mirrored in the case of Israel as in a glass. “He humbled you, and suffered you to hunger, and fed you.” How sweetly that follows, “suffered you to hunger, and fed you.” The light close on the heels of the darkness. Is there a desponding soul here who has been suffered to hunger? “Blessed are you that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for you shall be filled.” That “and” in the text is like a diamond rivet, none can ever take it out or break it. “He suffered you to hunger, and fed you.” He who suffers you to hunger will be sure to feed you yet upon the bountiful provisions of His Grace. Be of good cheer, poor mourning Soul.  
Now let us notice what our spiritual food has been, Brethren. I said the first remark shall be, we have been fed spiritually every day. We have had day by day our souls’ daily bread. As the manna fell daily, so has the food of our souls been given us from time to time by the power of the Spirit of God. Israel in the wilderness was always on the brink of starvation, yet never knew a want. There was nothing between the people’s being starved except (and what a blessed exception!), except the Divine interposition. They could not go to their stores, and say, “Here are tons of food.” They could not, as you may in going down the Thames, look at huge warehouses full of corn laid by in store.  
No, no, there was not a halfpenny worth of store in the house of any Israelite as he went to bed, the whole place was bare, all was gone. There was nothing between them and being starved, I say, but the Divine faithfulness. This is precisely how I have lived, by His Grace, before the Lord ever since I have known Him. There has been nothing between my soul and falling from Grace except the Divine faithfulness—no, nothing whatever of past experience, or all the present knowledge that could have stood me in any place in the time of trial. Not a man among you has anything spiritually to depend upon but the daily interpositions of Covenant Grace.  
Let the child of God remember this, and when he feels himself very weak in himself, and driven to his Lord in prayer, let him rejoice that he is just where God would have him be. When I am weak, then am I strong. When I have nothing, then have I all things. While I have nothing to depend upon of the old corn of the land, the manna will continually fall, and day by day my strength shall be renewed. Has that been your experience, dear Brothers and Sisters? If it has been, then everyday give a fresh song to God, who interposes between your soul and death.  
Yet though the manna came every day, it was always sufficient. I spoke of starvation, but Israel never had any reason even to think of it, for the provender which God sent was not limited so that any man could say, “It is not sufficient for me.” What sufficed one man might not suffice another in ordinary food, but of the manna every man had enough. So to this day it has been in Grace with every Believer. God has given to you and to me, up till this hour, all the Grace we have needed, and though He has given us so much, there is as much more left in the infinite provision as if He had never drawn upon it. Go to the richest man’s store, and take something out, and there is so much less remaining. But when the manna came from Heaven, there was just as much manna left after it had come as before.  
So the Grace of God is just as all-sufficient after you and I have received as it was at the first. The only stint the Israelite knew in the matter of the manna was the limit of his own capacity to receive. He might have as much as ever he could eat. And if we have not had more Grace, it has been our own fault. If we have not lived nearer to God, if we have not possessed more joy, or been more useful—we have not been straitened in our God—we have been straitened in our heart. We have had the provisions of His Grace day by day. We have had as much as we asked for, and often a great deal more. And we might have had as much more as we would if we had but had larger desires and greater confidence in God. The Lord’s name be praised for daily food in this wilderness, and for sufficient food.  
The manna was a very mysterious thing. It is said in the text that it was food that they did not know, and which their fathers had not known. And, certainly, the Grace of God which has kept us to this day is a most mysterious power upon us. The worldling does not understand what it is to eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood, and though we know what it is by sweet experience, we could not explain it. We have lived to this day upon the promises of God, upon the inflowing of the Divine Spirit into our souls, but we cannot tell from where it comes nor where it goes.  
Nor do our fathers after the flesh know. And though our sires, who have gone before us to Heaven, fed on the same food, yet it was to them mysterious as it is to us. Talk of wonders! The Christian man is the greatest wonder in the world! Speak of miracles! What is the Christian life but a continued miracle? A series of miracles, like links in a chain, one following the other—kept alive in the midst of death, and supported by a marvelous food—which the world knows nothing of. We are wonders unto many, and more so to ourselves.  
Brethren, the manna came from Heaven, and here is the very marrow of the Truth of God as to what we have lived upon spiritually—we have lived upon heavenly food. If our supplies had depended on human ministry, they would have failed. If they had depended upon the mere reading of good books, there might be times when we could read to profit. But the everlasting well-springs of Divine love are not affected by our condition of body or of mind—the Grace and love that are treasured up in Christ Jesus come to us when creature cisterns are broken, and all the help of friends is unavailing.  
From You, great God, from You we have derived the nutriment of our spiritual life, and it has always come in due season—up to this hour we have known no lack. You have made us hunger when we have looked to earth for supplies, but when we have turned to You our souls have been satisfied with marrow and fatness! Blessed be Your name forevermore! Dear Brothers and Sisters, do endeavor to live more and more upon unseen things. Let your fellowship be with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. Look not to the granaries of Egypt. Stay not yourself on an arm of flesh. Israel in the wilderness had no granaries, they looked neither to Moab nor Ammon—they looked to Jehovah, and to Jehovah alone. And let it he so with you, and, assuredly, even in the time of famine, your spirit shall be satisfied.  
The children of Israel in the wilderness were fed on the best food that ever fell to the lot of mortals. They did eat angels’ food. Egypt and Assyria, with all their wealth, tasted not of bread which dropped from Heaven. But poor Israel in the howling wilderness was fed with royal dainties. Let the sons of earth be nourished as they may, and fattened like kings’ sons, yet there are no faces that are so fair to look upon with holy joy and exultation as the faces of the men who feed on Christ Jesus who is the Bread that came down from Heaven.  
There are none who are so blessed as those who live upon God Himself—for they have this for their surpassing excellence—that eating as they do this bread, they live forever. He that eats other bread derives temporary nourishment from it, but before long he dies. He who feeds on Christ feeds on immortal food, and more—he becomes immortal himself— the food transforms the man. Matchless is the manna which comes from Heaven, for it makes us heavenly and bears us up to the Heaven from where it came!  
They who live on Christ become like Christ. Being fed upon Him, they become conformed unto His image, made meet to be partakers of the glory of God in Heaven. I wish I could speak so as to stir your hearts with gratitude, but the subject ought to do it without words of mine! And, sitting calmly here with Jordan sparkling before us, and Canaan hard by on the other shore, we are bound to remember all the way whereby the Lord our God has led us—and the food which up to this day has never failed us.  
3. The third favor mentioned in the text, upon which we will pause awhile, is the remarkable raiment. “Your raiment waxed not old upon you.” This has been interpreted by some to mean that they were able constantly to procure from the surrounding nations fresh changes of clothing. Others have said, and there is truth in the remark, that they had among them persons of great skill who were able to use the produce of the flocks and herds, so that they were not without clothes to supply their needs. Indeed, if that is all the meaning, it declares a great cause for thankfulness.  
The tribes never became a ragged regiment—though always on the march they were always well dressed—their clothes waxed not old. But I am not among those who like to blot out every miracle from the Word of God. As the history of the children in the wilderness is altogether miraculous, and cannot be accounted for without the introduction of Divine interposition, it seems to me that it is as natural to expect their raiment to be miraculously given as to expect their food to be. And the run of the text, if it were read by an intelligent child without any prejudice, one way or the other, would suggest a miracle.  
It stands in the midst of miracles, and is one itself. “Your raiment waxed not old upon you.” Certainly this was the old interpretation which the rabbis put upon it—that by a continuous miracle their clothes did not wear out for the whole space of forty years. Though subject to the ordinary wear and tear incidental to traveling, yet their garments still continued to be as good at the end of forty years as they were when first they left the land of Egypt. I believe that to be what the text means. And how, spiritually it is the case with us. “Your garments waxed not old upon you.”  
Do you remember, Brethren, when first you put your garments on? I do well remember when first I discovered, as Adam did in the garden, that I was naked

and I hid myself. I tried then, as you did, to make a fig leaf covering for myself—that would have waxed old soon enough—for the fig leaves of our own righteousness soon wither and decay. But I was pointed to the righteousness which God had prepared, even as Adam and Eve were pointed to the coats of skins which the Lord God had made ready for them. And then I put on the robe of Christ’s righteousness which He had provided, and glory be to His name—that garment has not waxed old upon me yet!  
Is it not so with you? You are not found naked this day. Perhaps you have been a Believer forty or fifty years, but that robe of Grace is ever new and evermore as fresh as at the first, and as suitable as at the beginning. All your nakedness is hidden from the face of God, and hidden from yourself, too. You can now rejoice in the Lord, and approach Him without fear. You do not want to hide yourself, but rather you wish to show yourself to God, and you say, “Search me, O God, and know my ways, try me, and know my heart.” Our garment, then, which covers our nakedness, has not waxed old.  
But we have a garment for more than this, namely, to make us acceptable. Jacob put on his brother Esau’s clothes, and he obtained the blessing of his father. We, too, have put on the garments of Christ, and have won the blessing. He who went into the feast and had not on a wedding garment was cast out. The wedding garment which we wear today is the righteousness which Christ has worked out for us—which He works in us by His Spirit. Now, blessed be His name, that which we put on many years ago, has not waxed old yet—we are still accepted in the Beloved.  
That robe has endured much wear and tear. What with our imperfections and sins, shortcomings and transgressions—if it had not been Divinely worked, it would have been worn out long ago. But blessed be His name, I know, and you know, that we are as acceptable to God this day, as we were when first we believed in Jesus. We are still dear children, still Beloved of the Lord, still heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus— our garment of acceptance has not waxed old.  
Besides, we have the garment of consolation. Men put on their clothes to warm and comfort them, and how often have we wrapped ourselves about with the promises of God’s Word—and with the doctrines of Revelation—and made garments of them to screen us from the cold blast of tribulation? These, also, have not waxed old. Glory be to God for those everlasting promises! When we were young we trusted in them, and when we are old and gray-headed we shall still find them to be fountains of consolation as clear, and true, and sure, and precious as ever they were. You cannot point me to a stale promise in all God’s Book. Neither can you find me a worn-out doctrine.  
The rabbis say that when the young Israelites grew older their clothes grew as they grew. I do not know how that was, but I do know that let us grow in mental stature as we may, the doctrines of the Gospel still are suitable for us. If they were like milk to us when we were babes, they are strong meat to us when we become men. They always meet our needs and conditions, and thus we can joyfully say that the garment which covers our nakedness, which adorns us before God, and affords us consolation, has not waxed old these forty years. Blessed be the name of the Most High for all this!  
4. But we pass on again. The next blessing for which we ought to be grateful is that sustained personal strength. Our spiritual vigor has not decayed during our sojourn in the wilderness, for it is written, “Neither did your foot swell.” A swollen foot is the common ailment of pilgrims in the desert. Much marching over hot sand soon makes the feet become swollen and puffed up, or else it hardens them, and some read this text, “Neither did your foot become callous.” In neither way in Israel’s case was the foot deformed, nor was walking rendered painful.  
For forty years the pilgrims footed it without pain, and though it was a weary land, yet their strength held out till they crossed the Jordan, and came into the promised rest. So it has been with us. Our foot has not swelled these forty years. In the way of perseverance we have been maintained and preserved. Personally I admire the Grace which has kept me in my course, though assailed by many, many fierce temptations, and exposed to great perils in my position. If I wonder, I dare say each one of you have to wonder, too. There have been scores of times since you made a profession, when your feet were almost gone, your steps had well near slipped, and yet your foot has not swollen. You are still on the way, in the way, and nearing the end of the way, kept consistent, kept in godliness, even until now.  
What a blessing! Suppose you had been permitted to faint? Suppose you had been suffered to fall on the road, and had no longer held on your way? You know what the result must have been, for only to perseverance is the promise made. But God has helped you to hold on to this hour, and He will aid you even to the end. Up till now you have held on—have confidence—He will keep you still. Your foot has not swelled in the way of perseverance.  
Neither have you been lamed in the way of service. Perhaps you have been called to do much work for Christ, yet you have not grown tired of it, though sometimes tired in it. Still you have kept to your labor, and found help in it. If you were ever called to preach the Gospel, you would be compelled to see, even if you closed your eyes, how dependent you were upon God. Sunday after Sunday, and weekday after weekday, preaching still, having need to say something fresh continually, and often wondering where it will come from. The preacher is grateful that as yet his foot has not swollen.  
You, too, have gone to your Sunday school, or you have held your position as a solitary testifier in the family, or you have served God as a missionary from door to door, and you have thought, “Surely, I shall come to the end of all I know, and all I can do,” but you have not. Your foot has not swollen all these years, you have kept on in the way of service. So, too, your foot has not swollen in the way of faith. Such little faith you had at first, that you might well have thought it would all die out by now.  
See a spark that floats in the sea, see a stone that hangs in the air, surely these must come to an end. The one must be extinguished, and the other must fall! But it has not been so. God has not quenched the smoking flax, nor broken the bruised reed. Still your foot has not swollen. You believe in Jesus yet, and notwithstanding your unbelief, your faith still can give forth the cry of a loving child, and say, “Lord, I believe, help You my unbelief.”  
In addition to all this, your foot has not swollen in the way of fellowship. You have walked with God, and you have not grown weary of the holy communion. Sometimes that walking with God has cost you much effort, much struggling with inward corruptions, much determination to be clear from the customs and the ways of ungodly men. And you had long ago been tired had not you leaned on your Beloved. But you have leaned so much on Him that your foot has not swollen. You can still walk with Him, and hope to do so until you come to your journey’s end—and sit down with Him forever and ever.  
Moreover, dear Brothers and Sisters, your foot has not swollen in the way of joy. You were happy young men in Christ Jesus, and you are happy fathers now. You were happy young women when first you gave your heart to Christ, and you have grown to be matronly now, but you are as happy as in younger days. The novelty has not worn off, or rather one novelty has been succeeded by another—fresh discoveries have broken out upon you—and Jesus has still to you the dew of His youth. If the old light has passed away, yet the new light of a still brighter sun has come, and you are nearing the “sacred, high, eternal noon,” where the Glory of God and of the Lamb shed splendor all around. He who walks with God shall never weary, though through all eternity he continues the hallowed march. For all this we give to God our thanks yet again.  
5. Bear with me when I notice in the fifth place the memorable blessing of chastisement. I must call special attention to it because God does so in these words, “You shall also consider in your heart.” That unswollen foot, and that unworn garment you need not so much value as this—for this you are specialty bid to consider—to meditate upon in your very heart. Your deepest thoughts are to be given to it, and, consequently, your highest praises. “Consider in your heart, that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you.” My dear Friends, I speak as one of the most humble of God’s servants, but I dare not withhold my testimony.  
I can truly say of everything I have ever tasted in this world of God’s mercy—and my path has been remarkably strewn with Divine loving kindness. I feel more grateful to God for the bodily pain I have suffered, and for all the trials I have endured of many sorts, than I do for anything else except the gift of His dear Son. I am sure I have derived more real benefit and permanent strength and growth in Grace, and every precious thing, from the furnace of affliction, than I have ever derived from prosperity. In fact, I have for years looked upon my great prosperity as being sent as a test and trial of my Graces.  
I regard it as the severest of ordeals which I must lay before God humbly, and ask for Grace to bear. But I have learned to regard affliction as being a sheltered nook in which I am more than usually screened from temptation, and in which I might expect to have the peculiar Presence of the Lord my God. I am not fearful of my ballast, but I am very anxious about my sail. Moreover, I have discovered that there is a sweetness in bitterness not to be found in honey—a safety with Christ in a storm which may be lost in a calm. I know not how to quite express my meaning, but even lowness of spirits and deep sadness have a peculiar charm within them which laughter may emulate in vain.  
It is good for me that I have been afflicted. Now I think if I were to take the testimony of many Christian friends here, they would have to say much the same. So then, as you know all this, let me say nothing about it but just this—ponder and consider much the gratitude you owe to God for His chastening rod. Dwell much in your heart upon what God evidently regards as one of His distinguishing blessings. Do not pass over slightly what God would have you consider. Count the Cross and the rod to be doubly worthy of your deepest thought. “Hear the rod and Him that has appointed it.” Remember that whenever you are chastened you are not chastened as a slave-master smites his victim, nor as a judge orders the criminal to be lashed, but as a man chastens his son, so are you chastened.  
Your chastisement is a sign of sonship, it is a token of love. It is intended for your good. Accept it, therefore, in the spirit of sonship, and “despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither faint when you are corrected of Him.” Remember that chastisement is an assured token of the Covenant relationship. It is the Lord your God that chastens you. If He were not your God He might let you alone. If He had not chosen you to be His own, He would not take such care of you. If He had not given Himself to be your Treasure, He might not be so diligent in weaning you from all other treasures. But because you are His He will withdraw your love away from this poor world.  
Perhaps He will take one child after another from you, that all the love that was lavished on the child might flow towards Himself. Perhaps He will leave you a widow, that the love that ran in the channel of a husband may run altogether to Himself. Perhaps He will take away your riches, that the consolation you did derive from them may be all derived from Him. Perhaps He will smite you, and then lay you on His own bosom, faint and helpless, that you may derive a strength and a joy from fellowship, close, and near with Himself. A closeness which you would never have had if it had not been that these other joys were removed.  
I have seen a little plant beneath an oak tree sheltered from the storm, and wind, and rain, and it felt pleased and happy to be so screened. But I have seen the woodman come with his axe and fell the oak, and the little plant has trembled with fear because its protection was removed. “Alas, for me,” it said, “the hot sun will scorch me, the driving rain will drown me, and the fierce wind will tear me up by the roots.” But instead of these dreadful results, the shelter being removed, the plant has breathed freer air, drank more of the dews of Heaven, received more of the light of the sun, and it has sprung up and borne flowers which else had never bloomed, and seeds that never else had sown themselves in the soil. Be glad when God thus visits you, when He takes away these overshadowing but dwarfing comforts to make you have a clear way between you and Heaven. So that heavenly gifts might come more plentifully to you. Bless God for chastening! Let the sweetest note of your music be to Him that lays not the rod aside, but like a father chastens His children for their good.  
II. Now our time is gone, but you must even be detained, for it is necessary to dwell upon the last thought, which is THE INFERENCE FROM ALL THIS. All this humbling, feeding, clothing, strengthening, chastening— what of it all? Why this—“therefore you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to fear Him.” If you have not shared in these blessings, I shall not speak with you, for the inference would not tell upon you.  
But if in very deed and truth every line here describes to the letter your Christian career, then let these arguments have power with you. He has done thus much for you, will you not serve Him? Are you not His by a thousand bonds? Delivered out of deep distresses, supported under enormous burdens, forgiven heinous sins, saved with a great salvation— are you not now bound by every tie that can bind an honorable man to be obedient to the Lord your God? Take the model of the text. Let your obedience be universal. Keep the commandments of the Lord. Walk in His ways.  
Set your heart to the Scriptures to find out what the Commandments are, and then, once knowing them, perform them at once. Settle it in your soul that you only want to know it is His will, and you will, by His Grace, neither question nor delay—but whatever He says unto you, you will do. Shut not your eyes to any part of His teaching. Be not willfully blind where Christ would guide you with His Word. Let your obedience be entire. In nothing be rebellious. Let that obedience be careful. Does not the text say, “Keep the commandments,” and does not the first verse say, “You shall observe to do”?  
Keep it as though you kept a treasure, carefully putting your heart as a garrison round it. Observe it as they do who have some difficult art, and who watch each order of the teacher, and trace each different part of the process with observant eye, lest they fail in their art by missing any one little thing. Keep and observe. Be careful in your life. Be scrupulous. You serve a jealous God, be jealous of yourself. Let your obedience be practical. The text says, “Walk in His ways.” Carry your service of God into your daily life, into all the minutiae and details of it.  
Do not have an unholy room in your house. Let the bedchamber, let the banqueting hall, let the place of conversation, the place of business—let every place be holiness unto your Gold. Walk in His ways. Whereas others walk up and down in the name of their god, and boast themselves in the idols wherein they trust, you walk in the name of Jehovah your God, and glory always to avow that you are a disciple of Jesus, God’s dear Son—and let your obedience spring from principle, for the text says, “Walk in His ways, and fear Him.”  
Seek to have a sense of His Presence, such as holy spirits have in Heaven who view Him face to face. Remember He is everywhere. You are never absent from that Eye. Tremble, therefore, before Him with that sacred trembling which is consistent with holy faith. Serve Him with faith and trembling, knowing that be you who you may, He is infinite and you are finite. He is perfect and you are sinful, He is All in All and you are nothing at all. With this sacred, reverential, child-like fear pregnant within your spirit, you will be sure to walk practically in obedience to Him.  
I close by saving, we who have followed God’s Word so far, and experienced the faithfulness of God so long, ought never to give way to unbelief. Your foot has not swollen, your garment has not waxed old these forty years—why will you then mistrust or be suspicious? If He meant to deceive you He would have left you long ago—  
*“He cannot have taught you  
To trust in His name,  
And thus far have brought you  
To put you to shame.”*

Go on! The present difficulty will melt like the past. Go on! The future mercy will be as sure as the mercies that have up to now come to you. Though winds and waves go over your head, and friends vanish from you, “trust in the Lord, and do good, so shall you dwell in the land, and, verily, you shall be fed.” The heavens and the earth may pass away, and rocks turn to rivers, and the sun turn to a coal, but the eternal promise never shall fail, and the heart of infinite love shall never change. “Be of good comfort, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord.”

What encouragement all this gives to young Brethren who are setting out in the Christian life, or about to engage in the Christian ministry! With that reflection I close. If your fathers, and your fellow Christians of elder years can say that their bread has been given them, and their supplies have been all-sufficient, then rest assured, my Brethren, you are entering upon a happy life, even if it is a tried and difficult one. For the Lord who has dealt so well with some of His people, gives in that fact a pledge that He will deal so with all. Commit yourselves wholly to God. Give up all your powers to His service. Work for Him with all your hearts, and He will supply your needs.

Think not of this world’s gain, but “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” Lay self in the dust, and let Christ be All in All. Live by the rule of Truth. Walk by the way of faith. Have confidence in God, and your path shall be as brightness, and your glory as a lamp that burns. Joined on earth to the hand of Christian soldiers, you shall, before long, be added to the countless host of the Church triumphant, who at this hour bear witness that God is faithful, and that His promise is sure.

O you who are not Believers, methinks your mouths must water this morning to come and join with God’s Israel! And remember that simply believing on the Lord Jesus Christ will bring you to be numbered with Israel. If you will but with your hearts accept Christ to be your Savior, then His people shall be your people, His God shall be your God. Where He dwells and His people dwell, you shall dwell. And if for awhile you are buried with Him, you shall arise again to live forever with Him in Heaven. May the Holy Spirit seal this on your hearts. Amen.

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ELECTION AND HOLINESS  
NO. 303

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 11, 1860, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

**“Behold, the Heaven and the Heaven of heavens is the Lord’s your God, the earth also, with all that therein is. Only the Lord had a delight in your fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them, even you above**

**all people, as it is this day.  
Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your  
heart and be no more stiff-necked.”  
Deuteronomy 10:14, 15, 16.**

HE who preaches the whole Truth of God as it is in Jesus will labor under continual disadvantages—albeit that the grand advantage of having the presence and blessing of God will more than compensate the greatest loss. It has been my earnest endeavor ever since I have preached the Word, never to keep back a single doctrine which I believe to be taught of God. It is time that we had done with the old and rusty systems that have so long curbed the freeness of religious speech. The Arminian trembles to go an inch beyond Arminius or Wesley and many a Calvinist refers to John Gill or John Calvin, as the ultimate authority.

It is time that the systems were broken up and that there was sufficient grace in all our hearts to believe everything taught in God’s Word, whether it was taught by either of these men or not. I have frequently found when I have preached what is called high doctrine, because I found it in my text, that some people have been offended. They could not enjoy it, could not endure it and went away. They were generally people who were best gone. I have never regretted their absence.

On the other hand, when I have taken for my text some sweet invitation and have preached the freeness of Christ’s love to man. When I have warned sinners that they are responsible while they hear the Gospel and that if they reject Christ their blood will be upon their own heads, I find another class of doubtless excellent individuals who cannot see how these two things agree. And therefore, they also turn aside and wade into the deceptive miry bogs of Antinomianism. I can only say with regard to them, that I had rather also that they should go to their own sort, than that they should remain with my congregation.

We seek to hold the Truth of God. We know no difference between high doctrine and low doctrine. If God teaches it, it is enough. If it is not in the Word, away with it! Away with it! But if it is in the Word, agreeable or disagreeable, systematic or disorderly, I believe it. It may seem to us as if one Truth of God stands in opposition to another, but we are fully convinced that it cannot be so, that it is a mistake in our judgment. That the two

things do agree we are quite clear, though where they meet we do not know as yet, but hope to know hereafter. That God has a people whom He has chosen for Himself and who shall show forth His praise, we do believe to be a doctrine legible in the Word of God to every man who cares to read that Book with an honest and candid judgment.

That, at the same time, Christ is freely presented to every creature under Heaven and that the invitations and exhortations of the Gospel are honest and true invitations—not fictions or myths, not tantalizations and mockeries, but realities and facts—we do also unfeignedly believe. We subscribe to both Truths of God with our hearty assent and consent.

Now, this morning it may be that some of you will not approve of what I have to say. You will remember, however, that I do not seek your approbation—that it will be sufficient for me if I have cleared my conscience concerning a grand Truth of God and have preached the Gospel faithfully. I am not accountable to you, nor you to me. You are accountable to God, if you reject a Truth of His. I am accountable to Him if I preach an error. I am not afraid to stand before His bar with regard to the great doctrines which I shall preach to you this day.

Now, two things this morning. First, I shall attempt to set forth God’s Election. Secondly, to show its practical bearings. You have both in the text, “Behold, the Heaven and the Heaven of heavens is the Lord’s your God, the earth also, with all that therein is. Only the Lord had a delight in your fathers to love them and He chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day.” And, then, in the second place, its practical bearings, “Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart and be no more stiff-necked.”

I. In SETTING FORTH ELECTION, I must have you observe, first of all, its extraordinary singularity. God has chosen to Himself a people whom no man can number, out of the children of Adam—out of the fallen and apostate race who sprang from the loins of a rebellious man. Now, this is a wonder of wonders, when we come to consider that the Heaven, even the Heaven of heavens, is the Lord’s. If God must have a chosen race, why did He not select one from the majestic orders of angels, or from the flaming cherubim and seraphim who stand around His Throne? Why was not Gabriel fixed upon? Why was he not so constituted that from his loins there might spring a mighty race of angels and why were not these chosen of God from before the foundations of the world?

What could there be in man, a creature lower than the angels, that God should select him rather than the angelic spirits? Why were not the cherubim and seraphim given to Christ? Why did He not take up angels? Why did He not assume their nature and take them into union with Himself? An angelic body might be more in keeping with the Person of Deity, than a body of weak and suffering flesh and blood. There were something congruous if He had said unto the angels, “You shall be My sons.”

But, no! Though all these were His own, He passes by the hierarchy of angels and stoops to man. He takes up an apostate worm and says unto him, “You shall be My son,” and to myriads of the same race He cries, “you shall be My sons and daughters, by a Covenant forever.” “But,” says one, “It seems that God intended to choose a fallen people that He might in them show forth His grace. Now, the angels, of course, would be unsuitable for this, since they have not fallen.” I reply, there are angels that have fallen. There were angels that kept not the first estate, but fell from their dignity. And how is it that these are consigned to blackness of darkness forever?

Answer me, you that deny God’s sovereignty and hate His election— how is it that angels are condemned to everlasting fire, while to you, the children of Adam, the Gospel of Christ is freely preached? The only answer that can possibly be given is this—God wills to do it. He has a right to do as He pleases with His own mercy. Angels deserve no mercy—we deserve none. Nevertheless, He gave it to us and He denied it to them. They are bound in chains, reserved for everlasting fire to the last great day, but we are saved. Before Your sovereignty, I bow, great God and acknowledge that You do as You will and that You give no account of Your matters. Why, if there were any reason to move God in His creatures, He would certainly have chosen devils rather than men. The sin of the first of the fallen angels was not greater than that of Adam.

It is not the time to enter into that question. I could, if opportunity were needed, prove it to be rather less than greater, if there were degrees in sin. Had the angels been reclaimed, they could have glorified God more than we. They could have sang His praises louder than we can, clogged as we are with flesh and blood. But passing by the greater, He chose the less, that He might show forth His sovereignty, which is the brightest jewel in the crown of His Divinity. Our Arminian antagonists always leave the fallen angels out of the question—for it is not convenient to them to recollect this ancient instance of Election. They call it unjust, that God should choose one man and not another.

By what reasoning can this be unjust when they will admit that it was righteous enough in God to choose one race—the race of men and leave another race—the race of angels—to be sunk into misery on account of sin? Brethren, let us have done with arraigning God at our poor fallible judgment seat. He is good and does righteousness. Whatever He does we may know to be right, whether we can see the righteousness or not.

I have given you, then, some reasons at the start, why we should regard God’s Election as being singular. But I have to offer to you others. Observe, the text not only says, “Behold, the Heaven, even the Heaven of the heavens is the Lord’s,” but it adds, “the earth also, with all that therein is.” Now, when we think that God has chosen us, when you, my Brethren, who by grace have put your trust in Christ, read your “title clear to mansions in the skies,” you may well pause and say in the language of that hymn—

*“Pause, my Soul I adore and wonder! Ask, ‘O why such love to me?’”*

Kings passed by and beggars chosen. Wise men left, but fools made to know the wonders of His redeeming love. Publicans and harlots sweetly compelled to come to the feast of mercy. Proud Pharisees suffered to trust in their own righteousness and perish in their vain boastings. God’s choice will ever seem in the eyes of unrenewed men to be a very strange one. He has passed over those whom we should have selected and He has chosen just the odds and ends of the universe—the men who thought themselves the least likely ever to taste of His Grace. Why were we chosen as a people to have the privilege of the Gospel? Are there not other nations as great as we have been? Sinful a people as this English nation has manifested itself to be, why has God selected the Anglo-Saxon race to receive the pure Truth of God, while nations who might have received the light with even greater joy than ourselves, still lie shrouded in darkness and the sun of the Gospel has never risen on them? Why, again, I say, in the case of each individual, why is the man chosen who is chosen? Can any answer be given but just the answer of our Savior—“Even so, Father, for it seems good in Your sight”?

Yet one other thought, to make God’s Election marvelous, indeed. God had unlimited power of creation. Now, if he willed to make a people who should be His favorites, who should be united to the Person of His Son and who should reign with Him, why did He not make a new race? When Adam sinned, it would have been easy enough to strike the world out of existence. He had but to speak and this round earth would have been dissolved, as the bubble dies into the wave that bears it. There would have been no trace of Adam’s sin left, the whole might have died away and have been forgotten forever.

But no! Instead of making a new people, a pure people who could not sin—instead of taking to Himself creatures that were pure, unsullied, without spot—He takes a depraved and fallen people and lifts these up and that, too, by costly means—by the death of His own Son—by the work of His own Spirit. To think that these must be the jewels in His crown to reflect His glory forever, oh, singular choice! Oh, strange election, my soul is lost in Your depths and I can only pause and cry, “Oh, the goodness, oh, the mercy, oh, the sovereignty of God’s Grace.”

Having thus spoken about its singularity, I turn to another subject. Observe the unconstrained freeness of electing love. In our text this is hinted at by the word “ONLY.” Why did God love their fathers? Why, only because He did so. There is no other reason. “Only, the Lord had a delight in your fathers to love them and He chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day.” There was doubtless some wise reason for the Lord’s acts, for He does all things after the counsel of His will, but there certainly could not be any reason in the excellence or virtue of the creature whom He chose.

Now, just dwell upon that for a moment. Let us remark that there is no original goodness in those whom God selects. What was there in Abraham that God chose him? He came out of an idolatrous people and it is said of his posterity—a Syrian ready to perish was your father. As if God would show that it was not the goodness of Abraham, He says, “Look unto the rock from where you were hewn and to the hole of the pit from where you were dug. Look unto Abraham your father and unto Sarah that bare you— for I called him alone and blessed him and increased him.” There was nothing more in Abraham than in any one of us why God should have selected him, for whatever good was in Abraham God put there.

Now, if God put it there, the motive for His putting it there could not be the fact of His putting it there. You cannot find a motive for a fact in itself—there must be some motive lying higher than anything which can be found in the mere act of God. If God chose a man to make that man holy, righteous and good—He cannot have chosen him because he was to be good and righteous. It were absurd to reason thus. It were drawing a cause for an effect and making an effect a cause. If I were to plead that the rose bud were the author of the root, well! I might, indeed, be laughed at.

But were I to urge that any goodness in man is the ground of God’s choice, when I call to recollection that that goodness is the effect of God’s choice, I should be foolish indeed. That which is the elect cannot be the cause. But what original good is there in any man? If God chose us for anything good in ourselves, we must all be left unchosen. Have we not all an evil heart of unbelief? Have we not all departed from His ways? Are we not all by nature corrupt, enemies to God by wicked works? If He chooses us it cannot be because of any original goodness in us. “But,” says one, “perhaps it may be because of goodness foreseen. God has chosen His people, because He foresees that they will believe and be saved.” A singular idea, indeed!

Here are a certain number of poor persons and a prince comes into the place. To some ninety out of the hundred he distributes gold. Some one asks the question, “Why did the prince give this gold to those ninety?” A madman in a corner, whose face ought never to be seen, replies, “He gave it to them because he foresaw that they would have it.” But how could he foresee that they would have it apart from the fact that he gave it to them?

Now, you say that God gives faith, repentance, salvation, because He foresaw that men would have it. He did not foresee it apart from the fact that He intended to give it them. He foresaw that He would give them grace. But what was the reason that He gave it to them? Certainly, not His foresight. That were absurd, indeed! And none but a madman would reason thus.

Oh, Father, if You have given me life and light and joy and peace, the reason is known only to Yourself. For reasons in myself I never can find, for I am still a wanderer from You and often does my faith flicker and my love grow dim. There is nothing in me to merit esteem or give You delight. It is all by Your grace, Your grace alone that I am what I am. So will every Christian say. So must every Christian, indeed, confess.

But is it not all idle talk, even to controvert for a single moment, with the absurd idea that man can shackle his Maker? Shall the purpose of the Eternal be left contingent on the will of man? Shall man be really his

Maker’s master? Shall free will take the place of the Divine energy? Shall man take the Throne of God and set aside as he pleases all the purposes of Jehovah—compelling Him by merit to choose him? Shall there be something that man can do that shall control the motions of Jehovah? It is said by someone that men give free will to everyone but God and speak as if God must be the slave of men.

Yes, we believe that God has given to man a free will—that we do not deny—but we will have it that God has a free will also—that, moreover, He has a right to exercise it and does exercise it. And that no merit of man can have any compulsion with the Creator. Merit, on the one hand, is impossible. And even if we did possess it, it could not be possible that we could possess it in such a degree as to merit the gift of Christ. Remember, if we deserve salvation, man must have virtue enough to merit Heaven, to merit union with Jesus, to merit, in fact, everlasting glory.

You go back to the old Romish idea, if you once slip your anchor and cut your cable and talk about anything in man that could have moved the mercy of God. “Well,” says one, “this is vile Calvinism.” Be it so, if you choose to call it so. Calvin found his doctrine in the Scriptures. Doubtless he may have also received some instruction from the works of Augustine, but that mighty doctor of grace learned it from the writings of St. Paul. And St. Paul, the Apostle of Grace, received it by inspiration from Jesus the Lord. We can trace our pedigree directly to Christ Himself. Therefore, we are not ashamed of any title that may be appended to a glorious Truth of God. Election is free and has nothing to do with any original goodness in man, or goodness foreseen, or any merit that man can possibly bring before God.

I come to the hardest part of my task this morning—Election in its justice. Now, I shall defend this great fact, that God has chosen men to Himself and I shall regard it from rather a different point of view from that which is usually taken. My defense is just this. You tell me, if God has chosen some men to eternal life, that He has been unjust. I ask you to prove it. The burden of the proof lies with you. For I would have you remember that none merited this at all. Is there one man in the whole world who would have the impertinence to say that he merits anything of his Maker?

If so, be it known unto you that he shall have all he merits. And his reward will be the flames of Hell forever, for that is the utmost that any man ever merited of God. God is in debt to no man and at the Last Great Day every man shall have as much love, as much pity and as much goodness, as he deserves. Even the lost in Hell shall have all they deserve, yes, and woe the day for them when they shall have the wrath of God, which will be the summit of their deservings. If God gives to every man as much as he merits, is He therefore to be accused of injustice because He gives to some infinitely more than they merit?

Where is the injustice of a man doing as he wills with his own? Has he not a right to give what he pleases? If God is in debt to any, then there would be injustice. But He is indebted to none and if He gives His favors according to His own sovereign will, who is he that shall find fault? You have not been injured. God has not wronged you. Bring up your claims and He will fulfill them to the last jot. If you are righteous and can claim something of your Maker, stand up and plead your virtues and He will answer you.

Though you gird up your loins like a man and stand before Him and plead your own righteousness, He will make you tremble and abhor yourself and roll in dust and ashes. For your righteousness is a lie and your best performance but as filthy rags. God injures no man in blessing some. Strange is it that there should be any accusation brought against God, as though He were unjust.

I defend it again on another ground. To which of you has God ever refused His mercy and love, when you have sought His face? Has He not freely proclaimed the Gospel to you all? Does not His Word bid you come to Jesus? And does it not solemnly say, “Whosoever will, let him come”? Are you not every Sabbath invited to come and put your trust in Christ? If you will not do it, but will destroy your own souls, who is to blame? If you put your trust in Christ you shall be saved—God will not run back from His promise. Prove Him, try Him. The moment you renounce sin and trust in Christ, that moment you may know yourself to be one of His chosen ones. But if you will wickedly put from you the Gospel which is daily preached, if you will not be saved, then on your own head is your blood.

The only reason why you can be lost is because you would continue in sin and would not cry to be saved from there. You have rejected Him, you have put Him far from you and left to yourselves, you will not receive Him. “Well, but,” says one, “I cannot come to God.” Your powerlessness to come lies in the fact that you have no will to come. If you were but once willing you would lack no power. You can not come, because you are so wedded to your lusts, so fond of your sin. That is why you cannot come. That very inability of yours is your crime, your guilt. You could come if your love to evil and self were broken.

The inability lies not in your physical nature but in your depraved moral nature. Oh, if you were willing to be saved! There is the point—there is the point! You are not willing, nor will you ever be, till Grace makes you willing. But who is to blame because you are not willing to be saved? None but yourself. You have the whole blame. If you refuse eternal life, if you will not look to Christ, if you will not trust to Him, remember your own will damns you. Was there ever a man who had a sincere will to be saved in God’s way who was denied salvation? No, no, a thousand times NO, for such a man is already taught of God. He who gives will, will not deny power. Inability lies mainly in the will. When once a man is made willing in the day of God’s power, he is made able also. Therefore, your destruction lies at your own door.

Then let me ask another question. You say it is unjust that some should be lost while others are saved. Who makes those to be lost that are lost? Did God cause you to sin? Has the Spirit of God ever persuaded you to do a wrong thing? Has the Word of God ever bolstered you up in your own self-righteousness? No. God has never exercised any influence upon

you to make you go the wrong way. The whole tendency of His Word, the whole tendency of the preaching of the Gospel, is to persuade you to turn from sin unto righteousness, from your wicked ways to Jehovah.

I say again, God is just. If you reject the Savior proclaimed to you, if you refuse to trust Him, if you will not come to Him and be saved, you are lost. God is supremely just in your being lost, but if He chooses to exert the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit upon some of you, He is surely just in giving the mercy which no man can claim and so just that through eternal ages there shall never be found anything new in His acts but the “Holy, Holy, Holy.” God shall be hymned by the redeemed and by cherubim and seraphim, and even the lost in Hell shall be compelled to utter an involuntary bass to that dread song, “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.”

Having thus tried to defend the justice of Election, I now turn to notice the truth of it. I may possibly have here some godly men who cannot receive this doctrine. Well, my Friend, I am not angry with you for not being able to receive it, because no man can receive it unless it is given him from God. No Christian will ever rejoice in it unless he has been taught of the Spirit. But, after all, my Brother, if you are a renewed man, you believe it. You are coming upstairs to argue with me. Come along and I will allow you to argue with yourself and before five minutes have passed you will out of your own mouth prove my point. Come, my dear Brother, you do not believe that God can justly give to some men more grace than to others.

Very well. Let us kneel down and pray together. And you shall pray first. You no sooner begin to pray than you say, “O Lord, be pleased, in your infinite mercy, to send Your Holy Spirit to save this congregation and be pleased to bless my relatives according to the flesh.” Stop! Stop! You are asking God to do something which, according to your theory, is not right. You are asking Him to give them more grace than they have got. You are asking Him to do something special. Positively, you are pleading with God that He would give grace to your relatives and friends and to this congregation. How do you make that to be right in your theory?

If it would be unjust in God to give more grace to one man than to another, how very unjust of you to ask Him to do it! If it is all left to man’s free will why do you beg the Lord to interfere? You cry, “Lord, draw them Lord, break their hearts, renew their spirits.” Now, I very heartily use this prayer, but how can you do it, if you think it unrighteous in the Lord to endow this people with more grace than He does the rest of the human race? “Oh,” but you say, “I feel that it is right and I will ask Him.”

Very well, then, if it is right in you to ask, it must be right in Him to give. It must be right in Him to give mercy to men and to some men such mercy that they may be constrained to be saved. You have thus proved my point and I do not want a better proof. And now, my Brother, we will have a song together and we will see how we can get on there. Open your hymn book and you sing in the language of your Wesleyan hymnbook—

*“Oh, yes, I do love Jesus*

*Because He first loved me.”*  
There, Brother, that is Calvinism. You have let it out again. You love Jesus because He first loved you. Well, how is it you come to love Him while others are left not loving Him?

Is that to your honor or to His honor? You say, “It is to the praise of Grace. Let Grace have the praise.” Very well, Brother. We shall get on very well, after all, for, although we may not agree in preaching, yet we agree, you see, in praying and praising. Preaching a few months ago in the midst of a large congregation of Methodists, the Brethren were all alive, giving all kinds of answers to my sermon, nodding their heads and crying, “Amen!” “Hallelujah,” “Glory be to God!” and the like. They completely woke me up. My spirit was stirred and I preached away with an unusual force and vigor. And the more I preached the more they cried, “Amen!” “Hallelujah,” “Glory be to God!”

At last, a part of the text led me to what is styled high doctrine. So I said, this brings me to the doctrine of Election. There was a deep drawing of breath. “Now, my Friends, you believe it,” said I. They seemed to say. “No, we don’t.” But you do and I will make you sing “Hallelujah,” over it. I will so preach it to you that you will acknowledge it and believe it. So I put it thus—Is there no difference between you and other men? “Yes, yes; glory be to God, glory!” There is a difference between what you were and what you are now? “Oh, yes! Oh, yes!” There is sitting by your side a man who has been to the same Chapel as you have, heard the same Gospel, he is unconverted and you are converted. Who has made the difference, yourself or God? “The Lord!” said they, “the Lord! Glory! Hallelujah,” Yes, cried I and that is the doctrine of Election!

That is all I contend for, that if there is a difference the Lord made the difference. Some good man came up to me and said, “You are right, lad! You are right. I believe your doctrine of Election. I do not believe it as it is preached by some people, but I believe that we must give the glory to God, we must put the crown on the right head.” After all, there is an instinct in every Christian heart, that makes him receive the substance of this doctrine, even if he will not receive it in the peculiar form in which we put it. That is enough for me.

I do not care about the words or the phraseology, or the form of creed in which I may be in the habit of stating the doctrine. I do not want you to subscribe to my creed, but I do want you to subscribe to a creed that gives God the glory of His salvation. Every saint in Heaven sings, “Grace has done it.” And I want every saint on earth to sing the same song, “Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His blood, to Him be the glory forever and ever.” The prayers, the praises, the experience of those who do not believe this doctrine prove the doctrine better than anything I can say. I do not care to prove it better and I leave it as it is.

II. We now turn to ELECTION IN ITS PRACTICAL INFLUENCES. You will see that the precept is annexed to the doctrine—God has loved you above all people that are upon the face of the earth, therefore, “circumcise the foreskin of your hearts and be no more stiff-necked.” It is whispered

that Election is a licentious doctrine. Say it out loud and then I will answer you. Election is a licentious doctrine? How do you prove it? It is my business to prove to you that it is the very reverse. “Well but,” cries one, “I know a man that believes in Election and yet lives in sin.”

Yes and I suppose that disproves it? So that if I can go through London and find any ragged drunken fellow, who believes a doctrine and lives in sin, the fact of his believing it disproves it? Singular logic, that! I will undertake to disprove any truth in the world if you only give me that to be my rule.

Why, I can bring up some filthy, scurvy creature, that doubts the universal bounty of God. Then, I suppose that will disprove it? I might bring up to you some wretch that is lying in sin, who yet believes that if he were to cry “Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner,” from his heart, he would he saved, even though he was on his dying bed. I suppose his believing that, disproves it—does it? No! You know very well, though you use such logic as that against us, you would not use it against yourself. The fact is, that the bad lives or the good lives of some individuals cannot be taken as a proof either for or against any set of doctrines.

There are holy men that are mistaken. There are unholy men who receive truth. That may be seen any day by any man who will candidly make the observation. If, however, any one sect were peculiarly full of ungodly professors and hypocrites, then would I admit the force of your argument. But I defy you to the proof. The men that have believed this doctrine have been the wide world over—though perhaps, it is not my place to say it, except that I will glory in it as Paul did—have been the most zealous, most earnest, most holy men. Remember, Sirs, you that scoff at this doctrine, that you owe your liberties to men who held it.

Who carved out for England its liberties? I do not hesitate to give the palm to the strong arms of the Ironsides and the mighty will of Oliver Cromwell. But what made them dash to battle as they did but a firm belief that they were God’s chosen ones and could sweep everything before them, because the Lord their God was with them? It was said in Charles the Second’s time that if you wanted to find believers in Arminianism, you could find them in every pot-house. But if you wanted to find those who believed the doctrine of grace you must go into the dungeons where the saints of God were shut up, because of the rigidity of their lives and the peculiar straitness of their conversation.

Never were men more heavenly-minded than the Puritans. And what Puritan can you find that holds any other doctrine than that which I preach today? You may find some modern doctor who teaches the reverse, but march through centuries and with few exceptions, where are the saints who denied the Election of God? The banner has been passed from one hand to the other. Martyrs died for it! they sealed the Truth of God with their blood. And this Truth of God shall stand when rolling years shall cease to move. This Truth of God which shall be believed when every error and superstition shall crumble to the dust from which they sprang.

But I come back to my proof. It is laid down as a matter of theory that this doctrine is licentious. We oppose that theory. The fitness of things proves that it is not so. Election teaches that God has chosen some to be kings and priests to God. When a man believes that he is chosen to be a king, would it be a legitimate inference to draw from it—“I am chosen to be a king, therefore I will be a beggar. I am chosen to sit upon a throne, therefore I will wear rags”? Why, you would say, “There would be no argument, no sense in it.”

But there is quite as much sense in that as in your supposition—that God has chosen His people to be holy and yet that a knowledge of this fact will make them unholy. No! The man, knowing that a peculiar dignity has been put upon him by God, feels working in his bosom a desire to live up to his dignity. “God has loved me more than others,” says he—“then, will I love Him more than others. He has put me above the rest of mankind by His Sovereign Grace, let me live above them—let me be more holy—let me be more eminent in grace than any of them.”

If there is a man that can misuse the dignity of grace which Christ has given him and pervert that into an argument for licentiousness, he is not to be found among us. He must be something less than man, fallen though man be, who would infer, from the fact that he has become a Son of God by God’s free grace, that therefore he ought to live like a son of the devil. Or, who should say, “Because God has ordained me to be holy, therefore I will be unholy.” That were the strangest, oddest, most perverted, most abominable reasoning that ever could be used. I do not believe there is a creature living that could be capable of using it.

Again—not only the fitness of things, but the thing itself proves that it is not so. Election is a separation. God has set apart him that is godly for Himself, has separated a people out of the mass of mankind. Does that separation allow us to draw the inference thus—“God has separated me, therefore, I will live as other men live.” No! If I believe that God has distinguished me by His discriminating love and separated me, then I hear the cry, “Come out from among them and be you separate and touch not the unclean thing and I will be a Father unto you.” It were strange if the decree of separation should engender an unholy union. It cannot be.

I deny, once and for all in the name of all who hold the Truth of God—I deny solemnly, as in the presence of God, that we have any thought that because God has separated us, therefore we ought to go and live as others live. No, God forbid! Our separation is a ground and motive for our separating altogether from sinners. I heard a man say once, “Sir, if I believed that doctrine I should live in sin.” My reply to him was this, “I dare say YOU would! I dare say YOU would!” “And why,” said he, “should I more than you?”

Simply because you are a man and I trust I am a new man in Christ Jesus. To man that is renewed by grace, there is no doctrine that could make him love sin. If a man by nature is as a swine that wallows in the mire, turn him into a sheep and there is NO doctrine you can teach that can make him go and wallow in the mire again. His nature is changed.

There is a raven transformed into a dove. I will give the dove to you and you may teach it whatever you like, but that dove will not eat carrion any more. It cannot endure it—its nature is entirely changed. Here is a lion roaring for its prey. I will change it into a lamb. And I defy you to make that lamb, by any doctrine, go and redden its lips with blood. It cannot do it—its nature is changed.

A friend on board the steamboat, when we were coming across from Ireland, asked one of the sailors, “Would you like a risqué song?” “No,” said he, “I do not like such things.” “Would you like a dance?” “No,” said he, “I have a religion that allows me to swear and be drunk as often as ever I please and that is never—for I hate all such things with perfect hatred.” Christian men keep from sin because their nature abhors sin. Do not imagine we are kept back from sin because we are terrified with threats of damnation. We have no fear, except the fear of offending our loving Father

we do not want to sin—our thirst is for holiness and not for vice. But if you have a kind of religion that always keeps you in restraint, so that you say, “I should like to go to the theater tonight if I dare”—if that is what you say, depend upon it, your religion is not of much value. You must have a religion that makes you hate the things you once loved and love that which you once hated—a religion that draws you out of your old life and puts you into a new life. Now, if a man has a new nature, what doctrine of Election can make that new nature act contrary to its instincts? Teach the man what you will, that man will not turn again to vanity. The Election of God gives a new nature—so, even if the doctrine were dangerous, the new nature would keep it in check.

But once more, bring me here the madman—shall I call him?—bring me the beast or devil that would say, “God has set His love upon me from before all worlds. My name is on Jesus’ heart. He bought me with His blood. My sins are all forgiven. I shall see God’s face with joy and acceptance, therefore, I hate God, therefore I live in sin.” Bring me up the monster, I say, and when you have brought up the fool, even then I will not admit that there is reason in that vile lie, that damnable calumny, which you have cast upon this doctrine—that it makes men live in licentiousness.

There is no Truth of God that can so nerve a man to piety as the fact that he was chosen of God before time began. Loved by You with an unlimited love that never moves and that endures to the end—O my God! I desire to spend myself in Your service—

*“Love, so amazing, so Divine,*

*Demands my life, my soul, my all,”*  
and gratitude to God, for this rich mercy constrains us, compels us to walk in the fear of God and to love and serve Him all our lives.

Now, two lessons and then I will send you away. The first lesson is this—Christian Brothers and Sisters—chosen of God and ordained unto salvation—remember that this is a doctrine everywhere spoken against. Do not hide it, do not conceal it—for remember, Christ has said, “He that is ashamed of my words, of him will I be ashamed.” But take care that you do not dishonor it. Be you holy, even as he is holy. He has called you— stand by your calling—give diligence to make your calling and election sure. Put on, as the elect of God, hearts of compassion, holiness and love and let the world see that God’s chosen ones are made by grace the choicest of men, who live nearer to Christ and are more like Christ, than any other people upon the face of the earth.

And let me add, if the world sneers at you, you can look your enemy in the face and never tremble. For this is a degree of nobility, a patent of Divine dignity for which you never need blush but which will keep you from ever being a coward, or bowing your knee before pomp and station, when they are associated with vice. This doctrine has never been liked because it is a hammer against tyrants. Men have chosen their own elect ones, their kings, dukes and earls and God’s election interferes with them.

There are some that will not bow the knee to Baal, who hold themselves to be God’s true aristocracy, who will not resign their consciences to the dictation of another. Men rail and rave and rage because this doctrine makes a good man strong in his loins and will not let him bend his knee, or turn back and be a coward. Those Ironsides were made mighty because they held themselves to be no mean men. They bowed before God, but before men they could not and would not bow. Stand fast, therefore, in this your liberty and be not moved from the hope of your calling.

One other word of exhortation—it is the second lesson. There are some of you who are making an excuse out of the doctrine of Election—an excuse, an apology for your own unbelieving and wicked hearts. Now remember the doctrine of Election exercises no constraint whatever upon you. If you are wicked you are so because you will be so. If you reject the Savior you do so because you will do so. The doctrine does not make you reject Him. You may make it an excuse, but it is an idle one. It is a cobweb garment that will be rent away at the last day. I beseech you lay it aside and remember that the Truth of God which you have to do is this, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” If you believe, you are saved.

If you trust Christ, be you who you may, or what you may, the wide world over, you are a saved man. Do not say, “I will not believe because I do not know whether I am elected.” You cannot know that until you have believed. Your business is with believing. “Whosoever”—there is no limitation in it—“Whosoever believes in Christ shall be saved.” You, as well as any other man. If you trust Christ, your sins shall be forgiven, your iniquities blotted out. O may the Holy Spirit breathe the new life into you. Bowing the knee, I beseech you, kiss the Son lest He be angry. Receive His mercy now, steel not your hearts against the gracious influence of His love. Yield to Him and you shall then find that you yielded because He made you yield—that you came to Him because He drew you. And that He drew you because He had loved you with an everlasting love.

May God command His blessing for Jesus’ sake. Amen.  
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Sermon #58 New Park Street Pulpit 1

CANAAN ON EARTH  
NO. 58

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 30, 1855, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

**For the land which you go to posses is not as the land of Egypt, from where you came out, where you sowed your seed and watered it with your foot, as a garden of herbs. But the land where you go to possess**

**it, is a land of hills and valleys and drinks water of the rain of Heaven. A land which the Lord your God cares for. The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year.”  
Deuteronomy 11:10, 11, 12.**

IT has generally been considered that the passage of the Jordan by the Israelites is typical of death and that Canaan is a fitting representation of Heaven. We believe that in some sense it is true and we do fondly cherish the household words of those hymns which describe our passing through Jordan’s billows and landing safely on Canaan’s side. But we think that the allegory does not hold—that Jordan is not a fair exhibition of death— nor the land of Canaan a fair picture of the sweet land beyond the swelling flood which the Christian gains after death. For mark you—after the children of Israel had entered into Canaan, they had to fight with their enemies. It was a land filled with foes! Every city they entered, they had to take by storm, unless a miracle dismantled it. They were warriors, even in the land of Canaan, fighting for their own inheritance. And though each tribe had its lot marked out, they had to conquer the giant Anakim and encounter terrible hosts of Canaanites. But when we cross the river of death, we shall have no foes to fight, no enemies to encounter. Heaven is a place already prepared for us. Out of it the evil ones have long ago been driven. There Brethren shall await us with pleasing faces, kind hands shall clasp ours and only loving words shall be heard. The shout of war shall never be raised by us in Heaven! We shall throw our swords away and the scabbards with them. No battles with warriors, there! No plains soaked with blood, no hills where robbers dwell, no inhabitants with chariots of iron. It is “a land flowing with milk and honey.” And it dreams not of the foeman of Canaan of old. We think the Church has lost the beauty of Scripture, in taking Jordan to mean death—and that a far fuller meaning is the true allegory to be connected with it. Egypt, as we have lately observed to you, was typical of the condition of the children of God while they are in bondage to the law of sin. There they are made to work unceasingly, without wages or profit, but continually subject to pains. We said, again, that the coming up out of Egypt was the type of the deliverance which every one of God’s people enjoys, when, by faith, he strikes the blood of Jesus on his lintel and his doorpost and spiritually eats the Paschal Lamb. And we can also tell you, now, that the passage through the wilderness is typical of that state of hoping, fearing, doubting, wavering, inconstancy and distrust which we usually experience between the period when we come out of Egypt and attain unto the full assurance of faith.

Many of you, my dear Hearers, have really come out of Egypt. But you are still wandering about in the wilderness. “We that have believed do enter into rest.” But you, though you have eaten of Jesus, have not so believed on Him as to have entered into the Canaan of rest. You are the Lord’s people, but you have not come into the Canaan of assured faith, confidence and hope, where we wrestle no longer with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. You have not come to that place where it is no longer a matter of doubt with us whether we shall be saved, but we feel that we are saved! I have known Believers who have existed for years with almost no doubt as to their acceptance. They have enjoyed a sweet and blessed reliance on Christ! They have come into Canaan. They have fed on the good old corn of the land. They now “lie passive in His hands and know no will but His.” They have such a sweet oneness with their blessed Lord Jesus that they lay their head on His breast all day long! They have scarcely any nights— they almost always live in days, for though they have not attained unto His perfect image—they feel themselves so manifestly in union with Him that they cannot and dare not doubt! They have entered into rest. They have come into Canaan. Such is the condition of the child of God when he has come to an advanced stage in his experience, when God has so given him Grace upon Grace that he can say, “Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”

We will read this passage again and bear in mind what I understand it to mean. It sets before us the Christian’s state after he has attained to this faith and confidence in God—when he is no longer careful about the things of this life, when he does not water the ground with his foot, but has come to a land that drinks in the rain of Heaven. “The land where you go in to possess it”—the land of high and holy Christian privilege— “is not as the land of Egypt, from where you came out, where you sowed your seed and watered it with your foot, as a garden of herbs. But the land where you go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys and drinks water of the rain of Heaven. A land which the Lord your God cares for. The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.” We shall have, this morning, to note, first of all, the difference between the Christian’s temporal condition and that of the Egyptian worldling. And secondly, the special privilege granted to those who have entered into Canaan—that the eyes of the Lord their God are always upon their land, “from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year.”

I. True religion makes a difference not only in a man, but in a man’s condition. If affects not only his heart, but his state—not only his nature, but his very standing in society! The Lord your God cares not only for Israel, but for Canaan, where Israel dwells. God has not only a regard to the elect, but to their habitation and not only so, but to all their affairs and circumstances. The moment I become a child of God, not only is my heart changed and my nature renewed, but my very position becomes different. The very beasts of the field are in league with me and the stones, there, are at peace! My habitation is now guarded by Jehovah! My position in this world is no longer that of a needy mendicant—I have become a gentleman-pensioner on the Providence of God! My position, which was that of a bond slave in Egypt, is now become that of an inheritor in Canaan! In this difference of the condition of the Christian and the worldling, we shall mark three things.

First, the Christian’s temporal condition is different to that of the worldling. The worldling looks to secondary causes—the Christian looks to Heaven. He gets his mercies there. Read the text—“The land which you go to posses is not as the land of Egypt, from where you came out, where you sowed your seed and watered it with your foot, as a garden of herbs.” The land of Egypt has never had any rain from Heaven—tit has been always watered from earthly sources. At a certain season, the river Nile overflowed its banks and covered the land. A stock of water was then accumulated in artificial reservoirs and afterwards let out in canals and allowed to run in little trenches through the fields. They had to water it as a garden of herbs. All their dependence was on the nether springs. They looked to the river Nile as the source of all their plenty and even worshipped it. But the land to which you are coming is not watered from a river—“it drinks water of the rain of Heaven.” Your fertility shall not come from such artificial sources as canals and trenches. You shall be fed from the water that descends from Heaven! You see how beautifully this pictures a worldling and a Christian? Look at the worldling. What is his dependence? It is all upon the water below—he looks only to the water that flows from the river of this world. “Who will show us any good?” Some rely upon what they call chance—(a river, the source of which, like the source of the Nile, is never known) and though continually disappointed, they still persevere in trusting to this unknown stream. Others, who are more sensible, trust to their hard work and honesty. They look to the source of that river and they trace it to a fountain of human erection, graced by a statue of labor. Ah, that river may yet fail you! It may not overflow its banks and you may be starved. But, O Christian, what do you rely upon? Your land “drinks water of the rain of Heaven.” Your mercies come not from the hand of chance! Your daily bread comes not so much from your industry as from your heavenly Father’s care! You see stamped upon every mercy, Heaven’s own inscription and every blessing comes down to you perfumed with the ointment and the spikenard and the myrrh of the ivory palaces from where God dispenses His bounties! Here is the difference between the assured Christian and the mere worldling—the one trusts to natural causes—the other “looks through Nature up to Nature’s God.” He sees his mercies as coming down fresh from Heaven!

Beloved, let us improve on this thought by showing you the great value of it. Do you know a man who sees his mercies coming from Heaven and not from earth? How much sweeter all his mercies are! There is nothing in the world that tastes as sweet to the schoolboy as that which comes from home. Those who live at the school may make him ever such good things, but he cares nothing for anything like that which comes from home! So with the Christian. All his mercies are sweeter because they are home mercies. I love God’s favors on earth. For everything I eat and drink tastes of home. And oh, how sweet to think, “That bread, my Father’s hand molded. That water, my Father drops out from His hand in the gentle rain.” I can see everything coming from His hand! The land in which I live is not like the land of Egypt, fed by a river, but it “drinks water of the rain of Heaven.” All my mercies come from above. Don’t you like, Beloved, to see the print of your Father’s fingers on every mercy? You have heard of the haddock having the mark of the thumb of Peter on it! It is a fiction, of course, but I am sure all the fish that we get out of the sea of Providence are marked by Jesus’ fingers. Happy the lot of that man who receives everything as coming from God and thanks his Father for it all! It makes anything sweet, when he knows it comes from Heaven! This thought, again, has a great tendency to keep us from an overwhelming love of the world. If we think that all our mercies come from Heaven, we shall not be so likely to love the world, as we shall be if we think that they are the natural products of the soil. The spies went to Eschol and fetched an immense cluster of the grapes which grew there. But you do not find that the people said, “These are fine fruits, therefore will we stay here.” No—they saw that the grapes came from Canaan and, therefore, they said, “Let us go on and possess them.” And so, when we get rich mercies, if we think they come from the natural soil of this earth, we feel—

*“Here I will forever stay.”*  
But if we know that they come from a foreign clime, we are anxious to go—

*“Where our dear Lord, His vineyard keeps, And all the clusters grow.”*

Then, Christian, rejoice, rejoice! Your mercies come from Heaven! However small they are, still they are your Father’s gifts. Not one comes to you without His knowledge and His permission. Bless the Lord, therefore, that you have come to Canaan—where your “land drinks water of the rain of Heaven”!

My dearly Beloved, just stop here and console yourselves, if you are in trouble. “Oh,” says one, “I know not what I shall do—where to turn myself I cannot tell.” You are not like your Brother, who is sitting near you. He has a competency. He has a river of Egypt to depend on, you have not any. Nevertheless, there is still the sky. If you were to tell a farmer, “You have no rivers to water your lands.” “Well,” he would say, “I don’t need them, either, for I have clouds up there and the clouds are enough.” So, Christian, if you have nothing to depend on down below, turn your eyes up there and say, “The land which I go into possess, is not as the land of Egypt, from where I came out, where I sowed my seed and watered it with my foot, as a garden of herbs. But the land, where I go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys and drinks water of the rain of Heaven.”

1. Now comes the second distinction and that is, a difference in the toilsomeness of their lives. The worldly man, just like the Israelites in Egypt, has to water his land with his foot. Read the passage—“For the land which you go to possess, is not as the land of Egypt, from where you came out, where you sowed your seed and watered it with your foot as a garden of herbs.” This alludes, possibly, to the practice among all eastern nations where the land is irrigated, of letting out a certain quantity of water into a trench and then having small gutters dug in the gardens, to compel the water to run along different parts of the ground. Sometimes one of these gutters might be broken. And then the gardener would press the mold against it with his foot, to keep the water in its proper channel. But I am inclined to think that the passage alludes to the method which those Eastern countries have of pumping up the water by a tread wheel and so watering the land with their foot. However that may be, it means that the land of Egypt was watered with extraordinary labor in order to preserve it from sterility! “But,” said Moses, “The land to which you are going is not a land which you will have to water with your foot. The water will come spontaneously. The land will be watered by the rain of Heaven. You can sit in your own houses, or under your own vine, or under your own fig tree and God, Himself, shall be your Irrigator! You shall sit still and ‘in quietness shall you possess your souls.’ Now, here is a difference between the godly and ungodly—the ungodly man toils. Suppose his objective is ambition—he will labor and labor and labor and spend his very life until he obtains the desired pinnacle. Suppose it is wealth—how will he emaciate his frame, rob his body of its needed sleep and take away the nourishment his frame requires—in order that he may accumulate riches! And if it is learning, how will he burn his eyes out with the flame of his hot desire, that he may understand all knowledge! How will he allow his frame to become weak and weary and thin, by midnight watching, till the oil with which he lights himself by night comes from his own flesh and the marrow of his bones furnishes the light for his spirit! Men will, in this way, labor and toil and strive! But not so the Christian. No— God “gives His beloved sleep.” His “strength is to sit still.” He knows what it is to fulfill the command of Paul—“I would have you without carefulness.” We can take things as God gives them, without all this toil and labor.

I have often admired the advice of old Cineasto Pyrrhus. An old story says that when Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, was making preparation for his intended expedition into Italy, Cineas, the philosopher, took a favorable opportunity of addressing him thus—“The Romans, Sir, are reported to be a warlike and victorious people. But if God permits us to overcome them, what use shall we make of the victory?” “You ask,” said Pyrrhus, “a thing that is self-evident. The Romans once conquered, no city will resist us! We shall then be masters of all Italy.” Cineas added—“And having subdued Italy, what shall we do next?” Pyrrhus, not yet aware of his intentions, replied, “Sicily next stretches out her arms to receive us.” “That is very probable,” said Cineas, “but will the possession of Sicily put an end to the war?” “God grant us success in that,” answered Pyrrhus, “and we shall make these only the forerunners of greater things, for then Libra and Carthage will soon be ours—and these things being completed, none of our enemies can offer any further resistance.” “Very true,” added Cineas, “for then we may easily regain Macedon and make absolute conquest of Greece. And when all these are in our possession, what shall we do, then?” Pyrrhus, smiling, answered, “Why then, my dear Friend, we will live at our ease, take pleasure all day and amuse ourselves with cheerful conversation.” “Well Sir,” said Cineas, “and why may we not do this, now, and without the labor and hazard of an enterprise so laborious and uncertain?”

So, Beloved, says the Christian! The worldly man says, “Let me go and do this. Let me go and do that. Let me accumulate so many thousand pounds. Let me get so rich. Then I will enjoy myself and take my ease.” “No, says the Christian, “I see no reason for doing it. Why should I not make God my refuge now? Why should I not enjoy comfort and peace and make myself happy now?” He does not want to water his land with his feet! He sits down quietly and his land “drinks in water of the rain of Heaven.” Do not say I am preaching laziness! No such thing. I am only saying it is vain for you to rise up early and sit up late and eat the bread of carefulness, for, “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it.” But if, “He gives His beloved sleep,” they rest in Him. They know not these toils. That is, if they have attained to full assurance and crossed into the Canaan of full confidence in God. They do not care to go ranging the world to find their happiness. They say, “God is my everpresent help. In Him my soul is satisfied.” They rest content in Him. Their land is watered with the rain of Heaven!

I remember a story of a young man who was a lawyer. In order to attain fame in his position, he was extremely anxious to understand all the mysteries and tortuous windings of the law and to acquire some power of oratory, so that he might be able to deliver himself eloquently before the bench. For ten years he lived apart from other people, lest domestic habits should wean him from his studies. He wrapped himself every night in a blanket and took one of his own volumes and put it under his head. He denied himself food, eating only so many morsels a day, lest indigestion should impair his powers. Although he was an infidel, he believed in God—and he bowed his head so many times a day and prayed that he might lose anything rather than his intellectual powers. “Make a giant of me!” That was his expression. And although his poor mother begged him to make himself more comfortable, he would not, but persisted in his course of moderation and self-denial. One day, in reading one of his books, he saw this passage—“When all is gained, how little then is won! And yet to gain that little, how much is lost!” He stamped his foot and raved like a maniac at the thought, that he had spent all these ten years toiling and wearying himself for nothing! He saw the vanity of his course. He was driven to desperation, seized his axe, cut down the sign-board of his profession and said, “Here ends this business.” Turning to the same book, he found that it recommended Christianity as the rest of the weary soul. He found it in Christ and attained to such an understanding of Christ that he became a preacher of the Gospel and might well have preached on this text—“The land which you go to posses is not as the land of Egypt, from where you came out, where you sowed your seed and watered it with your foot, as a garden of herbs. But the land which you go to possess is a land of hills and valleys and drinks water of the rain of Heaven. A land which the Lord your God cares for. The eyes of the Lord your God are upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year”

2. This brings us to the third and last difference that we will note this morning. And that is that the unbeliever—he who has not crossed the Jordan and come to full confidence—does not understand the universality of God’s Providence, while the assured Christian does. You will see that in my text in a minute. In Egypt the ground is almost entirely flat. And where it is not flat, it is impossible, of course, to grow anything unless the ground is watered at considerable difficulty by some method of artificial irrigation, which shall force the water onto the high places. “But,” says Moses, “the land which you go to possess is a land of hills and valleys.” The Egyptians could not get the water up on the hills, but you can. For the mountains drink in the rain, as well as the valleys! Now look at a worldling. Give him comforts, give him prosperity. He can be so happy. Give him everything just as he likes it—make his course all a plain, all a dead valley and a flat. He can fertilize that and water it. But let him have a mountainous trouble—let him lose a friend, or let his property be taken from him—put a hill in his way and he cannot water that with all the pumping of his feet and all the force he strives to use! But the Christian lives in “a land of hills and valleys.” A land of sorrow as well as joys. And the hills drink the water, as well as the valleys! We need not climb the mountains to water their heads, for our God is as high as the hills. High as our troubles and mountainous as are our difficulties, sometimes, we need not climb up with weary feet to make them fertile, for they are all made to work together for our good! Go on, Egyptian! Live in your flat country and enjoy its luxuries—you have your papyrus and you write mercies upon it—but it shall be the food of worms! We have no lotus, but we have a flower that blooms in Paradise. And we write our mercies on rocks and not on rushes. Oh, sweet Canaan, heavenly land where I dwell and where you dwell, my Brother and Sister Christians—a land which “drinks water of the rain of Heaven!”

II. We must consider, a little time, THE SPECIAL MERCY. “The eyes of the Lord are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.” We must now altogether turn away from the allegory and come to this special mercy, which is the lot only of God’s people.

“The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year”—that is, upon the lot of all Christians individually. We have come now, Beloved, to the end of another year—to the threshold of another period of time—and have marched another year’s journey through the wilderness. Come, now! In reading this verse over, can you say, Amen, to it? “The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon you, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.” Some of you say. “I have had deep troubles this year.” “I have lost a friend,” says one. “Ah,” says another, “I have been impoverished this year.” “I have been slandered,” cries another. “I have been exceedingly vexed and grieved,” says another. “I have been persecuted,” says another. But, Beloved, take the year altogether—the blacks and the whites, the troubles and the joys, the hills and the valleys all together and what have you to say about it? You may say, “Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” Do not pick out one day in the year and say it was a bad day, but take all the year round! Let it revolve in all its grandeur. Let all the signs of the Zodiac come before you. Do not say, “I have been in Cancer a long time,” but run through them all and then get into Libra and judge between things that differ. And then what will you say? “Ah, bless the Lord! He has done all things well. My soul and all that is within me, bless His holy name!” And you know why all things have been well? It is because the eyes of the Lord have been upon you all the year! Oh, if those awful eyes had been shut for a single moment, by night or day, where would we have been? Why, we had not been at all, but swept away, like airy dreams, into annihilation! God watches over every one of His people, just as if there were only that one in the world. And He has been watching over you, so that when a trouble came, God said, “Trouble, Avaunt!” “There shall no temptation happen to you but such as is common to man.” And when your joys would have satiated upon you and around you, God has said, “Stand back, joy! I will not have you fondle him too much. He will be deceived by you.” “The eyes of the Lord have been upon you continually, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.” “Well,” says one, “I cannot say so much of my year.” Then I cannot say so much of you. I was speaking to the Christian. And if you cannot say of your year, “surely goodness and mercy have followed it all,” I am afraid you are not a child of God, for I think a child of God will say, when he reviews it all, “not one good thing has failed of all the Lord God has promised, but all has come to pass.”

Then, my Brethren, might I not say a word to you concerning the eyes of the Lord having been upon us as a Church? Ought we to let this year pass without rehearsing the works of the Lord? Has He not been with us, exceedingly abundant and prospered us? It is during this year that we met together in the great assembly—during this year that these eyes have seen the mighty gatherings of men who listened to our words on the Sabbath. We shall not soon forget our sojourn in Exeter Hall, shall we? During those months, the Lord brought in many of His own elect and multitudes who were unsaved up to that time were called by Divine Mercy and brought into the fold. How God protected us there! What peace and prosperity has He given to us! How has He enlarged our borders and multiplied our numbers, so that we are not few, and increased us, so that we are not weak! I think we are not thankful enough for the goodness of the Lord which carried us here and gave us so many who have become useful to us in our Church! Remember in how many places you have worshipped God this year. This place has been enlarged so that more can be held within its walls. Now we can receive more to listen to the voice of the Gospel than we could before. And God seems to say, “Go, forward, go forward still.” The goodness of the Lord has increased as we have gone along. I have often feared, lest the people should desert the house, that when we made it larger we should not have enough to fill it. But the Lord still sends an overwhelming congregation and still gives us Grace to preach His Gospel. How thankful should we be! Surely, “the eye of the Lord” have been upon this Church, “from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.” We have had peace—not a rotten peace, I trust—but the peace of God! Nothing has arisen that should disturb our equanimity. The Church has been kept by the Grace of God faithful to the Doctrines of Grace. Ah, what a blessing it is, that our members have been kept from falling into sin! What a glorious thing that we are carried through another year safely! Some old writer has said, “Every hour that a Christian remains a Christian, is an hour of miracle.” It is true. And every year that the Church is kept an entire Church, is a year of miracle!

It is a year of miracles. Tell it to the wide, wide world. Tell it everywhere! “The eyes of the Lord” have been upon us, “from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.” Two hundred and ten persons have, this year, united with us in Church fellowship. About enough to have formed a church. One half the churches in London cannot number so many in their entire body! And yet the Lord has brought so many into our midst. And still they come. Still they come. Whenever I have an opportunity of seeing those who are converted to God, they come in such numbers that many have to be sent away. Still they come, still they come!

And I am well assured that I have as many, still, in this congregation, who will, during the present year, come forward to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. How often has the sacred pool of baptism been opened this year! How sweetly have we assembled round the Lord’s Table! What precious moments we have had at the Monday evening Prayer Meetings! And how glorious it has been when we have publicly recognized Brother after Brother, Sister after Sister, by giving them the right hand of fellowship! In all our ways we hope we have acknowledged Him and He has directed our paths. Sing unto the Lord, for He has done wonders! Bless His name, for He has worked miracles! Praise His Grace, for He has highly exalted His people! Unto Him be honor, forever and ever! And mark you, Brethren, this Church has known what it is to come out of Egypt. We have not toiled with our feathers. I hope there has been no desire to draw unfit persons into the Church. I have had no toiling with my feet, I am sure, in preaching the Gospel—no legal preaching—none of your exciting preaching—none of all that toiling with your feet! But we have had nothing but the rain from Heaven. We have not labored to excite carnal passions, nor to preach sermons with a view of driving you into religious fevers. Sturdy old Calvinism will not let us do that! We cannot preach such sermons as Arminians can. The land has been watered by the rain of Heaven. We have not had any of those fatal pestilential mists that sometimes gather round the Church. It is proverbial, that wherever the revivalists go, they always carry desolation. Before them is an Eden. Behind them is a desert! Wherever they go, they search the land like firebrands—though hundreds seem to be converted to God, they are converted to ten times blacker sins than before and the last end of them is worse than the first! [The revivalists since this period have been usually true preachers of the Gospel with whom I have the fullest sympathy. Our remarks are intended for certain American Arminian ravers who have done much mischief.] We want not the getting up of a little feverish passion by appealing to the natural man. It is the drinking water of the rain of Heaven that does the good. I trust it has been so here and that “the eyes of the Lord” have been upon you “from the beginning of the year even to the end of the year.”

So, Beloved, I can say that, as a minister, the eyes of the Lord have been upon me this year. It has been my privilege, many times this year to preach His Word. I think more than 400 times have I stood in the pulpit to testify His Truth and the eyes of the Lord have been upon me. Blessed be His name! Whether it has been in the north, in the south, in the east, or in the west, I have never lacked a congregation. Nor have I ever gone, again, to any of the places I have preached, without hearing of souls converted. I cannot remember a single village or town that I have visited a second time without meeting with some who blessed God that they heard the Word of Truth there. When I went to Bradford, last time, I stated in the pulpit that I had never heard of a soul being converted through my preaching there. And the good pew-opener came to Brother Dowson and said, “Why didn’t you tell Mr. Spurgeon that such-a-one joined the Church through hearing him?” And instantly that dear man of God told me the cheering news! We have met with much opposition this year. Thanks to our Brothers in the ministry, we have not had very much assistance from them. We have been enabled to say to them all, “I will not take from you, from a thread to a shoe-latch, lest you should say, I have made him rich.” But how much of that bigotry which formerly existed has subsided! How much of that sneer, which was at one time so common, has now gone away, by God’s Grace! I am now rather more afraid of their smiles than their frowns—though I do not think I feel much of either. Cedo nulli, was my motto at the beginning and I take it once more. I yield to none! But by the Grace of God I preach His Truth and still, if He helps me, will I hold on my way! And to the Three-in-One God, be eternal honor. Amen.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #728 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GOOD CHEER FOR THE NEW YEAR

NO. 728

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 6, 1867, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.” Deuteronomy 11:12.**

THE Israelites had sojourned for a while in Egypt, a land which only produces food for its inhabitants by the laborious process of irrigating its fields. They had mingled with the sons of Ham as they watched with anxious eyes the swelling of the river Nile. They had shared in the incessant labors by which the waters were preserved in reservoirs, and afterwards eked out by slow degrees to nourish the various crops. Moses tells them in this chapter that the land of Palestine was not at all like Egypt—it was a land which did not so much depend on the labor of the inhabitants as upon the good will of the God of Heaven. He calls it a land of hills and valleys, a land of springs and rivers, a land dependent not upon the rivers of earth but upon the rain of Heaven, and he styles it in conclusion, “A land which the Lord your God cares for: the eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.”

Observe here a type of the condition of the natural and the spiritual man! In this world in temporals and in all other respects the merely carnal man has to be his own providence, and to look to himself for all his needs. Hence his cares are always many, and frequently they become so heavy that they drive him to desperation. He lives a life of care, anxiety, sorrow, fretfulness and disappointment. He dwells in Egypt, and he knows that there is no joy, or comfort, or provision if it does not wear out his soul in winning it. But the spiritual man dwells in another country! His faith makes him a citizen of another land. It is true he endures the same toils, and experiences the same afflictions as the ungodly, but they deal with him after another fashion, for they come as a gracious Father’s appointments and they go at the bidding of loving wisdom.

By faith the godly man casts his care upon God who cares for him, and he walks without taking care because he knows himself to be the child of Heaven’s loving kindness for whom all things work together for good. God is his great Guardian and Friend, and all his concerns are safe in the hands of infinite Grace! Even in the year of drought the Believer dwells in green pastures and lies down beside the still waters. But as for the ungodly, he abides in the wilderness and hears the mutterings of that curse, “Cursed is he that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm. He shall be like the heath in the desert. He shall not see when good comes.” Do you question my assertion, that Canaan is a fitting type of the present condition of the Christian? We have frequently insisted upon it that it is a far better type of the militant Believer here than of the glorified saint in the New Jerusalem. Canaan is sometimes used by us in our hymns as the picture of Heaven, but it is scarcely so. A moment’s reflection will show that it is far more distinctly the picture of the present state of every Believer. While we are under conviction of sin we are like Israel in the wilderness—we have no rest for the sole of our feet—but when we put our trust in Jesus we do, as it were, cross the river and leave the wilderness behind.

“We that have believed do enter into rest,” for, “there remains a rest for the people of God.” Believers have entered into the finished salvation which is provided for us in Christ Jesus! The blessings of our inheritance are in a great measure already in our possession. The state of salvation is no longer a land of promise, but it is a land possessed and enjoyed. We have peace with God! We are even now justified by faith. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God.” Covenant blessings are at this moment actually ours, just as the portions of the land of Canaan became actually in the possession of the various tribes.

It is true there is an enemy in Canaan, an enemy to be driven out— indwelling sin which is entrenched in our hearts as in walled cities, and fleshly lusts which are like the chariots of iron with which we have to do war—but the land is ours! We have the covenanted heritage at this moment in our possession, and the foes who would rob us of it shall, by the sword of faith, and the weapon of all prayer, be utterly rooted out! The Christian, like Israel in Canaan, is not under the government of Moses now. He has done with Moses once and for all. Moses was magnified and made honorable as he climbed to the top of the hill and with a kiss from God’s lips was carried into Heaven. Even so the Law has been magnified and made honorable in the person of Christ, but has ceased to reign over the Believer.

And as Joshua was the leader of the Israelites when they came into Canaan, so is Jesus our Leader now. He it is who leads us on from victory to victory, and He will not sheathe His sword till He has taken unto Himself and given unto us, His followers, the full possession of all the holiness and happiness which covenant engagements have secured for us. For these and many other reasons it is clear that the children of Israel in Canaan were typically in the same condition as we are now who, having believed in Jesus, have our citizenship in Heaven!

Beloved, those of you who are in such a state will relish the text. It is to such persons that the text is addressed. The eyes of the Lord, your God, are always upon you, O Believer, from the beginning of the year even to the end of the year! You who trust in Jesus are under the guidance of the great Joshua! You are fighting sin. You have obtained salvation! You have left the wilderness of conviction and fear behind you. You have come into the Canaan of faith, and now the eyes of God are upon you and upon your state from the opening of the year to its close.

May the Holy Spirit bless us, and we shall, first, take the text as we find it. Secondly, we shall turn the text over. Thirdly, we shall blot the text out, and then, fourthly, we shall distil practical lessons from the text.

I. First, we will consider THE TEXT AS WE FIND IT. The first word that glitters before us, like a jewel in a crown, is that word “eyes.” “The eyes of the Lord.” What is meant here? Surely not mere Omniscience. In that sense the eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good. God sees Hagar as well as Sarah, and beholds Judas when he gives the traitorous kiss quite as surely as He beholds the holy woman when she washes the feet of the Savior with her tears.

No, there is love in the text to sweeten observation. “The Lord knows the righteous” with a knowledge which is over and above that of Omniscience. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, not merely to see them, but to view them with complacency and delight. He does not merely observe them, but observes them with affectionate care and interest. The meaning of the text, then, is first, that God’s love is always upon His people. Oh, Christians, think of this (it is rather to be thought of than to be spoken of), that God loves us! The big heart of Deity is set upon us poor, insignificant, undeserving, worthless beings! God loves us, loves us forever, never thinks of us without loving thoughts, never regards us, nor speaks of us, nor acts towards us except in love!

God is love in a certain sense towards all, for He is full of benevolence to all His creatures. Love is, indeed, His Essence—but there is a depth unfathomable when that word is used in reference to His elect ones who are the objects of distinguishing Grace, redeemed by blood, enfranchised by power, adopted by condescension, and preserved by faithfulness. Beloved, do not ask me to speak of this love, but implore God the Holy Spirit to speak of it to your inmost souls! The loving eyes of God are always upon you—the poorest and most obscure of His people—from the beginning of the year even to the end of the year.

The expression of the text teaches us that the Lord takes a personal interest in us. It is not here said that God loves us, and therefore sends an angel to protect and watch over us—the Lord does it Himself! The eyes that observe us are God’s own eyes! The Guardian under whose protection we are placed is God Himself! Some mothers put out their children to nurse, but God never does—all his babes hang upon His own breast—and are carried in His own arms. It is little that we could do if we had to perform everything personally and therefore most of the things are done by proxy. The captain, when the vessel is to be steered across the deep, must have his hour of sleep, and then the second in command, or some other, must manage the vessel.

But you will observe that in times of emergency the captain is called up and takes upon himself personal responsibility. See him as he himself anxiously heaves the lead, and stands at the helm or at the look-out, for he can trust no one else in perilous moments. It seems from the text that it is always a time of emergency with God’s people, for their great Lord always exercises a personal care over them. He has never said to His angels, “I will dispense with My own watching and you shall guard My saints.” But while He gives them charge concerning His people, yet He Himself is personally their Keeper and their Shield. “I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it I will keep it night and day.”

You have sometimes, when you have been very sick, sent for a physician. And it may be that he has been engaged somewhere else, but he has an assistant who probably is quite as skillful as himself, yet, as soon as that assistant comes, such has been your confidence in the man himself for whom you have sent that you feel quite disappointed. You wanted to see the man whom you had tried in days gone by. There is no fear of our being put off with any substitute for our God!

Oh, Beloved, when I think of the text, I feel of the same mind as Moses when God said, “I will send My angel before you.” “No,” Moses in effect, said, “that will not suffice: if Your Presence go not with us, carry us not up from here.” My Lord, I cannot be put off with Gabriel or Michael! I cannot be content with the brightest of the seraphs who stand before Your Throne! It is Your Presence I want, and blessed be Your name, it is Your Presence which the text promises to give! The anxious mother is glad to have a careful nurse upon whom she may rely, but in the crisis of the disease, when the little one’s life trembles in the balance, she says, “Nurse, I must sit up myself with the child tonight.” And though it is the third, perhaps the fourth night, since the mother has had sleep, yet her eyes will not close so long as the particular point of danger is still in view.

See, my Brethren, see the loving tenderness of our gracious God! Never, never, never, does He delegate to others, however good or kind, or to any secondary agents, however active or powerful—the care of His people! His own eyes, without a substitute, must watch over us!

Further, the text reminds us of the unwearied power of God towards His people. What? Can His eyes always be upon us? This were not possible if He were not God. To be always upon one object, man can scarcely do that! And where there are ten thousand times ten thousand objects, how can the same eyes always be upon every one among so many! I know what Unbelief has said to you. He has whispered, “He brings forth the stars, He calls them all by their names, how, then, can He notice so mean an insect as you are?” Then we have said, “My way is passed over from God: God has forgotten me. My God has forsaken me!”

But here comes the text. Not only has He not forgotten you, but He has never once taken His eyes off you! And though you are one among so many, yet He has observed you as narrowly, as carefully, as tenderly as if there were not another child in the Divine family—nor another one whose prayers were to be heard, or whose cares were to be relieved. What would you think of yourself if you knew that you were the only saved soul in the world, the only elect one of God, the only one purchased on the bloody tree? Why you would feel, “How God must care for me! How He must watch over me! Surely He will never take His eyes off such a special favorite.”

And it is the same with you, Beloved, though the family is so large, as if you were the only one! The eyes of the Lord never grow weary—He neither slumbers nor sleeps—both by day and night He observes each one of His people. If you put these things together—intense affection, personal interest, unwearied power—and then if you remember that all this time God’s heart is actuated by unchanging purposes of Divine Grace towards you, surely there will be enough to make you lose yourself in wonder, love, and praise!

You have sinned in the past of your history, but your sin has never made Him love you less because He never looked upon you as you are personally considered, naked, and abstract in yourself. He saw you and loved you in Christ in the eternal purpose even when you were dead in trespasses and sins! He has seen you in Christ ever since, and has never ceased to love you. It is true you have been very faulty (what tears this ought to cost you!) but as He never loved you for your good works, He has never cast you away for your bad works, but has beheld you as washed in the atoning blood of Jesus till you are whiter than snow—He has seen you clothed in the perfect righteousness of your Surety—and therefore looked upon you and regarded you as though you were without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Grace has always set you before the Lord’s eyes as being in His dear Son all fair and lovely—a pleasing prospect for Him to look upon. He has gazed upon you, Beloved, but never with anger. He has looked upon you when your infirmities, no, your willful wickedness had made you hate yourself, and yet, though He has seen you in this doleful state, He had such a regard for your relationship to Christ that you have still been accepted in the Beloved!

I wish it were in the power of mortal speech to convey the full glory of that thought, but it is not. You must eat this morsel alone. You must take it like a wafer made with honey and put it under your tongue and suck the essential sweetness out of it. The eyes of God, my God, are always upon His chosen, as eyes of affection, delight, complacency, unwearied power, immutable wisdom, and unchanging love.

The next word that seems to flash and sparkle in the text is that word “ALWAYS.” “The eyes of the Lord are always upon it.” And it is added, as if that word were not enough for such dull ears as ours, “from the beginning of the year even to the end of the year.” This is so plain and pointed that we may not imagine that any one single day, or hour of the day, or minute of the hour we are removed from the eyes or the heart of God! I tried to discover the other day what time there was in one’s life when one could best afford to be without God. Perhaps imagination suggests the time of prosperity, when business prospers, wealth is growing, and the mind is happy.

Ah, Beloved, to be without our God then, why it would be like the marriage feast without the bridegroom! It would be the day of delight and no delight, a sea and no water in it, day and no light. What? All these mercies and no God? Then there is only so much shell and no kernel, so much shadow and no substance. In the midst of such joys as earth can give in the absence of the Lord the soul can hear Satanic laughter, for Satan laughs at the soul because it has tried to make the world its rest and is sure to be deceived. Do without God in prosperity, Beloved? We cannot, for then we should grow worldly, proud, careless, and deep damnation would be our lot.

The Christian in prosperity is like a man standing on a pinnacle—he must then be Divinely upheld or his fall will be terrible! If you can do without God at all, it certainly is not when you are standing on the pinnacle! What, then? Could we do without Him in adversity? Ask the heart that is breaking! Ask the tortured spirit that has been deserted by its friend! Ask the child of poverty who has not where to lay his head! Ask the daughter of sickness, tossing by night and day on that uneasy bed, “Could you do without your God?” And the very thought causes wailing and gnashing of teeth!

With God pain becomes pleasure, and dying beds are elevated into thrones, but without God—ah, what could we do? Well then, is there no period? Cannot the young Christian, full of freshness and vigor, elated with the novelty of piety, do without his God? Ah, poor puny thing, how can the lamb do without the shepherd to carry it in his arms? Cannot the man in middle life then, whose virtues have been confirmed, do without his God? He tells you that it is the day of battle with him, and that the darts fly so thick in business, nowadays, that the burdens of life are so heavy in this age that without God a man in middle life is like a naked man in the midst of a thicket of briars and thorns—he cannot hope to make his way.

Ask yon grey beard with all the experience of seventy years whether at least he has not attained to an independence of Divine Grace, and he will say to you that as the weakness and infirmity of the body press upon him it is his joy that his inner man is renewed day by day—but take away God, who is the spring of that renewal—and old age would be utter wretchedness. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, there is not a moment in any one day that you or I have ever lived that we could have afforded to dispense with the help of God! When we have thought ourselves strong, alas, we have been fools enough to think so—in five minutes we have done that which has cost us rivers of tears to undo! In an unguarded moment we have spoken a word which we could not recall, but which we would have recalled if we should have had to bite our tongues in halves to have had it unsaid.

We have thought a thought when God has left us which has gone whizzing through our souls like a hellish thunderbolt making a fiery path along the spirit. We may well wonder how it is that the evil thought did not become a terrible act as it would have done if God, whom we had forgotten, had forgotten us! We need to set the Lord always before us. Let us then, when we wake in the morning, take this promise with us and say, Lord, You have said You will always be with us—then leave us not till the dews of evening fall and we return to our couch. Leave us not even when we are there, lest in the night, temptation should be whispered in our ears and we should wake to defile our mind with unholiness. Leave us never, O our God, but always be our very present help!

Last year was, perhaps, the most gloomy of our lives. All the newspaper summaries of 1866 are like the prophetic roll which was written within and without with lamentations. The year has gone, and everybody is glad to think that we have entered upon a new one—yet, who knows but what 1867 may be worse? Who can tell? Well, Brothers and Sisters, let it be what God chooses it shall be. Let it be what He appoints, for there is this comfort in the assurance that not a moment from this Sunday night on to December 31st , 1867, shall be without the tender care of Heaven. Not even for a second will the Lord remove His eyes from any of His people! Here is good cheer for us! We will march boldly into this wilderness, for the pillar of fire and cloud will never leave us! The manna will never cease to drop, and the Rock that followed us will never cease to flow with living streams. Onward, onward, let us go, joyously confident in our God!

The next word that springs from the text is that great word JEHOVAH. It is a pity that our translators did not give us the names of God as they found them in the original. The word LORD in capitals is well enough, but that grand and glorious name of “Jehovah” should have been retained. In this case we read, “the eyes of Jehovah are always upon it.” He who surveys us with love and care is none other than the one and indivisible God, so that we may conclude, if we have His eyes to view us, we have His heart to love us!

And if we have His heart, we have His wings to cover us. We have His hands to bear us up. We have the everlasting arms to be underneath us. We have all the attributes of Deity at our command. Oh, Christian, when God says that He always looks at you, He means this—that He is always yours! There is nothing which is necessary for you which He will refuse to do! There is no wisdom stored up in Him which He will not use for you. There is no one attribute of all that great mass of splendor which makes up the Deity which shall be withheld from you in any measure. All that God is shall be yours. He shall be your God forever and ever! He will give you Grace and glory, and be your guide even unto death.

Perhaps the sweetest word of the text is that next one—the eyes of Jehovah “YOUR GOD.” Ah, there is a blessed secret! Why? Ours in Covenant! Our God, for He chose us to be His portion, and by His Grace He has made us choose Him to be our portion. We are His and He is ours—

*“So I my best Beloved’s am,  
So He is mine.”*

“ Your God.” Blessed be the Lord, we have learned to view Him not as another man’s God but as our God! Christian, can you claim a property in God this day? Has your hand, by faith, grasped Him? Has your heart, by love, twisted its tendrils round Him? Do you feel Him to be the greatest possession that you have—that all creatures are but a dream, an empty show—but that God is your substantial treasure, your All in All?

Oh, then, it is not an absolute God whose eyes are upon you, but God in Covenant relationship regards you. “Your God.” What a word is this! He who is watching me is my Shepherd. He who cares for me is my Father— not my God, alone, by way of power—but my Father by way of relationship! He is One who, though He is so great that the Heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, yet deigned to visit this poor earth robed in mortal flesh that He might become like we, and He is now our God—the God of His people by near and dear relationship! In ties of blood Jesus is with sinners one, our Husband, our Head, our All in All! And we are His fullness, the fullness of Him that fills all in all.

Thus the eyes of God, as the Covenant God of Israel, are upon His people from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. I must now leave the text to talk to you alone by itself. Much more may be said, but better unsaid by me, if you let the text say it to you. Talk to the text, I pray you— let it journey with you till you can say of it as the disciples said of Christ, “Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us by the way?”

II. We are now to TURN THE TEXT OVER, that is to say, we will misread it, yet read it rightly. Suppose the text were to run thus—“The eyes of the Lord’s people are always upon Him from the beginning of the year to the end of the year”? Dear Friends, we like the text as it stands, but I do not believe we shall ever comprehend the fullness of it unless we receive it as I have now altered it, for we only understand God’s sight of us when we get a sight of Him. God, unknown to us, is our Protector, but He is not such a Protector that we can comfortably repose upon Him.

We mast discern Him by the eyes of faith, or else the mercy, though given by God, is not spiritually enjoyed in our hearts. Beloved, if God looks at us, how much more ought we to look at Him? When God sees us what does He see? Nothing—I was going to say—nothing, if He looks at us in ourselves. We are but that which is unworthy to be looked at. Now, on the contrary, when we look at Him what do we see? Oh such a sight, that I wonder not that Moses said, “I beseech You, show me Your Glory.”

What a vision will it be! Will it not be Heaven’s own vision to see God? Is not it the peculiar prerogative of the pure in heart that they shall see God? And yet, I cannot understand it! Some of us have had the right to see God for years, and we have occasionally seen Him face to face, as a man speaks to his friend—by faith we have seen God, but, Beloved, what I cannot understand is that we see so little of Him! Do you ever find yourself living all day without God? Not perhaps absolutely so, for you would not like to go to business without a little prayer in the morning. But do you not sometimes get through that morning’s prayer without seeing God at all?

I mean, is it not just the form of kneeling down, and saying good words and getting up again? And all through the day, have you not lived away from God? This is a strange world to live in. There are not many things to make one happy, and yet somehow we forget the very things that could give us happiness and keep our eyes upon the frivolous cares and teasing troubles which distract us. So we even close the night—no taste of His love, no kiss of His lips that is better than wine. And our evening prayer— poor moaning it is, hardly a prayer.

I fear it is possible to live not only days, but months at this dying rate! And it is horrible living, such horrible living that I would infinitely prefer to be locked up in the moldiest dungeon in which a man of God ever rotted and have the Lord’s Presence, than I would care to live in the noblest palace in which a sinner ever sported himself without God. After all, that is it which makes life—life is the enjoyment of the Presence of God! It is not so with the worldling—he can live without God, like the swine, who, being contented with their husks, lie down and sleep and wake again to feed. But the Christian cannot live on husks—he has a stomach above them—and if he does not get his God he will be miserable.

God has ordained it so that a spiritual man is wretched without the love of God in his heart. If you and I want present happiness without God, we had better be sinners outright and live upon this world than try to be happy in religion without communion with Jesus. Present happiness for a genuine Christian in the absence of Christ is an absolute impossibility! We must have God or we are, of all men, most miserable.

Suppose that in this year 1867 we were, at any rate, filled with the desire to have our eyes always upon God from the beginning of the year to the end of the year—to be always conscious that He sees us, to be always sensible of His Presence—more than that, to be always longing to be obedient to His commands, always desiring to win souls for His dear Son from the beginning of the year to the end of the year? What a happy thing this would be! If we could abide in a spirit of prayerfulness or thankfulness, devout, consecrated, loving, tender, it would be a high thing to attain unto.

Brethren, we believe in a great God who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above what we ask or even think. Why not expect great things from Him? I think of this blessing and I dare to ask for it—surely, then, He is able to give it. Do not let us stand back because of unbelief! Let us ask that as God’s eyes will be upon us, our eyes may be upon Him. What a blessed meeting of eyes when the Lord looks us full in the face and we look at Him through the Mediator Christ Jesus, and the Lord declares, “I love you,” and we answer, “We also love You, O our God!” Oh that we may be in harmony with the Lord our God and find ourselves drawn upwards and bound to Him!

May the Lord be the Sun, and we the dewdrops which sparkle in His rays and are exhaled and drawn aloft by the heat of His love! May God look down from Heaven and we look up to Heaven, and both of us be happy in the sight of each other, delighting and rejoicing in mutual affection! This is what communion means. I have taken a long while to bring it to that one word, but that is what it means—

*“Daily communion let me prove  
With You, blest Object of my love.”*  
That was Toplady’s desire, but I am afraid if I would express my own experience I must close with the other two of the verses where Toplady

says *—  
“But oh, for this no strength have I,  
My strength is at Your feet to lie.”*

III. In the third place, we will imagine that WE BLOT THE TEXT OUT ALTOGETHER. Not that we can blot it out or would do so if we could, but we are to suppose that it is blotted out to imagine that you and I have to live all the year without the eyes of God upon us—not finding a moment from the beginning of the year to the end of the year in which we perceive the Lord to be caring for us or to be waiting to be gracious to us. Imagine that there is none to whom we may appeal beyond our own fellow creatures for help. Oh miserable supposition!

We have come to the opening of the year, and we have to get through it somehow. We must stumble through January, go muddling through the winter, groaning through the spring, sweating through the summer, fainting through the autumn, and groveling on to another Christmas, and no God to help us! No prayer when God is gone, no promise when God is no more. There could be no promise, no spiritual succor, no comfort, no help for us if there were no God! I will suppose this to be the case with any one of us here.

But I hear you cry out, “Imagine not such a thing, for I should be like an orphan child without a father! I should be helpless—a tree with no water to its roots.” But I will suppose this is the case of you sinners. You know you have been living for 20, or 30, or 40 years without God, without prayer, without trust, without hope—yet I should not wonder that if I were solemnly to tell you that God would not let you pray during the next year, and would not help you if you did pray—I should not wonder if you were greatly startled at it! Though I believe that the Lord will hear you from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. Though I believe that He will watch over you and bless you if you seek Him, yet I fear that the most of you are despising His care, living without fellowship with Him, and so you are without God, without Christ, without hope, and will be so from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

There is a story told of a most eccentric minister, that walking out one morning he saw a man going to work and said to him, “What a lovely morning! How grateful we ought to be to God for all His mercies!” The man said he did not know much about it. “Why,” said the minister, “I suppose you always pray to God for your wife and family—for your children—don’t you?” “No,” said he, “I do not know that I do.” “What,” said the minister, “do you never pray?” “No.” “Then I will give you half-a-crown, if you will promise me you never will as long as ever you live.” “Oh,” said he, “I shall be very glad of half-a-crown to get me a drop of beer.”

He took the half-crown and promised never to pray as long as he lived. He went to his work, and when he had been digging for a little while, he thought to himself, “That’s a strange thing I have done this morning—a very strange thing—I’ve taken money and promised never to pray as long as I live.” He thought it over, and it made him feel wretched. He went home to his wife and told her of it. “Well, John,” she said, “you may depend upon it, it was the devil! You’ve sold yourself to the devil for half-acrown.” This so bowed the poor wretch down that he did not know what to do with himself! This was all he thought about—that he had sold himself to the devil for money—and would soon be carried off to Hell.

He commenced attending places of worship, conscious that it was of no use, for he had sold himself to the devil. He became really ill, bodily ill, through the fear and trembling which had come upon him. One night he recognized in the preacher the very man who had given him the halfcrown, and probably the preacher recognized him, for the text was, “What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” The preacher remarked that he knew a man who had sold his soul for half-a-crown. The poor man rushed forward and said, “Take it back! Take it back!” “You said you would never pray,” said the minister, “if I gave you half-a-crown! Do you now want to pray?” “Oh yes, I would give the world to be allowed to pray.”

That man was a great fool to sell his soul for half-a-crown! But some of you are a great deal bigger fools, for you never had the half-crown and yet you still do not pray! And I dare say you never will, but will go down to Hell never having sought God. Perhaps if I could make this text negative, and say to you, “the eyes of God will not be upon you from the beginning of this year to the end of the year, and God will not hear and bless you,” it might alarm and awaken you.

But though I suggest the thought, I would rather you say, “Oh let not such a curse rest upon me, for I may die this year, and I may die this day. O God, hear me now!” Ah, dear Hearer, if such a desire is in your heart the Lord will hear you and bless you with His salvation.

III. Let us close with USING THE TEXT. The way to use it is this. If the eyes of the Lord will be upon us His people from the beginning of the year to the end of the year, what shall we do? Why, let us be as happy as we can during this year! You have your trials and troubles to come—do not expect that you will be free from them. The devil is not dead, and sparks still fly upward. Herein is your joy—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ will never leave you nor forsake you. Up with your standard now and march on boldly!

In the name of the Lord set up your banner and begin to sing! Away with carking care—God cares for us! The sparrows are fed, and shall not the children be? The lilies bloom, and shall not the saints be clothed? Let us roll all our burdens upon the Burden-Bearer. You will have enough to care for if you care for His cause as you should. Do not spoil your power to care for God by caring for yourself. This year let your motto be, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

By anxious thought you cannot add a cubit to your stature, nor turn one hair white or black! Take, then, no anxious thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Lean upon your God and remember His promise that as your day is so shall your strength be. “I would have you,” says the Apostle, “I would have you without carefulness.” He does not mean, I would have you without economy, without prudence and without discretion, but he means he would have you without fretfulness, without distrustful care. He would have you be without care for yourself, because the Lord’s eyes will be upon you!

Further, dear Friends, I would have you use the text by the way of seeking greater blessings and richer mercies than you have ever enjoyed. Blessed be God for His merciful kindness towards this Church. His loving kindnesses have been very many! His favors new every morning and fresh every evening—but we need more! Let us not be content with a February blessing, though that is generally the month in which we have had our refreshing. Let us seek to get a blessing to-day! I hope you will get it this afternoon in the Sunday school, you workers there. And I hope you will have it in the senior classes from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. Let there be no dullness, lethargy, and lukewarmness in the classes this afternoon!

The Brother who has to address the school, will, I hope, speak to you with fervor and earnestness. There must be no coldness there. And I hope you who are preaching in the street, if it is possible in such weather, or going from house to house with tracts, or doing anything else, will have a blessing on this first Sunday of the year! But then, shall we grow cold next Sunday? Not at all! It is from the beginning of the year to the end of the year! Shall we endeavor to get up a little excitement and have a revival for five or six weeks? No, blessed be God, we must have it from the beginning of the year to the end of the year!

While we have a spring which never grows dry, why should the pitcher ever be empty? Surely gratitude can find us fuel enough in the forests of memory to keep the fire of love always flaming. Why should we be weary when the glorious prize is worthy of our constant exertions, when the great crowd of witnesses hold us in full survey? May our Lord, by His Spirit bring you and me to a high pitch of prayerfulness, and then let us continue in prayer from the beginning of the year to the end of the year!

May God bring you and me to a high degree of generosity, and then may we be always giving from the beginning of the year to the end of the year every week, from the first to the last, always laying by in store as God has prospered us for His cause. May we be always active, always industrious, always hopeful, always spiritual, always heavenly, and always raised up and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus!

So may our gracious God deal with us from the beginning of the year to the end of the year through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.  
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DAYS OF HEAVEN UPON THE EARTH  
NO. 3425

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1914.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 23, 1866.

**“As the days of Heaven upon the earth.”  
Deuteronomy 11:21.**

As this text was originally written, it referred only to the length of life and the length of endurance which God promised to His obedient Israel. If they walked in His statutes, the Kingdom was to abide from generation to generation, without end, “as the days of Heaven upon earth.” But it seems to me that such a phrase as this ought to mean something more, if it did not, and might be used to express—and must be used to express many of those happy seasons which we have enjoyed when the Lord has manifested Himself to us—and which have been to us “as the days of Heaven upon the earth.” But is not the expression exaggeration? Is it not too strong? Brothers and Sisters, I think not. There were days of Heaven upon earth once. Every day upon earth was a day of Heaven before our first parent stretched out his hand and broke his Lord’s command. When he walked through the Garden of Eden, by the side of the rippling Hiddekel, or the streaming Euphrates, which rolled over sands of gold. As he reclined under the shadow of the trees from the heat of the sun, and plucked the generous fruit, God was with him as his Companion and manifested Himself to His favorite creature. Those were, indeed, days of Heaven upon earth! There was no strife, no sin, no sorrow—everything was happy! It seemed as if this world was but one chamber of God’s great house, one of the many mansions in our Father’s house, the vestibule of Glory, the portal of the skies—the ground floor, if I may say so, of the Master’s palace which reached high up beyond the clouds! There were days of Heaven upon earth—and we know from the sweetest prophecies, as sure as they are sweet, that there will be days of Heaven upon earth again, and that for a continuance! He who went up to Heaven from Olivet will so come, in like manner, as we have seen Him go up into Heaven! And when He comes, then will He reign in the midst of His people. And we are in the habit of speaking of that glorious reign with intense delight. No strife shall vex Messiah’s reign! There shall be no sorrow, then. They shall hang the useless helmet in the hall and study war no more— halcyon days! A millennial period! Peace like a river! Righteousness like the waves of the sea, for He shall live and to Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba! Prayer, also, shall be made for Him continually and daily shall He be praised! We are looking for the advent of the Lord, praying for it, desiring to be found in a working and waiting posture whenever He may come! And when He comes, then, to the letter, there shall be a longcontinued series of days of Heaven upon the earth! But, dear Friends, it is of little service to mourn the past, and though it may be of much benefit to expect the future, yet what shall we say about the present? I think the present is not without some happy seasons which may be likened to the days of the text.

My first business at this time will be to mention some of the days which are fit to be called days of Heaven upon the earth. Then, secondly, I shall answer the question—why do we not have more of them? And then, thirdly, I shall try to show the best ways of getting more of them. First, then, though man is born to sorrow, yet—

I. WE HAVE MOST HAPPY AND BLESSED PERIODS—DAYS OF HEAVEN UPON EARTH. And the first I will mention is the day in which we first look to Jesus and lose our sins. Our Revival Hymnbook sings—

*“Happy day! Happy day!*

*When Jesus washed my sins away.”*  
The long time of conviction, the dolorous winter of sorrow made the day of our release the happier and the brighter, just as the oasis is all the greener in contrast with the dry, sandy region over which the traveler has passed. The first day of our conversion, when we know Christ and have peace through Him, is a peculiarly green and happy spot in our life’s pilgrimage. We can never forget it. Some of us had a very distinct time and place of conversion. To us the day when we looked to Jesus is as fresh as though it were newly coined from the mint of time. Other days have lost their peculiar image and superscription. We can scarcely recollect any one of our birthdays, perhaps, unless something very remarkable has happened on them. But that day, if we were to live to be as old as Methuselah, we would still remember and count it to be the true day of our birth, the day when we truly began to live—for all before it was but dead! Dear Friends, do you remember the excessive joy of that day? It must have been so with all of you—but with some of us the joy was more than we could bear! We were like Simeon, when he saw the Lord and said, “Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace.” We made no stipulations with God. We would have been content to rot in a dungeon, or to lie tossing on the sick bed of a hospital, now that we had found Christ! We needed nothing beyond! We could have dared the very gates of Hell in that day to stop our joy! Satan, himself, could not have made us cease from singing, so joyous were we. Probably others noticed it and asked why it was—and they learned that the Lord had done great things for us, whereof we were glad. Oh, I wish this evening some of you could find the Savior! Some of you, perhaps, did not come here to find Him, but you want Him. You are feeling your sins, perhaps, pressing heavily upon you. Your guilt is like a burden upon your back—I do hope you will look to the Cross of Christ, for if you do, the strings will crack that bind your burden to your back and you shall leap for joy to find that you are free! There is life for a look at the Crucified One! And with that life there comes such a flood of joy that I would not wonder if you were almost ready, when you get home, to begin singing in the house even though there might be some there who could not sympathize with your joy! It is one of the days of Heaven upon earth when a soul casts its anchor upon Christ and says, “I am at rest, at rest forever!”

It must not be thought, however, that this is the only season, for often—very often—days of calm and peace are, to the Christian, like days of Heaven upon earth! Have you not often felt a stillness in your souls— cares gone, doubts fled, troubles forgotten—all so peaceful within that you did not seem to have a wish, nor a need and, happy in the Savior’s love, you did not care for all the world beside? You have got up in the morning and you have felt so happy—there was no excitement, no exuberance of feeling—but still, such a peaceful happiness that you would not have changed your state with the King upon his throne! You had to go to business and there was a good deal to try you, but you were not vexed. You seemed to put it all aside and to go through the day talking with Christ, your hands busy below, but your heart occupied above— your treasure being in Heaven and your heart being there, too—and that continued all day! And, perhaps, at night, at the family altar, they noticed how sweetly you prayed, and, if they did not, you remember what a calm there was upon you when you went upstairs and cast yourself upon the bed and slept. And if you awoke during the night, you found that you were still with God! With some of us there have been many such periods—and they have lasted sometimes by the week together! But far oftener they have come and gone very soon. And to many they have been like angels’ visits—few and far between—yet have we had enough of them to make us have a foretaste of that happier shore where all is forever peace, where the dove builds her nest and is never disturbed, where not a wave of trouble ever rolls across a sea of everlasting rest, where the angels continually sing the praises of God and there are no groans to mar the melody of their seraphic songs! Yes, those days of quiet peacefulness were as days of Heaven upon earth!

And we have got beyond that. Many Christians can remember days of praise. Have you not had days in which your souls seemed taken up with singing God’s praises? I do not mean that you went into the street or in public, but your soul kept singing—you had got the prayer answered—

*“Oh, may my soul in tune be found,*

*Like David’s harp of solemn sound!”*  
You wanted to tell everybody about what your God had done for you! And when you had an opportunity, you told of the goodness of the Lord and bade people to, “Taste and see that the Lord is good.” You went to see the sick, and if they murmured, you put aside their murmuring, for you, yourself, felt so happy that you could scarcely sympathize with a murmuring spirit! And when you went up to the assembly of God’s House and they sang some of their joyous songs, when, like a peal of thunder, their notes of praise went up and made the walls ring again, oh, how blessed were you! Why, I say it without exaggeration, I have sometimes, in this House, when we have been singing some of God’s praises, felt as though it could not be much better to be in Heaven than it was to be in the midst of God’s people singing with all their hearts His praises! We have sometimes run up the gamut until we reached the top of the scale and seemed to have almost got to the top of Jacob’s ladder—and almost ready to step into Heaven! Blessed days of praise! We can never forget you, for you have been “as the days of Heaven upon the earth.” Days of finding Christ, days of peace, days of praise are “as the days of Heaven upon the earth.”

Among the choicest seasons in a Christian’s life, however, are those in which he finds himself honored of God in the conversion of souls. Those are days of Heaven upon earth! I would like to know, but I suppose it is impossible to find out—I would like to know how many of us, here, who are Christians, are spiritual parents. I am afraid if there was a stocktaking, there would not be found many diligent ones among us—and that is not to our credit. Every Christian should make it to be one of the grand aims of his life, if not the grandest, to bring others to reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ! Now, as some of you may never have tried this, I would like to encourage you by offering you the sweet reward which God gives to those who labor for Him. Ah, my dear Friend, the City Missionary, you need not tell me of all your toils among the poor, the ragged and the filthy—true every word—but there is one thing I would like you to tell me. When you have met with a poor sinner who has been plucked by you from the depths of degradation and you have seen the tears of gratitude glistening in the eyes of a convert, have not you felt that it has made up for it all? You are no true missionary if you cannot say that! And do not tell me, my dear Brother minister, of all the toils of preaching to a people who seem weary of hearing—and of endeavoring to convince those of the Truth of God who do not care to listen to it—we know all about that! But let me ask you, when you have heard that a penitent has come to Christ and it has been said, “Behold he prays!” have not you felt that you have been rewarded for ten times more toil and trouble than you have ever put forth? If one could be cut in pieces and every piece could be hanged or flayed alive, it were worthwhile to suffer all that for the bringing of one soul to Christ—because if Jesus Christ thought it worth His while to suffer unutterable pains to redeem a soul— it would be worth the while of any one of Christ’s people to suffer the same—if that were the way to bring sinners to Him! Let me tell you that there is no joy like it! When you can hear a penitent say, “Blessed be God, I was once far from Him by wicked works, but I listened to the Truth of God as you proclaimed it. I heard your prayer in the class and it touched my heart—it broke me down and afterwards it led me out of darkness into Christ’s marvelous light—and blessed be God, I am saved!” Oh, there is no joy like it, and he that has many souls thus given to him for his hire must enjoy many of the days of Heaven upon earth!

Again, I believe there is many a family where this same joy has been felt—not by those who were the immediate instruments of conversion, but by those who have long prayed for the conversion of such. Your good mother, now, John, if you were to go home tonight a saved soul, would be made unspeakably happy! The dear old soul has been praying for you these many years. She wept over you when you were in your cradle. She has often prayed for you when you have been cursing and swearing—and has she, sometimes, fears that she will go to her grave and never see her child brought in? But if she were to hear that you were saved, there would be a day of Heaven upon earth in that family! How many households are there where the conversion of the husband has turned a little Hell into a little Heaven? You know how children are afraid of the father—how they run upstairs to get to bed because the father comes home the worse for drink—and how the poor mother suffers. There may be a little furniture, but she knows at any moment it may go off to the pawnbrokers to be converted into money to get more of the accursed liquor! And she lives in perpetual bondage and fear! But one night he comes home very thoughtful—where has he been? Oh, he has been to such-and-such a place of worship! Do you know the woman cannot sleep that night for hope? She is in hopes that there may be a change come over him—and when she sees him washing himself the next morning, and she hears that he is going back to the same place—how her heart beats with joy and hope and how heartily does she pray that her husband may become a changed character! And when he comes home and sits down, and the tears begin to flow, and he says, “Wife, we never prayed together. You know that I could never bear the thoughts of your praying. But it is all changed, now—get the Bible and let us see if we cannot pray together tonight.” That is one of the days of Heaven upon earth! There is joy to the mother who finds her son saved, joy to the wife who sees her husband converted—and it is equal joy to the husband when he gets his wife converted! There are some husbands who have sore trouble with ungodly wives. And they have prayed often and I hope they will not grow cast-down and leave off praying. The Lord who blessed them can bless their wives! Wait, never give in, never give up praying, as long as they have breath in their bodies, as long as they are on praying ground, pray for them and they may be converted! Then there will be joy, unspeakable joy and full of glory even on earth, when such an one is brought to know the Lord! These are, indeed, days of Heaven upon earth!

I think the Church has sometimes had them. Some of you do not know much about it—you do not work for Christ, you do not pray for souls—you do not feel for souls. But I could pick out in this assembly, if it were right, some who know a great deal about it because the Lord has given them a yearning heart and a tender soul so that they weep for others’ sorrows and repent of others’ sins. These are the persons that know, in deed and in truth, that there are days of Heaven upon earth! They travail and, therefore, they know the joy of her who forgets her travail because a man-child is born into the world!

But I must hasten on. There are other days. Dear Friends, a communion with loving, Christian Brother and Sisters often brings days of Heaven upon earth. I know some churches where there seem to be as many sects in the church as there are male members—where there is no love, no unity, no affection, no contention for the faith—but much contention for power and position! Now they never have days of Heaven upon earth. But where Christians love each other, there is the dew of Heaven! Some Christians greatly envy you, your privileges, and in belonging to a united Church. Scores of times, when I have received members who have been united before with churches split up and divided, they have said—

*“Here would I find a settled rest,  
While others go and come!  
No more a stranger or a guest,  
But like a child at home.”*

And I know there are many of you who have found a settled rest here and you have found, in communion with God’s people, that you are made to lie down in green pastures and go beside the still waters. Lonely Christians lose much comfort and I think those Christians who are always going abroad for company lose more. But those who have a select few whom they love, and with whom they associate, and with whom they can enjoy holy communion, will find many such days. I must confess that I have often been loath to go to bed when I have had a few beloved friends to talk about better things—and I am afraid if we had had our way and had not had to go to work the next morning, we would have let the clock get into the small hours, for so sweet was the company and the talk, we did not like to part! When Jesus Christ is the theme, there is no fear of weariness! And when those who know Him speak about Him, there is such freshness in their speech that one likes to let them go on without stopping them at all. Christian fellowship, how sweet! And if you get into a Christian family and live in it, how happy and pleasant it is! Some families have a morose father who seems to think there is no one in the world to be cared for except himself—and he domineers and is a tyrant. Others have a touchy, crotchety, quick-tempered mother and very little can go right with them long together. Others have a negligent woman, perhaps untidy, who does not attend to the house, but is a gossip. Now, to live in such houses as those is a misery, but if you get into some houses such as I have known, where the father endeavors, while he rules the house, to do it with love, where the mother is the very pattern of her sex, where the children are obedient and yet happy and free—where the servants feel an interest in the master’s affairs, because the master feels an interest in theirs—it is like a little Heaven upon earth! It is a blessed thing to drop into such a house, for you feel there, indeed, they have days of Heaven upon earth! When you young people marry, I hope you will set up just such houses and that it will be your desire to make your homes such that people may like to live in them. I would have your houses like that of Sir Thomas Abney, where Dr. Watts went to stay a few days—and stayed 26 years! It was too good a house to leave! Let your houses be such that when good men come, they will feel, “Here is the place where we can find rest.” May you have many days of Heaven upon earth in such a way!  
Now, to pass on, surely the highest of all will be found in a close communion with Christ. There is a nearness of approach to Christ of which to speak in the carnal ear would be to cast pearls before swine. There is a secret and mysterious conversation carried on between earth and Heaven of which Solomon sang in mystic numbers in the Canticles—and which saints have enjoyed, but which no tongue can adequately express—a peace which is not only like Heaven, but is Heaven! It is a piece of Heaven cast down to us here! It is not a grape from some wilderness vine, but a cluster from the vine of Eshcol and Eshcol was in Canaan, itself. The Lord gives earnests of His love, pledges of joys to come, so that even here we have, in communion with Christ, days of Heaven upon earth! But I must not prolong the catalog, for time fails me. I think I have said enough to make some feel that the Christian’s life is a happy one—let me add my testimony that it is! Let me add, not mine, but the testimony even of many a Negro slave in the days of slavery, who could say that, notwithstanding all suffering and all penury and every ill, a Christian’s life was a happy one, after all. Now, the second point was to be an enquiry, if there are so many days of Heaven upon earth—

II. WHY DO WE NOT HAVE MORE OF THEM?  
I think there are many reasons. Some people think it wicked to be happy. You smile, but I know some Christians who even seem to think that it is a sign of growth in Grace when you grow to be blessedly miserable! They imagine that for anything like joy to be in a Christian is incompatible with sincerity. We have not so learned Christ! We know that through much tribulation we inherit the Kingdom of God, but we have learned that as tribulation abounds, so consolation abounds through Jesus Christ. Let your face lack no oil and your head no ointment—go your way and live happily and joyfully—for if God has accepted you, there is no flesh living that has such a right to be joyous! Accepted in the Beloved! Cleansed from sin! Clothed with the righteousness of Christ! Safe for Heaven! Why should you not be happy? Go to the weeping willows, take down your harps and begin to strike them to melodious tunes. You ought to be happy, you people of the living God! Let the righteous be glad. Yes, let them shout for joy! Some Christians, perhaps, do not think it is wrong to be happy, but they will not be. Almost as a matter of principle, they will not be happy. You cannot please them. They are thorough Englishmen—they exercise the blessed prerogative of grumbling. No matter what it is, they can always see something or other to find fault with in it. If they have much, it might be more. If they have little, they are harshly treated. The blessings of the upper springs cannot content them unless the nether springs flow in as freely. And the mercies that come from Heaven will not please them unless they can have their share of the mercies of earth. Oh, dear Friends, pray the Lord to give you a new heart and a right spirit! I cannot make out what such a body as you will do in Heaven. Ask your Master to take away your grumpy spirit so that you may be able to see reasons for joy, for there are many of them! Charnock says, “He who observes Providence will never be without Providence to observe,” and we can say, he who is willing to be made happy may never be without something to make him happy, if he chooses to look for it.  
There are some of us who do not have as many days of Heaven upon earth because we could hardly bear them. Joy has sometimes danger with it. There are, among the flowers, poisonous asps. The Christian has need, when his cup is full, to carry it with a steady hand. Too much spiritual joy might even be too much for the physical frame, like the old Scotch Divine who called out, “Hold, Lord! Hold, Lord! It is enough! Remember I am but an earthen vessel. Give me no more joy, lest I die of excess of it!” Yes, there might be spiritual maladies, if not bodily ones— we might grow proud, self-conceited and lifted up. If we have much sail, we need much ballast and, perhaps, the furnace is as good a place for us as any place on earth until we get to Heaven. If we had so many of these days of Heaven upon earth, we might never long to go to Heaven at all, we might say, “This is a place happy enough for us!” But the Lord will not let us do so. He will make the wilderness to be a wilderness, still, that we may be willing to go on to Canaan. He would not have the sailor so content with the vessel as not to desire the port—and so He sends us rough days and stiff breezes that we may be disturbed and long for our desired haven. There is one thing more—if we had so many of these days and no troubles, we would not be like Christ—we would lack one point of conformity to Him, for He was “a Man of Sorrows.” We are to have fellowship with Him in His sufferings—and if our path were always smooth and our sky always bright—we might not know as well as we now know what the sufferings of Jesus Christ meant. We might be losers in Heaven if we were not sufferers here, for I suppose it will be a part of the joy in Heaven to remember the sorrow through which we came, to recollect the difficulties which we overcame and if we have not sorrows or difficulties, we shall not have so sweet a song. Rest is all the sweeter to the laboring man, and so shall the rest of Heaven be all the better because of the days of grief and sorrow which we had on earth. But now, lastly—  
III. WHAT CAN WE DO TO GET MORE OF THE DAYS OF HEAVEN UPON EARTH?  
Well, we cannot build a city with streets of gold. We cannot find chrysolytes and pearls with which to build a Jerusalem the Golden! We must take the place as we find it. And this world of ours, though a very fair earth, is not all we should like it to be—but we cannot alter it. It is very much like a convict settlement, a prison house to Christians. This is not our rest and, as we look abroad upon it, we feel it is not a proper place for the spirit to dwell in. It needs a better land in which to develop itself. But how, then, are we to get Heaven upon earth? I think there are three things we can do. The first is, we can get it, if we cannot alter the place, by being more like the spirits in Heaven. They are happy in Heaven, not only because it is Heaven, but because they are heavenly! They could not be otherwise than happy. If those blessed spirits were on earth, so perfectly pure as they are, they would be perfectly happy. It is not, I say, so much the place that makes their Heaven, as their state of mind. They are completely conformed to the will of God. They delight themselves intensely in the Most High. They have been freed from their earthly grossness and they are now like the pure gold that has passed through the furnace. Let us pray for holiness and we shall get happiness! Let us ask to be heavenly-minded and we shall get Heaven! There is no fear about our joy if we can get holiness. Very much in proportion as we shall become fit for Heaven shall we have days of Heaven upon earth!  
And then a second thing we can do. If we cannot get the place, we can get the objective that makes the place such a place as it is—that is to say, if we cannot get Heaven, we can get days of Heaven upon earth by getting Christ, for it is Christ who makes Heaven, as the sun makes the day! Christ is the flower in that garden that makes all the rest sweet! Christ is Heaven’s crown and glory, it’s brightest jewel and diadem—and he that gets his heart set upon Christ gets the better part of Heaven! At any rate, he can do without the angels and without the harps of gold for a time. When he gets Christ in his heart, the hope of glory—when the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit—and he can say, “My Beloved is mine, and I am His,” he has got the major part of Heaven and may have days of Heaven upon earth!  
There is a third thing that we can do to get Heaven, and that is to follow the occupation of those who are in Heaven. A man’s joy or sorrow comes very much from what he has to do. In Heaven they are always serving and praising. If we get the same work to do, if we enter into the same happy choir and sing praises to our heavenly King, and try to serve Him without weariness, why, then, we shall get, again, the better part of Heaven by getting the occupation of it! Holy men with Christ in their hearts, and with Christ’s work in their hands, spend many days of Heaven upon earth! We did not find Mr. Whitfield and Mr. Wesley very often troubled with doubts and fears—and I believe the reason was because their tenor of life was on high, their communion with Jesus was very close and, above all, because they were so hard at work for their Master that they had not time to sit down and begin raking in the mire of doubts and fears! May we be just such men as they were—and we shall have days of Heaven upon earth!  
Now, alas, alas, alas, there are many to whom I am now speaking who will have no days of Heaven upon earth, but they will have their poor unsatisfactory days to drag their weary length along and then, at last, will come the days of death. Ah, then, there are some that have had days of Hell upon earth—some who have made the nurse declare that they would never nurse such a man, again, for all the world—some who have made their very parents start from their bedside to hear their cries as they lay there suffering from the rod of Almighty wrath! Take care, take care that such is not your end! And if you would escape from it, remember the door of Heaven is Christ! The door is wide open! Only come to it, trust Christ, and you shall have days of Heaven upon earth, and afterwards Heaven, itself, shall be your portion! God grant that it shall be so for His name’s sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **DEUTERONOMY 6:1-23.**

Verses 1, 2. Now these are the commandments, the statues, and the judgments which the LORD, your God, commanded to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you go to possess it. That you might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son, and your son’s son, all the days of your life; and that your days may be prolonged. Obedience to God should arise from the fear of Him, or from a holy awe of God felt in the heart—for all true religion must be heart work. It is not the bare action, alone, at which God looks, but at the motive—at the spirit which dictates it, hence it is always put, “That you might fear the Lord, your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments.” Neither are we to be content with keeping commands ourselves. It is the duty of parents to seek the good of their children—to seek that the son and the son’s son should walk in the ways of God all their lives. May God grant us never to be partakers of the spirit of those who think that they have no need to look after the religion of their children—who seem as if they left it to a blind fate. May we care for them with this care that our son and our son’s son should walk before the Lord all the days of their life!

3. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with you and that you may increase mightily, as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you, in the land that flows with milk and honey. It seems, according to the Old Covenant, that temporal prosperity was appended as a blessing to the keeping of God’s commandments. It has been sometimes said that while prosperity was the blessing of the Old Covenant, adversity is the blessing of the New. There is some truth in that statement, for whom the Lord loves, He chastens, and yet is it true that the best thing for a man is that he should walk in the commands of God. There is a sense in which we do make the best of both worlds when we seek the love of God. When we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, other things are added to us so that it is not without meaning to us that the Lord here promises temporal blessings to His people.

4. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD. This is the great Doctrine that we learn, both from the Old and the New Testament—there is one Lord. And this great Truth of God has been burnt into the Jews by their long chastisement and, whatever other mistakes they make, you never find them making a mistake about this! The Lord your God is one Lord. May we always be kept from all idolatry—from all worship of anything except the living God. The sacred Unity of the Divine Trinity may we evermore hold fast.

5. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. It is not a little love that God deserves, nor is it a little love that He will accept. He blesses us with all His heart and all His might—and after that fashion are we to love Him.

6, 7. And these words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart. And you shall teach them diligently unto your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. The Word of God is not for some particular place called a Church or a Meeting House. It is for all places, all times and all occupations. I wish that we had more of this talking over of God’s Word when we sit by the way, or when we walk.

8. And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. With you in all your actions—with you in all your thoughts—conspicuously with you—not out of ostentation, but through your obedience to become apparent unto all men.

9-12 And you shall write them upon the posts of your house, and on your gates. And it shall be, when the LORD your God shall have brought you into the land which He swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you great and goodly cities which you built not. And the houses full of all good things which you filled not, and wells dug which you dug not, vineyards and olive trees which you planted not, when you shall have eaten and are full, then beware lest you forget the LORD, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Pride is the peculiar sin of prosperity—and pride stands side by side with forgetfulness of God. Instead of remembering from where our mercies came, we begin to thank ourselves for these blessings—and God is forgotten. I remember one of whom it was said that he was a self-made man and he adored his creator. And I may say that there are a great many persons who do just that! They believe that they have made themselves and so they worship themselves! Be it ours to remember that it is God who gives us strength to get wealth or to get position and, therefore, unto Him be all the honor of it, and never let Him be forgotten.

13-15. You shall fear the LORD your God, and serve Him, and shall swear by His name. You shall not go after other gods or the gods of the people which are round about you: (For the LORD your God is a jealous God among you). He will have the heart all to Himself. Two gods He cannot endure. Of false gods, there may be many—of the true God there can be but One—and He is a jealous God.

15-19. Lest the anger of the LORD your God be kindled against you, and destroy you from off the face of the earth. You shall not tempt the LORD your God as you tempted Him in Massah. You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and His testimonies and His statutes, which He has commanded you. And you shall do that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with you and that you may go in and possess the good land which the LORD swore unto your fathers, to cast out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has spoken. Now, this Covenant of Works they break, as we also have long ago broken ours. Blessed be God, our salvation now hangs on another Covenant which cannot fail nor break down—the Covenant of Grace! Yet, still, now that we have become the Lord’s children, we are put under the discipline of the Lord’s house, and these words might not set forth what is the discipline of the Lord’s house towards His own children, namely, that He does bless us when we walk in His ways, and that He will walk contrary to us if we walk contrary to Him. He keeps a rod in His house, and in very love He uses that upon His best beloved ones. “You only have I known of all the nations of the earth; therefore, I will punish you for your iniquities.” He will not kill His children, nor treat them as a judge treats a criminal, for they are not under the Law, but under Grace. But He will chasten them and treat them as a father chastens his child— out of love. Oh, that we might have Grace to walk before Him with a holy, childlike fear, so that we may always walk in the light of His Countenance!

20-23. And when your son asks you in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statues, and the judgments which the LORD our God has commanded you? Then you shall say unto your son, We were Pharaoh’s bondmen in Egypt and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. And the LORD showed signs and wonders great and sore upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household before our eyes. And He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land which He swore unto our fathers. And cannot we tell our children what God has done for us—how He brought us out of our spiritual captivity, and how in His almighty love He has brought us into His Church and will surely bring us into the glory above? May God grant us Grace to speak about these things without diffidence, but with great confidence to tell our children of what He has done.

—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 #1406 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

REMEMBER!  
NO 1406

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 31, 1878, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“You shall remember that you were a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you.”  
Deuteronomy 15:15.**

IN an autobiography of William Jay we read that on one occasion he called to see the famous Mr. John Newton, at Olney, and he observed that over the desk at which he was accustomed to compose his sermons, he had written up in very large letters the following words—“Remember that you were a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you.” To my mind this story invests the text with considerable interest—it was most fitting that such a remarkable convert as he should dwell upon such a theme and place such a text conspicuously before his eyes. Might it not with great propriety be placed in a similar position by each one of us?

Mr. Newton lived and acted under the influence of the memory which the text commands, as was seen that very morning in his conversation with Mr. Jay. “Sir,” said Mr. Newton, “I am glad to see you, for I have a letter just come from Bath and you can, perhaps, assist me in the answer to it. Do you know anything of So-and-So (mentioning the name)?” Mr. Jay replied that the man was an awful character, had once been a hearer of the Gospel, but had become a leader in every vice. “But, Sir,” said Mr. Newton, “He writes very penitently and who can tell? Perhaps a change may have come over him.” “Well,” said Mr. Jay, “I can only say that if ever he should be converted, I should despair of no one.” “And I,” said Mr. Newton, “have never despaired of anybody since I was, myself, converted.”

So, you see, as he thought of this poor sinner at Bath, he was remembering that he, also, was a bondman in the land of Egypt and the Lord his God had redeemed him. And why should not the same redemption reach even to this notorious transgressor and save him? The memory of his own gracious change of heart and life gave him tenderness in dealing with the erring and hope with regard to their restoration. May some such good effect be produced in our minds—we are not all called to be preachers of the Gospel, but in any capacity a holy, beneficial, sanctifying effect will be produced upon a right mind by remembering that we were bondmen, but the Lord our God redeemed us. May the Holy Spirit, at this hour, bring the amazing Grace of God to our remembrance with melting power!

As to the particular fact of the redemption of Israel out of Egypt, great care was taken that it should be remembered. The month upon which they came out was made the commencement of the year. “This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you” (Exo. 12:2). A special injunction was issued, “Observe the month of Abib and keep the Passover unto the Lord your God: for in the

month of Abib the Lord your God brought you forth out of Egypt by night.” An ordinance was established on purpose that the deliverance might be commemorated—and the eating of the Passover lamb was made binding upon the whole of the people—so that they should not forget the sprinkling of the blood.

The Word of the Lord ordained, saying, “And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and you shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever.” They were enjoined, also, to instruct their children concerning it, so that in addition to a ceremonial there was an oral tradition to be handed from father to son. “And when your son asks you in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God has commanded you? Then you shall say unto your son, We were Pharaoh’s bondmen in Egypt and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand” (Deut. 6:20, 21).

Their law of the Ten Commandments commenced with a reminder of that remarkable fact—“I am the Lord your God, which have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage: you shall have no other gods before Me.” All through the book of Deuteronomy you will observe that this is the one weighty and oft repeated argument for obedience and faithfulness—“Remember that you were a bondman in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you.” Now, Beloved, if the Jew was so carefully instructed to remember his deliverance out of Egypt, should not we, also, take heed to ourselves that we by no means forget, or cast into the background, our yet greater redemption through the precious blood of Christ by which we were set free from the yoke and bondage of sin? See how Paul, in Ephesians 2:11, 12, 13, speaks to us who have been called by Grace from the ends of the earth—“Why remember, that you being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus you who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of Christ.”

He puts the same thought into other words in Romans 6:17, 18, when he says—“God be thanked, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness.” Paul would have us remember our redemption. And God the Holy Spirit who spoke by Paul would have us remember it! Will we not give earnest heed to such solemn counsels? The blessed effects that will flow from such a memory urge us to remember it and because of this our discourse of this morning is intended to be a humble assistance towards such a memory.

O my Brothers and Sisters, forget all else, just now, and give your heart to the work before you and, “remember that you were a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you.” First, then, let us consider our bondage. Secondly, our redemption. And thirdly, the influence of the memory of the two facts. I shall not try to say anything fresh or new—it would be out of place to attempt it, for my present duty is to awaken your memories as to former days. I have only to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. He who is only a remembrancer for the past must not look about for novelties. We speak what you know and ask you to testify to what you have felt.

I. First let us consider OUR BONDAGE. It was exceedingly like the bondage of the children of Israel in Egypt. There are many points in which a parallel might be drawn. We will indicate them in a few words. First, when we were unregenerate and sold under sin, we were enslaved to a mighty power against which we could not contend. It would have been of no use for the Israelites to have commenced an insurrection against Pharaoh—he was too firmly established upon the throne and his soldiers by far too strong for poor, feeble, shepherd tribes to be able to resist. They scarcely dared to think of such a thing and, Brethren, if fallen man singlehandedly had the heart to contend with sin and Satan, he would certainly be unable to achieve a victory.

The Fall has left us “without strength.” The Law, with all its force, is “weak through the flesh.” Alas, man has no heart for spiritual liberty, otherwise the Lord would lend him power. But apart from Divine power, what man can break loose from his sin? Shall the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then shall he that is accustomed to do evil learn to do well, unassisted by Divine strength! No, Brothers and Sisters, the fetters which enchain the mind of the carnal man are much too strong for him to snap them. He may resolve to do so, as in moments of reflection some men do, but, alas, he is soon weary of the struggle for liberty and resigns himself to his prison.

If man had been capable of his own redemption, there would never have descended from Heaven the Divine Redeemer, but because the bondage was all too dire for man to set himself free, therefore the eternal Son of God came here that He might save His people from their sins. Our natural bondage was caused and maintained by a power tremendous in energy and craft. The Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience, held us beneath his iron sway and sin exercised a tyrannical dominion over us from which we could not break.

Worse still, we were like the Israelites in another respect. Our slavery had so degraded us that we had no heart to desire an escape! One of the worst points of slavery is that it frequently degrades men into contentment with their condition. That would be thought by some to be a benefit, but it is a giant evil, for a man has no right to be satisfied in slavery. Such contentment is an ensign of debased manhood. Freedom is the right of every human being and he is not truly a man if he can be happy in bondage.

The Israelites were so trampled down that they crouched at their oppressors’ feet and made themselves as content as they could in their enslaved condition. As they were turned into beasts of burden, so were their minds brutalized until their chief joy lay in the onions and the cucumbers with which they refreshed themselves—and the fish of which they later

spoke so longingly. They declined from a thoughtful family into a clan of groveling laborers without heart or hope, so that when Moses went to them, the first time, he was not received. And when he was sent of God with his brother, Aaron, the people at the first hour of conflict shrank into their former cowardice and would willingly have remained slaves sooner than excite Pharaoh’s wrath.

They had been ground down so terribly with their hard labor in mortar and in brick that they scarcely dared to think of freedom—and that was just your case and mine, beloved Friends—we, too, were willing slaves of death and sin. If we are free this morning it was not because when left to ourselves we fought for liberty and refused to wear a fetter. No, our bonds were on our hearts and we chose our own degradation. The slave from the south, of old, watched the northern star and followed it through brake, swamp and forest to obtain his liberty, but our eyes refused to look to Jesus, who is the Star of Freedom. We boasted that we were born free and were never in bondage to any man and so we most effectually proved our bondage under our own pride.

We, perhaps, called ourselves freethinkers and, at any rate we meant to be free actors, yet, all the while we were in bondage and did not care to seek true liberty. Can you not remember when you hugged your chains and kissed your bonds—and like a madman who crowns himself with a wisp of straw and calls himself a king—embraced the foolish pleasures of this world and thought yourselves supremely blessed in such base enjoyments? Remember again, dear Brothers and Sisters, that you were in a bondage similar to that of Egypt, for while in that condition you toiled hard and found that all the service wherein Satan made you to serve was with rigor.

The Israelites built treasure cities for Pharaoh and they are supposed to have erected some of the pyramids. But their wage was very small and their taskmasters were brutal. Laborers engaged upon royal works received no wages, but were simply served with sufficient bread to keep them alive. The Israelites were called upon to make an enormous quantity of bricks and, at last, the chopped straw, which was necessary to make the clay bind together, which had been given out of the royal granaries, was refused them and they were bid to go over all the land to hunt up what they could of stubble instead of straw—thus their labor was increased beyond all bearing.

Could not many a sinner tell of horrible nights and woeful mornings when under the power of his passions? Who has woe? Who has redness of the eyes? Who is filled with dread of death? Who flees when no man pursues? Of all tyrants sin and Satan are the most cruel! How are men worn out in the devil’s destructive service! What an expense does sin entail! It is a costly thing for many, to obey their own vices! They are impoverished by their passions. Those who complain if they are pressed for subscriptions to holy causes should consider how much more they would have spent in the pleasures of the world. Why, men squander fortunes upon their frivolities or upon their lusts—and encumber future generations to indulge a vice which ruins their health, destroys their reputation and sends them to an early grave!

If you will have your own way, that way will be the hardest you can choose. It does not matter in what position a man may be, whether rich or poor, illiterate and fond of the more vulgar pleasures, or tutored and educated and prone to more fashionable vices—sin leads on to hard service everywhere—and its exactions increase from day to day. If men were but in their senses, drunkenness, gambling, gluttony, wantonness and many other vices would be punishments rather than pleasures—and yet they live in them! There was a time, dear Brethren, when, in addition to our hard toil, our bondage brought us misery.

Do you remember when you dared not think a day’s conduct over for the life of you? When if you had been compelled to sit down and review your own character it would have been an intolerable task? I recollect, also, when a sense of sin came over me and then, indeed, my life was made bitter with hard bondage. I labored to set up a righteousness of my own, for I could not yield to the righteousness of Christ. That was laboring as in the very fire! I strove by my own good works to accomplish my own salvation and tried by prayers and tears to pay the debt I owed to God, but all in vain. I was sinning all the while by refusing Christ and endeavoring to rival my Savior.

So far I speak for myself, but I know that you have done the same. Do you remember, Brothers and Sisters, when your pleasures ceased to be pleasures? When all the amusements of the world lost their flavor and became flat, stale, nauseous and you turned away and asked in vain for something that would content you? Do you remember when at last you saw yourself in your true condition and bewailed yourself before the living God as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn? Ah, then you felt like Israel in Egypt when they sighed and cried by reason of the bondage!

And, blessed be God, the parallel runs further, for in your case, also, God heard the groaning and remembered His covenant (Exo. 2:24). All this while our enemy was aiming at our destruction! This was what Pharaoh was driving at with Israel—he intended to cut off the nation by severe tasks, or at least to reduce its strength. As his first policy did not succeed, he set about to destroy the male children. And even so, Satan, when he has men under his power, labors by all means to utterly destroy them, for nothing short of this will satisfy him! Every hopeful thought he would drown in the river of despair, lest by any means the man should shake off his yoke. The total overthrow of the soul of man is the aim of the great enemy. What a mercy to have been redeemed out of the hand of the enemy!

And like Israel in Egypt, we were in the hands of a power that would not let us go. There came a voice by Moses which said to Pharaoh, “Thus says the Lord, Let My people go,” but Pharaoh’s answer was, “I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.” And such was the language of our corruptions! Such the language of the devil who had dominion over us. “I will not let you go,” said the fierce Prince of Darkness and, like a strong armed man, he kept his goods in peace. You remember that telling sermon which thrilled you and awoke in you desires for liberty? You recollect how there seemed to ring in the halls of your nature the resounding

voice, “Let my people go”?  
But you did not go, for that slavish will of yours held you in bondage.  
Your sins captivated you! Then came the reading of the Scriptures, or a  
mother’s exhortation, or another earnest sermon and again the voice was  
heard, “Thus says the Lord, Let My people go.” You began to feel uneasy  
in your condition and to venture somewhat into the border country, but  
you could not escape—the iron had entered into your soul—your heart  
was captive. Blessed was the day when the strong armed man that kept  
you as a man keeps his house was overcome by a stronger than he and  
cast out forever! Then Jesus took possession of your nature, never to  
leave it, but to hold His tenancy world without end! Glory be to God, we  
were bondmen in Egypt, but the Lord our God redeemed us—let His name  
be praised!  
I would assist you still further to remember that bondage. It cannot be  
hard for some of you to do so, for you are “from Egypt lately come.” Some  
of you have been set free, now, these 20 years, some perhaps these 50  
years! But it cannot be difficult for you to remember what must be so indelibly impressed upon you. I can imagine, 30 years after coming out of  
Egypt, some of the gray fathers who had crossed the Red Sea telling their  
sons the sad story of the bondage in Egypt. “I, your father,” one of them  
would say, “was beaten with rods by the taskmaster because when I had  
made up my full tale of bricks I was required to make twice as many. I  
toiled far into the night at brick-making, but I could not accomplish the  
task—and I remember how the blows descended upon my back like burning hail. Look here, my son,” he would say, as he stripped himself to show  
the scars, “these are the memorials of Egyptian bondage.”  
Ah, glory be to God, we are free! No more do we carry clanking chains  
upon our souls—but we still bear the old scars about us. Sometimes the  
old temper rises, or the old lusts flame up. When a man has had a bone  
broken, it may have been well set and he has, for the most part, forgotten  
the problem, yet, in bad weather I have heard it said, “The old bone talks  
a bit.” And, alas, the bones we broke by our sins will talk a bit at times—  
and their talk is a sad reminder of our former state. Snatches of ill songs,  
recollections of old lusts and I know not what besides, are scars which  
remind us that we were bondmen in Egypt!  
Many a mother that came out of Egypt when she looked at her boy  
would say, “And I might have been the joyful mother of seven sons, but  
they were one after another snatched from my bosom by the remorseless  
servant of the Egyptian tyrant and put to death.” With her joy for what  
was left her would be mingled sorrow for what she had lost. Yes, and in  
your families it may be your younger children have been brought under  
religious influences, but your older sons are as irreligious as you were  
when they were lads at home. Many are led to think of their own evil example in former years as they see their wayward sons persevering in sin. As you think of them you may say, “I see my bondage in my son. I see  
my sin repeated in my child.” These are mournful memorials of our carnal  
state. But, indeed, I need not thus remind you, for everything may refresh your memories as to your former bondage. Is it not so? The task set before you in the text is an easy one and I charge you, therefore, remember  
that you were once bondmen in Egypt.  
II. In the second place, we have to think of the blessed fact of OUR REDEMPTION—“The Lord your God redeemed you.” Here again there is a  
parallel. He redeemed us first by price. Israel in Egypt was an unransomed nation. God claimed that nation to be His firstborn. As it is written,  
“Sanctify unto Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the  
children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is Mine.” That portion had  
been His claim from the first. And the Law was afterwards carried out by  
the setting apart of the Levitical tribe to take the place of the firstborn—  
but Israel in Egypt had never set apart its firstborn at all—and was, therefore an unredeemed people.  
How was all that indebtedness to be made up? The nation must be redeemed by a price and that price was set forth by the symbol of a lamb  
which was killed, roasted and eaten, while the blood was smeared upon  
the lintel and the two side posts. Beloved, you and I have been redeemed  
with blood! Blessed Lord Jesus, “You were slain and have redeemed us  
unto God by Your blood.” “You were not redeemed with corruptible things,  
as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb  
without blemish and without spot.” You cannot, you must not, you shall  
not forget this. You were bondmen, but Jesus your Lord redeemed you. He  
took your nature and was thus next of kin to you—and it became His  
right to redeem you, which right He has exercised to His own cost but to  
your eternal gain.  
The price by which you were set free He counted down in a wondrous  
coinage, minted from His own heart. The ransom is paid and the Jubilee  
trumpet proclaims that you and your heavenly possessions are now delivered from all mortgage and encumbrance through the blood of Jesus  
Christ. Remember that with a great price you have obtained this freedom.  
The Lord says, “I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for you.”  
But there would not have been a coming out of Egypt unless there had  
been a display of power as well as a payment of price—for with a high  
hand and an outstretched arm the Lord brought forth His people. There are always two redemptions to every man who is saved—  
redemption by price and redemption by power. You know what power God  
put forth in the land of Egypt when He worked all His plagues in the field  
of Zoan. But that was nothing compared with the power of Christ when He  
broke the head of the old dragon! When He utterly destroyed the kingdom  
of sin and led our captivity captive! Greater than Moses’ rod were Christ’s  
pierced hands! He has done it! He has done it! Our tyrant has no more  
power to hold us in chains, for Christ has vanquished him forever! Another form of redemption was also seen by Israel, namely, in the  
power exerted over themselves. I think sufficient stress has never been  
laid upon this. That they should have been willing to come out of Egypt  
was no small thing—universally willing so that not a single person remained behind—so unanimous and so eager were they to come out of  
Egypt, though almost rooted to the soil, that a number of Egyptians came up with them. According to the word of Moses, “Not a hoof shall be left behind,” they all left the land and neither sheep, nor goat, nor ox—much  
less man, woman, or child—remained.  
Israel was glad to come out and even Egypt was glad when they departed. It is wonderful that they were all able to come out of Egypt. There  
was never an army, yet, but what had some sick in it—the ambulance and  
the hospital are always needed—but of this grand army we are told, “He  
brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble  
person among their tribes.” Marvelous display of power was this! And so,  
Beloved, we will tell it to the praise of God this day that He made us willing to come out of the Egypt of our sin to which we were rooted! And making us willing He made us able, too! The power of the Spirit came upon us  
and the might of His Grace overshadowed us and we did arise and come  
to our Father. Let Grace have all the glory!  
Shall I need to press upon you, then, to let your minds fly back to the  
time when you realized your redemption and came up out of the land of  
Egypt? It was a Divine interposition. “The Lord your God redeemed you.”  
And it was personally experienced, for, “The Lord your God redeemed  
you.” It was a matter of clear consciousness to your own soul. You were a  
bondman—you knew it and felt it—the Lord your God redeemed you and  
you know it and feel that, also! You know it as much as a galley slave  
would know it if he no more tugged the oar! As much as the captive who  
has pined away in the dungeon through weary years would know it when  
once more he breathed the air and felt that he was free!  
“You were a bondman, and the Lord your God redeemed you.” There  
can be no doubt about it! Satan himself could not make some of us doubt  
it! The chains were so real and the liberty so delightful! It was a mental  
phenomenon for which there can be no accounting except upon this belief—that the Lord our God, Himself, came and set us free!  
III. Thus, Brothers and Sisters, I have set before you the subject for  
your memory. I shall now try to show you THE INFLUENCE WHICH THIS  
DOUBLE MEMORY OUGHT TO HAVE UPON YOU. We should naturally  
conclude, without any reference to Scripture, that if a Christian man kept  
always in mind his former and his present state, it would render him  
humble. You have been preaching and God has blessed you to the conversion of many—do you feel elated? “Remember that you were a bondman in  
the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you.”  
You are getting on in knowledge and your character is evidently much  
improved. Your inner life is full of peace and comfort. Do you feel as if you  
were some great one? Do not play the fool! You are less than nothing! Remember that you were a poor miserable slave—brown, sun-dried, smoketinged—and that not long ago! You would have been in Hell if it had not  
been for Sovereign Grace! Or if not there, perhaps you would have been  
among drunkards and swearers, and lewd men and women, or at least  
among the proud, self-righteous Pharisees. When you are honored of the  
Lord and happy in the full assurance of faith, remember that you were a  
bondman—walk humbly with your God.  
In the next place, be grateful. If you have not all the temporal mercies  
that you would desire, yet you have received the choicest of all mercies—  
liberty through Jesus Christ—therefore be cheerful, happy and thankful.  
Remember that you were a bondman and if you have but little of this  
world’s goods, be thankful for the great spiritual blessing you have received in being set free from the galling yoke. Do not receive such a liberty  
as this without blessing those dear, pierced hands which was nailed to the  
tree that you might be delivered! Let gratitude abound, as you remember  
the wormwood and the gall.  
Being grateful, be patient, too. If you are suffering or ailing, or if sometimes your spirits are cast down, or if you are poor and despised, yet say  
to yourself, “Why should I complain? My lot may seem difficult, yet it is  
nothing in comparison with what it would have been if I had been left a  
prisoner in the land of Egypt! Thank God I am no longer in bondage to my  
sins.” The slave of the sad times in America would leap on the Canadian  
shore! And though he came there with all his earthly goods wrapped up in  
his handkerchief and knew not where his next meal would come from, yet  
he would spring upon the shore, dance for joy and say, “Thank God, I am  
free! I am penniless, but free!” How much more, then, may you, whatever  
your suffering or sorrow may be, exclaim, “Thank God! I was a bondman,  
but the Lord my God has redeemed me

and I will be patient, whatever I  
am called to bear.”  
Next, be hopeful. What may you not yet become? “It does not yet appear  
what we shall be.” You were a bondman, but Divine Grace has set you  
free! Who knows what the Lord may yet make of you? Is there anything  
that He cannot, will not do for one whom He has already redeemed by His  
blood? He has set you free from sin! Oh, then, He will keep you from falling and preserve you to the end. “For if when we were enemies we were  
reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled,  
we shall be saved by His life.” Are you thus hopeful? Then be zealous!  
Here earnestness should find both fire and fuel—we were bondmen, but  
the Lord has redeemed us. What, then, can be too hard for us to undertake for His sake? We must give all to Him who has purchased us to Himself and we must continue to do so as long as we live.  
John Newton persisted in preaching even when he was really incapable  
of it, for he said “What? Shall the old African blasphemer leave off preaching Jesus Christ while there is breath in his body? No, never!” He felt that  
he must continue to bear testimony, for our text was always before him,  
“Remember that you were a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord  
your God redeemed you.”  
But now kindly follow me while I, as briefly as I can, show you the  
Lord’s own use of this remembrance. And the first text I shall quote will be  
found in Deuteronomy 5:14. This is what He says—“The seventh day is  
the Sabbath of the Lord your God: in it you shall not do any work, you,  
nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your ox, nor your ass, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger  
that is within your gates; that your manservant and your maidservant  
may rest as well as you. And remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord your God brought you out of there through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord  
your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.”  
You were a bondman. What would you have given for rest? Now that  
the Lord has given you this hallowed day of rest, guard it sacredly. When  
you were a bondman you knew the heart of a servant and you sighed because your toil was heavy. Now that you are set free, if you have servants,  
think of them and so order your household that they may, as much as  
possible, enjoy their Sabbath. Certain household duties must be performed, but plot and plan to make these as light as possible, “that your  
manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you.” If you meet  
with any that are in bondage of soul and cannot rest, obey the text in its  
spiritual teaching.  
Rest in the Lord Jesus yourself, but endeavor to bring all your family  
into the same peace, “that your manservant and your maidservant may  
rest as well as you.” Surely if you have been set free from the iron bondage  
you ought not to need urging to keep, with all sacredness, this holy day  
which the mercy of God has hedged about! Nor should you need exhorting  
to rest in the Lord and to endeavor to lead others into His rest. In Deuteronomy 7 we have another use of this remembrance. Here the  
chosen people are commanded to keep separate from the nations. They  
were not to intermarry with the Canaanites nor make alliances with them.  
Israel was to be separated, even as Moses said, “you are a holy people  
unto the Lord your God.” And the reason he gives in the 8th verse is this—  
“The Lord redeemed you out of the house of bondmen.” Ah, Brothers and  
Sisters, if we are redeemed from among men. If there is a special and particular redemption, as we believe, by which Christ loved His Church and  
gave Himself for it, then as the specially blood-bought ones, we are under  
solemn obligations to come out from the world and to be separate from it.  
Did not Jesus say of His redeemed, “They are not of the world, even as I  
am not of the world”? Therefore come you out from among them and be  
you separate.  
In the 8th chapter, redemption is used as an argument for obedience,  
and they are exhorted not to forget the laws and statutes of the Lord. And  
above all they are warned, lest in the midst of prosperity their heart  
should be lifted up so as to forget the Lord their God who brought them  
forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. The same argument runs through the 11th chapter and it is a very clear one. We ought  
to render glad obedience to Him who has worked us so great a deliverance! We find in the 13th chapter that the redemption from bondage is  
used as an argument for loyal attachment to the one and only God. The tendency of the nation was to idolatry, since all the countries  
round about had many gods and lords—but the Lord commanded His  
people to put to death all prophets and dreamers of dreams who might  
seek to lead them away from the worship of Jehovah. “You shall stone him  
with stones that he dies,” says the 10th verse, “because he has sought to  
thrust you away from the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.” You must not have another God,  
for no other God delivered you—worship Him to whom you owe your all. Our own text is set in the following connection. If a man entered into  
forced servitude, or came under any bonds to his fellow man among the  
Jews, he could only be held for six years. In the seventh he was to go free.  
“And when you send him out free from you, you shall not let him go away  
empty: you shall furnish him liberally out of your flock and out of your  
flour, and out of your winepress: of that which the Lord your God has  
blessed you, you shall give unto him. And you shall remember that you  
were a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed  
you.”  
The Lord’s people should be considerate of those who are in their employment. The recollection of their own bondage should make them tender  
and kind to those who are in subservience to them and never should a  
Christian man be ungenerous, illiberal, severe, churlish with his servants,  
or with any who are dependent upon him. Be large-hearted! Do not be angry at every little fault, nor swift to observe every slight mistake. And be  
not forever standing on your exact rights, litigious, sticking out for the last  
half-farthing as some do.  
I am almost sorry if a mean, stingy man gets converted, for I am afraid  
he will be no credit to Christianity. There should be in a man redeemed  
with the blood of Christ something like nobility of soul and benevolence to  
his fellow men. Even this stern Book of the Law teaches us this. I have no  
time except to remind you that they were bound to keep the Passover because of their deliverance from Egypt as we find in the 16th chapter at the  
1st verse. “Observe the month of Abib and keep the Passover unto the Lord  
your God: for in the month of Abib the Lord your God brought you forth  
out of Egypt by night.”  
So let us, also, take heed unto ourselves that we keep all the statutes  
and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly. Let us keep the ordinances as  
they were delivered unto us and neither alter nor misplace them. Hold fast  
the Truth of God and be not moved from it by the cunning craftiness of  
men. Walk according to the teaching of Scripture in all things, keeping the  
good old way, because the Lord our God redeemed us and His Truth is  
unchangeable. Again, in the 16th chapter, verses 10 to 12, you have the  
great redemption used as an argument for liberality towards the cause of  
God. They were to give unto the Lord rejoicingly of that which the Lord  
had given to them. “Every man shall give as he is able, according to the  
blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you.”  
And that because of the 12th verse, “You shall remember that you were  
a bondman in Egypt: and you shall observe and do these statutes.” In the  
26th chapter the same teaching is reduced to a set form, for they were  
there commanded to bring each one a basket of first fruits and offer it  
unto the Lord, saying—“The Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a  
mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness,  
and with signs, and with wonders. And He has brought us into this place,  
and has given us this land, even a land that flows with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first fruits of the land, which You, O  
Lord, have given me.”  
Need I, even for a moment, impress this duty upon you? Last of all, in  
the 24th chapter there remains one more lesson. We are there exhorted to  
be careful concerning the fatherless and the widow (Deut. 24:17). A generous spirit was to be exhibited towards the poor. They were not to fetch  
in all their sheaves from the field if any were forgotten, nor to scrape up  
every single ear of corn from among the stubble, as some do these days,  
nor to beat their olive trees twice, nor to gather the grapes of their vineyard a second time. Rather, they were to leave something for the poor!  
This was the argument—When you were in Egypt, when you had to make  
bricks without straw, how glad you were to turn your children in among  
the stubble to gather a few ears to make a loaf of bread. And now the Lord  
has given you a better land, therefore deal well with the poor. Brethren, let the needy never be forgotten by you! Do not be miserly. Do  
not imitate those farmers who would comb their fields with a smalltoothed comb if they could—sooner than the poor should glean—raking it  
and raking it again and again! No, the ransomed Israelites were not even  
to pick all their fruit, for the argument was, “Would not you, when in  
Egypt, have given anything for a bunch of those grapes which grew in the  
gardens of the rich?” Think, therefore, of the poor and deal kindly with  
them, even as you would wish others to deal with you.  
With this I close. Be thoughtful of all your fellow men. You that have  
been redeemed with price, be you tender-hearted, full of compassion,  
merciful. In spiritual things take care that you never rake the corners of  
your fields. Do not rob the Gospel of its sweetness. There is a class of  
preaching out of which the last ear of wheat has been taken. Their Gospel  
is criticized into nothing. The skeptical commentators come in and pick  
nearly every bunch of grapes and then the modern-thought gentry devour  
the rest!  
The preaching of modern times is as an olive tree beaten till not a trace  
of fruit remains. Let it not be so with us, but let the preacher say, “I was a  
bondman and therefore I will drop handfuls on purpose for poor souls in  
trouble.” Brothers and Sisters, be very considerate to seekers. Look them  
up. Talk to them after the sermon. Say a word to those sitting in your pew  
which may encourage their poor trembling hearts to lay hold on Jesus  
Christ.  
Remember that you were a bondman—the smell of the brick kiln is  
upon you now, my Brother, my Sister—you have not yet cleansed all the  
clay from your hands with which you did work in mortar and in brick.  
Then do not become selfish, unloving, unkind, but in all things love your  
neighbor as yourself and so prove that you love the Lord your God with all  
your heart. God bless you. Amen.

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FORGIVENESS, FREEDOM, FAVOR  
NO. 2276

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, OCTOBER 2 1892. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 10, 1890.

**“And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor that lends anything unto his neighbor shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbor, or of his brother; because it is called the LORD’S release.” Deuteronomy 15:2.**

THIS wonderful transaction of “the Lord’s release” came at the end of every seven years. It was according to the gracious Law of God for Israel that there should be, first of all, a rest one day in seven. Next, there were feast days one month in seven—and then there came, every seventh year, a year of rest for the land in which they did not till it, but left it to lie fallow. Then after the seven sevens were complete, there came on the 50th year, an extraordinary year of rest, in addition to the usual one—this was called the Year of Jubilee.

I believe that there is a spiritual meaning in this succession of rests, but I have not time to enter upon the explanation of it now, except to say that, doubtless, that last seven of sevens represents the restitution of all things, when the Lord Jesus shall have gathered His people in to rest forever and ever with Himself in His Glory. Till then, we go from seven to seven every week—our Sabbaths are so many staves of the golden ladder by which we climb up to the eternal Sabbath. We bless God that we still retain, at least, that vestige of the seven, for blessed are our eyes that they see, and our hearts that they enjoy the one day of rest every week! What would we do without it?

Once, then, in seven years, there was a year of perfect rest. And I cannot help remarking, again, as I did in the reading, what happy people the chosen people would have been if they had but listened to God’s commands! Only imagine a country where, for a whole year, there would be nothing to do. The land would bring forth her own fruit and everybody might eat of it, sitting under his own vine and fig tree, having no tillage of the field or pruning of the vine, but having an opportunity given to him of spending the whole year in the service and worship of the Most High! When the people afterwards revolted from the Lord and desired a king to reign over them, He told them by the mouth of the Prophet Samuel the manner of the king whom they would choose, so that they might know the difference between the Lord’s rule and their king’s. The earthly monarchs would ground them down, oppress them and bring them into all manner of bondage—and it came to pass! But the Lord’s yoke was only this—that they should rest and serve Him here and enjoy Him forever hereafter.

These high privileges were attended, in the case of the people of Israel, with high spiritual commands. The laws given to Israel were not intended for Moabites, Edomites and Egyptians. They could not have understood them—they would probably have laughed at them. But the spirituallyminded among God’s chosen people—and there were some such—would delight in these commands and obey them. Look at the command in the present chapter, that any Israelite who had sold his liberty to a brother Hebrew, should go free at the end of six years. It was a strange command, a blessedly generous one—but it was added that he should not go out empty but that he should be furnished with abundant help from the flock, from the threshing floor and from the winepress—and that he who gave him this fresh start in life should not do it grudgingly. The Hebrew has it, “Loading him, he shall be loaded; you shall adorn his neck with your gifts.” He was to have an abundance given to him and this was to be done cheerfully, not grudgingly! A delight was to be felt in thus setting free a brother of the chosen race and starting him, once more, on the journey of life. It is a grand command!

Do you not think that it should always be so, that they who receive much should have much required of them? And that they who serve a generous God should be, themselves, generous? Is there not reason in that precept of the Savior, “Freely you have received, freely give”? May not the Lord expect of us much more than He does of others? If you are chosen out of mankind, redeemed from among men, called out from the fallen mass, quickened with a life which they do not know and privileged with access to God and communion with Heaven to which they are strangers, should not the Law of God’s House be a higher and a nobler one than a law that could be given to those who are strangers to Him and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel? Do not, therefore, if you are Christians, measure yourselves with others, and say, “If I do as much as my neighbor does, it suffices.” You who are of the blood royal of Heaven, princes in God’s Kingdom—will you behave yourselves like paupers? You who have been redeemed with blood, whose every fetter has been struck off—will you act like slaves? Let it not be so! Rise to your true dignity! Act worthy of your privileges and accept with joy a Law of your Father and your King which others cannot understand and which they would think unreasonable and impracticable! It was so with the laws which were given to these people. It is true that, on one side of them, they were somewhat toned down in certain respects to suit their weaknesses, but in other respects they were heightened and elevated above what any human legislature would ever have thought of enacting.

However, that is not my subject tonight. I want to speak to you about the Lord’s release.  
It seems to me that this passage, first of all, teaches us concerning the release which the Lord desired His people to give. But, secondly, and typically, it speaks to us of the release which the Lord, Himself, gives to us. He does not command us to do what He will not much more abundantly do Himself! “Be you perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.” Your Lawgiver is, Himself, an example of the fulfillment of every gracious and noble precept in His own Law.  
I. First, then, let us consider THE RELEASE WHICH THE LORD DESIRED HIS PEOPLE TO GIVE.  
First, they were to forgive their debtors. They were, at the end of every seven years, to release every man, his debtor, from the debt which he had accumulated. I suppose that as soon as the year began, there was a release given. A man might pay if he could—and he should do so. A man might, at some future time, if his circumstances altered, discharge the debt which had been remitted, but as far as the creditor was concerned, it was remitted. It is the opinion of some commentators that it only signifies that the man was to be let alone during that year, but the debt still remained. I do not think that such an interpretation would have occurred to anybody who read the chapter by itself. You can take the idea to the chapter and foist it upon it, if you like, but it certainly is not there in the natural run of the words. All the Jewish interpreters, albeit that they often twisted their laws, are agreed upon this—it was an absolute forgiveness of the debt incurred which was intended here—and I will not give our Jewish brethren any blame for being too lenient in money matters.  
I think, perhaps, that they may be a little inclined the other way, and if their Rabbis all teach that this was an absolute wiping out of the debt, I think that, for once, I must agree with their Rabbis and accept their interpretation, as it evidently is the plain meaning of the passage. I am no learned man and, therefore, I read the passage as it stands. I think that the Lord would have the creditor at the end of six years absolutely wipe out the debt! And I am more certain of it because He anticipates the objection that many would begin to say, “The year of release is at hand,” and would, therefore, refuse to lend. Many of them who were what is called, prudent, and who were inclined towards hard-heartedness, would naturally say, “No, we are not going to make a loan when it is so near the time when it will have to be forgiven and the loan will become a gift.” Hence the Lord says, “Beware that there be not a thought in your wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand, and your eyes be evil against your poor brother, and you give him nothing.”  
Oh, what a relief it must have been to the debtors! And when it was really done, what a comfort and lightness of heart it must have brought to the creditors, too, when they saw their poor brethren able to enjoy life, again, and no longer having their days darkened with the shadow of a heavy debt!  
The next thing was that they were never to exact that debt again. Observe in the text, “He shall not exact it of his neighbor, or of his brother.” After that year he was to have no further claim. Or if he thought that he had a claim, he was never to use any legal means, or any kind of physical force, or any threats, to obtain what was due. It was to be regarded as done with, as far as any legal claim was concerned. The moral claim might remain—and the honest, upright-minded Israelite might take care that his brother Israelite should not lose anything through him. But, still, according to the Divine Command, there was to be no exacting of it. My dear brother Williams, in his prayer, spoke of the generosity of God as seen in these commands and, depend upon it, none but a generous Lawgiver would have made such a law as this! It is noble-hearted, full of loving kindness and we could expect that none but a people in whose midst there was the daily sacrifice—in the midst of whom moved the High Priest of God—would be obedient to such a precept.  
Observe next, that they were to do this for the Lord’s sake “because it is called the Lord’s release.” They were to do it with an eye to a blessing from God! “For the Lord shall greatly bless you in the land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance to possess it: only if you carefully listen to the voice of the Lord your God.” It is not enough to do the correct thing—it must be done in a right spirit and with a pure motive. A good action is not wholly good unless it is done for the glory of God and because of the greatness and goodness of His holy name. It would ennoble an Israelite to give a release to one’s debtor and say, “It is called the Lord’s release,” to act, as it were, as lieutenant of the great King of Kings! It will ennoble you to give a discharge, not in your own name, but in Christ’s name, and for His sake, because you love Him. The most powerful motive that a Christian can have is this, “For Jesus’ sake.” You could not forgive the debt, perhaps, for your brother’s sake—there may be something about him that would harden your heart. But can you do it for Jesus’ sake? This is true charity, that holy love which is the choicest of the Graces of God! That text in John’s first Epistle is not only, “We love Him because He first loved us,” but many versions read it, “We love because He first loved us.” Even our love towards men, when it flows out in acts of mercy and deeds of kindness, should spring from the fact that Christ first loved us.  
And then, like the Israelites, we may look believingly to the gracious reward that God gives. We do not serve God for wages, but we still have respect unto the recompense of the reward, even as Moses had. We do not run like hirelings, but we have our eyes upon the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus. A Christian should often perform acts of kindness for which he may only meet ingratitude—acts of kindness to the unthankful and to the evil—in the full belief that there will come a day when Christ will accept such things as done unto Himself and will say, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink.” This Law, given to Israel, is a Law given to us so far as the motive for keeping it is concerned. Let us do good unto all men, for God’s Glory, for Christ’s sake, and let us have an eye to that day when every holy action done unto the Lord shall receive a reward from Him.  
Next, notice, as you read down the chapter, that they were not only to perform this kindness once, but they were to be ready to do it again. The creditor, who had absolved his debtor, once, must not begin to say to himself, “I shall not lend any more. This business of the seven years, this statute of limitations, makes a dead loss of it.” No, if he thinks so, the ninth verse tells him that it is a thought in his wicked heart—“Beware that there be not a thought in your wicked heart.” “In your heart of Belial”—so the Hebrew runs, as if such a thought brought him down from Israel to Belial, and made the man of God to be a loose man, a man who feared not Jehovah at all! Beloved, it is the part of Christians not to be weary in well-doing! And if they get no reward for what they have done from those to whom it is done, still to do the same again! Remember how gracious God is and how He gives to the unthankful and the evil and makes His rain to fall upon the field of the churl as well as upon the field of the most generous. He is good to all and His tender mercies are over all His works. We may carry the idea of only helping the worthy a great deal too far, till we cease to be imitators of Christ, and rather become dispensers of justice than of love—and this is not the work for a Christian man to do.  
Next, observe, that while they were to forgive and remit, on this seventh year, the loans which remained unpaid, they were also to let the bondman go. He was a Hebrew, but he was so poor that he had sold his land and then, at last, he had been obliged to sell himself into slavery. “Take me,” he said, “and I will be your servant if you give me bread to eat, and clothes to put on.” And the Law of God allowed it and so there were some few Hebrews who had their fellow Hebrews in servitude to them. That servitude was of an exceedingly light kind, for if ever one of these so-called slaves ran away, it was contrary to the Law to return him to his master—he might break the servitude when he pleased. At the end of the sixth year, when the Hebrew servant might go free, it often happened that he had been treated so well in his servitude that he had no desire to go, but he was willing to have the awl thrust through the lobe of his ear that he might be fastened to the doorpost of his master to abide in servitude as long as he lived! But at the end of the six years, the Hebrew servant was free to go if so it pleased him.  
Now, according to the Law of God, the bondman was to be sent away freely. It was not to be thought a hardship to part with a servant man or woman. However useful they might have been in the house or field, however much they were felt to be necessary to domestic comfort or farm service, they were to be allowed to go and, what was more, they were not to go empty-handed, but they were to receive a portion out of every department of the master’s wealth—from his flock, his threshing floor and his winepress. They were to go away well loaded, even as Israel went out of Egypt, as we read, “He brought them forth also with silver and gold.” This was a grand Law! And does it not teach God’s people how kind they ought to be? A miserable, miserly, hard, close-fisted Christian—is there such a thing? It is not for me to be a judge. One who would take his brother’s labor without payment and, at the end of the term would offer him no kind of remuneration, but leave him to starve—is he a child of God? How dwells the love of God in him? God would have His people not only do what is righteous, but what is generous! And act, not only justly, but kindly to all with whom they come in contact.  
Further, this setting free of their brother at the specified time was to be done for a certain reason—“You shall remember that you were a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you.” How can you hold another a bondman when God has set you free? How can you treat another with unkindness when the Lord has dealt so generously with you? Down at Olney, when Mr. Newton was the rector of the parish, he put up in his study this text where he could always see it when he lifted his eyes from his text while preparing his sermon, “Remember that you were a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you.” Would it not do many Christians good if they had that text often before their eyes? Would it not excite gratitude to their Redeemer and tenderness towards those who happened to be in subjection to them! Would it not excite tenderness to every sinner that is a bond slave under the Law of God, tenderness to the myriads that swarm these streets, slaves to sin and self, and who are perishing in their iniquity? This was to be the reason why Israel should act generously towards bondservants. Let it stand as a reason why we should act kindly towards all about us!  
As

ar as most of us are concerned, it may be that we are not creditors to anybody, and we are not likely to crush anybody by exacting their debts. If we do not happen to be in that position, yet the Law is spiritual and it has its own teaching. And surely it means just this—Let us readily forgive. I know not how true it is, but I have heard that if that venerable and godly man, Mr. Rowland Hill, had any kind of fault, it was that, sometimes, when he thought that persons had acted very wrongly to him, he could not very readily forgive them. One of his hearers said he remembered that, one Sunday, Mr. Hill had spoken very severely about a certain person, not more severely than was just, but perhaps more severely than was generous, and when he was offering the prayer, “Forgive us our trespasses,” the hearer noticed that the good man hesitated at the words, “As we—as we—forgive them that trespass against us.” He had evidently a little struggle with himself and he was so sincere and transparent a man that he showed it even in the public service!  
Do not some of you, at times, find it rather difficult to forgive those that trespass against you? Possibly you have been very angry with your boy this afternoon. It would have been as well to have given him a kiss before you left home. It may be that your dear girl has, in some way, offended you. It would have been as well to have told her that you had forgiven her. You had good reasons, perhaps, for not doing so. I will not go into them. However, may I ask you to forgive her as soon as you get home? It may be that you will be doing no good to your child by doing what is hardly justifiable as from yourself.  
Be ready to forgive your children! There is reason to make that remark, for I have known persons sitting here who have excluded a son or daughter from their house because of some marriage that the parents did not like, or for some other reason. You said, “She shall never darken my door again.” And you are a Christian? I would say to you, if I knew you were here, “I wish that you would never darken the Communion Table, again, until that kind of feeling were gone from you once and for all!” How can you say, “Our Father, which are in Heaven,” while there is still towards your own child, whether young or old, something which you say you cannot forgive? Make up your mind never to go to Heaven if you cannot forgive people! You cannot enter the pearly gates while you cherish an unforgiving spirit!  
Or is it some friend of yours with whom you have quarreled? You two have parted. You were dear friends, once, but now, like a great cliff that has been split in the middle, there you stand frowning upon one another! Let it be so no longer! If there is any personal gripe or ill-will, let it be cast into the depths of the sea. Whatever may be the story, I do not want to hear it. Surely the time has come when all that should be wiped out, once and for all. “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath,” is a good precept. I have heard of two friends who had differed greatly and spoken very bitterly. And the sun was just going down, so one of them said, “I must not let the sun go down on my wrath. I will go and try to be reconciled to my friend.” And half way to his friend’s house, he met his friend coming to him, on the same errand, and they met joyfully to forgive each other! May it be so with all true Christians!  
Once again, dear Friends, I think the spirit of this release of the Lord is this—Never be hard on anybody. It is true that the man made the bargain and he ought to keep to it, but he is losing money and he cannot afford it. He is being ruined and you are being fattened by his mistake. Do not hold him to it. If you have made a losing bargain, you should stand to it, for the Christian “swears to his own hurt, and changes not.” But if the loss is on the other side, cancel the bond as speedily as may be and let not the poor man have to go with his tears before Almighty God and blame you for your cruelty. No Christian man can be a sweater of workers! No Christian can be a grinder of the poor! No man who would be accepted before God can think that his heart is right with him when he treats others ungenerously, not to say unjustly!  
That, I think, is the spirit of the first part of my subject—the release which the Lord desired His people to give, that which is called, “the Lord’s release.”  
II. But now, secondly, and as briefly as I can, let us consider THE RELEASE WHICH THE LORD GIVES TO US.  
Let me proclaim to every sinner here who acknowledges his indebtedness to God and feels that he can never discharge it, that if you will come and put your trust in Christ, the Lord promises oblivion to all your debt, forgiveness of the whole of your sins! I need not repeat the long black list, for conscience has made you read it up and down and down and up, and you have become familiar with the roll of your iniquities. The Lord is prepared to wipe them all out! He will do what He bids His people do—“it is called the Lord’s release.” He will release you from your sins if you believe in Jesus Christ!  
This release shall be followed up by a non-exacting of the penalty forever. If you are pardoned of God, He will never exact of you any punishment because of your iniquities or transgressions. No, neither in this life, nor in that which is to come will He require it at your hands. He will give you a full discharge—one that can be pleaded in the High Court of Heaven above! “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again.” If you will come to your God, acknowledging your debt and confessing your inability to pay it, He will so wipe it out that you shall never hear of it again, forever! And if your sins are searched for, they shall not be found.  
Notice, next, that God will do all this for you on the ground of your poverty. Look at the fourth verse—“Save when there shall be no poor among you.” They should not remit a debt if ever there should come a time when there should be no poor among them. But, as long as there was a man who was poor, they were to remit the debt. You noticed how we sang— *“‘Tis perfect poverty alone  
That sets the soul at large.”*  
When you cannot pay half a farthing in the pound of all your great debt of sin. When you are absolutely bankrupt, then may you believe that Jesus Christ is your Savior! When you are absolutely helpless and hopeless, only believe that Jesus is the Christ and put your trust in Him, and God will remit and discharge all your liabilities, and you shall go away clear before Him!  
I may be addressing a soul here that says, “I like that thought. I wish I could catch hold of it, but I feel myself to be such a slave that I cannot grasp it.” Well, the Lord may allow a soul to be in bondage for a time. Indeed, it may be necessary that He should. The Hebrew might be in bondage six years and yet he went free when the seventh year came. There are reasons why the Spirit of God is, to some men, a Spirit of bondage for a long time. Hard hearts must be melted, proud stomachs must be brought down. Some men’s wills are like an iron sinew. Some men’s selfrighteousness is hard to slay, even though it is shot through the heart seven times. There are many who would be rebellious against God very soon if they found forgiveness too soon—so He brings down their heart with labor—they fall and there is none to help.  
I may be speaking to one here who has been a long time in bondage. I passed through that state, myself, and many a time have I gripped the hand of a poor man or woman in abject distress and despair, almost ready to go into an asylum, and I have said, “I know all about that experience. I know that the Lord does, for a while, suffer the heart to be plowed and torn, and rent, to make it ready for the good seed.” Have you ever seen God’s 10 black horses come out? I mean the Ten Commandments. Have you heard the plowman crack the whip? Have you seen that awful plow that is just behind those horses and how they have dragged that plow up the soul and back again, and up the soul and back again, till the field of the soul has been plowed from end to end? Then, when you thought that the work was all done, the horses have been turned sideways and there has been cross-plowing back and back again, tearing up the whole nature, and breaking every clod to powder! God has His plowers at work upon some men! But, for all that, it is not because He hates them, but because He loves them and means to get out of them a heavy harvest of joy and thankfulness in the years to come!  
Once more, the man was set free at the end of the sixth year, paying nothing for his liberation. Though not free-born, nor yet buying his liberty with a great sum, yet he was set free! O Lord, set some soul free tonight! Oh, that every slave here, who is in bondage, may get his liberty tonight, to the praise of the Glory of God’s Grace!  
And when the Lord sets poor souls at liberty, He always sends them away full-handed. He gives something from the flock, from the threshing floor and from the winepress. Some of us were rich, indeed, the first day we came to Jesus! We know more, now, than we knew then, but we do not possess more than we had then, for we had Christ, then, and He is everything and we cannot get more than that! God gave us Heaven within us, then. Oh, how we laughed for joy that day! We shall never forget it! We were not to be beggars or paupers any more—all the riches of Heaven were bestowed upon us.  
There is one thing which may be said here. This act never seems hard to the Lord. He says to the Hebrew, in the 18th verse, “It shall not seem hard unto you, when you send him away free.” It never seems hard to Christ when He sets a sinner free. Why, some of you pray as if you thought that Christ was hardhearted! It is you who are hardhearted! You pray as if you thought God had to be moved to mercy. It is you who need to be moved to accept the mercy! God is generous enough. He will set you free and load you daily with His benefits and delight to do it, if you trust His dear Son. In fact, to make worlds is nothing to Him, compared with saving souls. He takes the big hammer of His Omnipotence and brings it down on the anvil of His wisdom and worlds fly like sparks all over the sky when He is at that work! And He thinks nothing of it. But He rests in His love and rejoices over His people with singing when He is at work for their salvation. This is the very joy of His heart—it is never hard for Him to set free those who have been in bondage!  
One thing I feel sure of and that is if the Lord sets us free, we shall want to remain His servants forever! We will go straight away to the doorpost and ask Him to use the awl, for, though we are glad to be free, we do not want to be free from Him. No, no! “O Lord, truly I am Your servant. I am Your servant. . .You have loosed my bonds.” Once set free, then I wish to be bound to the Lord forever! Come, dear Heart, if you find Christ tonight—if you believe in Him and are at liberty, come and have your ear bored! You do not like Baptism? Come and have your ear bored! You do not like to join the Church and confess Christ? Well, I know that it may be a “bore” to you, but, for all that, come and have your ear bored! Come and say, “I will go no more out forever. Since the Lord has set me free, I will serve Him all my days.”  
The Lord bless these words to many, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON **LEVITICUS 25:1-7, 17-22, AND DEUTERONOMY 15:1-18.**

Leviticus 25:1, 2. And the LORD spoke unto Moses on Mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When you come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD. The Jews had much rest provided for them. If they had had faith enough to obey God’s commands, they might have been the most favored of people, but they were not a spiritual people and the Lord often had to lament their disobedience as in the words recorded by Isaiah, “O that you had hearkened to My Commandments! Then had your peace been as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea.”

3, 4. Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; but in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD. Think of a Sabbath a year long, in which nothing was to be done but to worship God and so to rest!

4, 5. You shall neither sow your field, nor prune your vineyard. That which grows of its own accord of your harvest you shall not reap, neither gather the grapes of your vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land. A restful period in a restful land—all land to have rest and yet to have fruitfulness in that rest! The rest of a garden, not the rest of a task. Thus is it oftentimes with God’s people—when they rest most, they work best—and while they are resting, they are bearing fruit unto God.

6, 7. And the sabbath of the land shall be food for you; for you, and for your servant, and for your maid, and for your hired servant, and for your stranger that sojourns with you, and for your cattle, and for the beast that are in your land, shall all the increase thereof be food. There was to be no private property in the spontaneous produce of that year. It was free to everybody—free even to the cattle—which might go and eat what they would, and where they would.

17-21. You shall not therefore oppress one another; but you shall fear your God: for I am the LORD your God. Therefore you shall do My statutes, and keep My judgments, and do them; and you shall dwell in the land in safety. And the land shall yield her fruit, and you shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety. And if you shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year, behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: then I will command My blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. Not merely for the one year of rest, but fruit for three years!

22. And you shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in you shall eat of the old store. They were to have enough for the year of rest and for the next year in which the harvest was growing—and still to have something over for the ninth year! They scarcely could need as much as that, but God would give them more than they actually needed, exceeding abundantly above what they asked or even thought. That Sabbatical year had other blessings connected with it. Let us read about them in the Book of Deuteronomy, Chapter Fifteen.

Deuteronomy 15:1, 2. At the end of every seven years you shall make a release. And this is the manner of the release—Every creditor that lends anything to his neighbor shall release it—he shall not exact it of his neighbor, or of his brother because it is called the LORD’S release. What a wonderful title for it, “the LORD’S release”!

3. Of a foreigner you may exact it again but that which is yours with your brother your hand shall release. How was a man to pay when he did not sow or reap during the Sabbatical year? The foreigner did not observe the year of rest—consequently he was bound to pay and it was only fair that he should do so. But for the Israelite, who carried out the Divine Law, there was provision made if he were in debt.

4. Save when there shall be no poor among you. If there were no poor, then there would be no need for this Law of God.  
4-6. For the LORD shall greatly bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance to possess it: only if you carefully listen unto the voice of the LORD your God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command you this day. For the LORD your God blesses you, as He promised you. That little clause, “as He promised you,” is worth noticing! This is the rule of God—He deals with us “according to promise.”  
6. And you shall lend unto many nations, but you shall not borrow; and you shall reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you. If God’s people had done His will, they would have been like their language—it is observed of the Hebrew by some, that it borrows nothing from other tongues, but lends many words to various languages.  
7-9. If there is among you a poor man of one of your brethren within any of your gates in your land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not harden your heart, nor shut your hand from your poor brother: but you shall open your hand wide unto him, and shall surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he needs. Beware that there is not a thought in your wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and your eyes be evil against your poor brother, and you give him nothing; and he cry unto the LORD against you, and it is sin unto you. Moses, moved by the Spirit of God, anticipates what would very naturally occur to many—“I shall not lend anywhere near the seventh year; if I do, I shall lose it, for I must release my debtor, then.” The hardhearted would be sure to make this their evil excuse for lending nothing. But here the Hebrew is warned against such wicked thoughts, lest, refusing to lend to his poor brother for this cause, the needy one should cry to God, and it should be accounted sin on the part of the merciless refuser.  
10, 11. You shall surely give him, and your heart shall not be grieved when you give unto him: because that for this thing the LORD your God shall bless you in all your works, and in all that you put your hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land. They would have done so— they might have done so—if the rule of God had been kept. But inasmuch as He foresaw that it never would be kept, He also declared, “the poor shall never cease out of the land.”  
11. Therefore I command you, saying, You shall open your hand wide unto your brother, to your poor, and to your needy, in your land. See how God calls them, not, “the poor,” but, “your poor” and, “your needy.” The Church of God should feel a peculiar property in the poor and needy, as if they were handed over, in the love of Christ, to His people, that they might care for them.  
12. And if your brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, is sold to you, and serves you six years; then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. He might be under an apprenticeship of servitude for six years, but the seventh year was to be a year of rest to him, as it was a year of release to debtors, and of rest to the land.  
13. And when you send him out free from you, you shall not let him go away empty. To begin life, again, with nothing at all in his pocket.  
14. You shall furnish him liberally out of your flock, and out of your threshing floor, and out of your winepress: of that wherewith the LORD your God has blessed you, you shall give unto him. Who would think of finding such a law as that on the statute book? Where is there such a law under any governor but God? The Theocracy would have made a grand government for Israel if Israel had but been able to walk before God in faith and obedience!  
15. And you shall remember that you were a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you: therefore I command you this thing today. The remembrance of their own deliverance out of Egyptian bondage was to make them merciful and kind to their own bondservants.  
16-18. And it shall be, if he says unto you, I will not go away from you; because he loves you and your house, because he prospers with you; then you shall take an awl, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be your servant forever. And also unto your maidservant you shall do likewise. It shall not seem hard unto you, when you send him away free from you; for he has been worth a double hired servant to you, in serving you six years. He has had no pay. He has been always at his work. He has been worth two ordinary hired laborers. Let him go, therefore, and let him not go away empty-handed.  
18. And the LORD your God shall bless you in all that you do.

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THE PROPHET LIKE UNTO MOSES  
NO. 1487

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 3, 1879, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“The Lord your God will raise up unto you a Prophet from the midst of you, of your brethren, like unto me; unto Him you shall hearken; according to all that  
you desired of the Lord your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto you, and will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall  
come to pass, that whoever will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him.” Deuteronomy 18:15-19.**

MAN, the creature, may well desire communion with his Creator. When we are right-minded we cannot bear to be like fatherless children, born into the world by a parent of whom we know nothing whatever. We long to hear our father’s voice. Of old time, before sin had entered into the world, the Lord God was on the most intimate terms with His creature, man. He communed with Adam in the garden. In the cool of the day He made the evening to be seven-fold refreshing by the shadow of His own Presence. There was no cloud between unfallen man and the Ever-Blessed One— they could commune together, for no sin had set up a middle wall of partition.

Alas, man, being in honor, continued not, but broke the Law of his God and not only forfeited his own inheritance, but entailed upon his descendants a character with which the holy God can hold no converse. By nature we love that which is evil and within us there is an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God—consequently, communion between God and man has had to be upon quite another footing from that which commenced and ended in the glades of Eden. It was condescension at the first, which made the Lord speak with man, the creature. It is mercy, unutterable mercy, now, if God deigns to speak with man the sinner!

Through His Divine Grace, the Lord did not leave our fathers altogether without a word from Himself even after the Fall, for between the days of Adam and Moses there were occasional voices heard as of God speaking with man. “Enoch walked with God,” which implies that God walked with him and had communion with him. And we may rest assured it was no silent walk which Enoch had with the Most High. The Lord also spoke to Noah, once and again, and made a Covenant with him. And then He, at still greater length and with greater frequency, spoke with Abraham, whom He graciously called His friend.

Voices also came to Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. And celestial beings flitted to and fro between earth and Heaven. Then there was a long pause and a dreary silence. No Prophet spoke in Jehovah’s name; no voice of God in priestly oracle was heard, but all was silent while Israel dwelt in

Egypt and sojourned in the land of Ham. So completely hushed was the spiritual voice among men that it seemed as if God had utterly forsaken His people and left the world without a witness to His name.

But there was a prophecy of His return and the Lord had great designs which only waited till the full time was come. He purposed to try man in a very special manner, to see whether he could bear the Presence of the Lord or not. He resolved to take a family, multiply it into a nation and set it apart for Himself. And to that nation He would make a revelation of Himself of the most extraordinary character. So He took the people who had slaved among the brick kilns of Egypt and made them His elect—the nation of His choice—ordained to be a nation of priests, a people near unto Him if they had but Grace to bear the honor.

Though they had lain among the pots, with a high hand and an outstretched arm He delivered them and with gracious love He favored them so that they became for beauty and excellence as the wings of a dove that are covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold. He divided the Red Sea and made them a way of escape and afterwards set that sea as a barrier between them and their former masters. He took them into the wilderness and there fed them with manna which dropped from Heaven and with water out of the rock did He sustain them. After a while He began to speak to them as He had never spoken to any nation before.

He spoke with them from the top of Sinai, so that they heard His Voice out of the midst of the fire and in astonishment they cried, “We have seen this day that God does talk with man and he lives.” But the experiment failed. Man was not in a condition to hear the direct Voice of God. On the very first day the people were in such terror and alarm that they cried out, “This great fire will consume us! If we hear the Voice of the Lord our God any more we shall die.” As they stood still at a distance to hear the words of God’s perfect Law they were filled with great fear. So terrible was the sight that even Moses said, “I exceedingly fear and quake.”

The people could not endure that which was commanded and entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more. They felt the need of someone to interpose—a daysman, an interpreter—someone was needed to come between them and God. Even those among them that were the most spiritual and understood and loved God better than the rest confessed that they could not endure the thunder of His dreadful Voice. And so their elders and the heads of their tribes came to Moses and said, “Go you near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say: and speak you unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto you; and we will hear it, and do it.”

The Lord knew that man would always be unable to hear his Maker’s voice and He, therefore, determined not only to speak by Moses, but to speak by His servants, the Prophets, raising up here, one, and there, another. And then He determined, as the consummation of His condescending mercy, that at the last He would put all the words He had to say to man into one heart and that word should be spoken by one mouth to men, furnishing a full, complete and unchangeable revelation of Himself to the human race! This He resolved to give by One of whom Moses had learned something when the Lord said to Him in the words of our text, “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto you, and will put My words in His month; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him.”

We know assuredly that our Lord Jesus Christ is that Prophets like unto Moses by whom, in these last days, He has spoken unto us! See Peter’s testimony in the third chapter of the Acts of the Apostles and Stephen’s in the seventh chapter of the same book. “This Man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who has built the house has more honor than the house,” yet did He bear a gracious likeness to Moses and therein His Apostles found a sure argument of His being, indeed, the Messiah, sent of God.

The subject of this morning’s discourse is the Lord’s speaking to us by Jesus Christ, the one Mediator between God and man—and our earnest aim is that all of us may reverently hear the Voice of God by this greatest of all Prophets. Brothers and Sisters, this is the Word of God unto you this morning, that very Word which He spoke on the holy Mount, when the Lord was transfigured and there appeared with Him Moses and Elijah speaking to Him. And out of the excellent Glory there came the words, “This is My beloved Son, hear you Him.” This is my message at this hour—“Hear you Him.”

He says to you all this day, “Incline your ear and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live. Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat you that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.” “See that you refuse not Him that speaks. For if they escaped not who refused Him that spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaks from Heaven.” Our meditation will run in this line—first, we will think for a moment upon the necessity for a Mediator. Secondly, upon the Person of the Prophet-Mediator whom God has chosen. And, thirdly, upon the authority with which this Mediator is invested, by which authority He calls upon us this day to listen to God’s Voice which is heard in Him.

I. We begin by considering how urgently there existed THE NECESSITY for a Mediator. I need but very short time to set this forth. There was a necessity for a Mediator in the case of the Israelites, first, because of the unutterable Glory of God and their own inability to endure that Glory, either with their eyes, their ears, or their minds. We cannot suppose that the revelation of God upon Sinai was the display of all His greatness. No, we know that it could not be such, for it would have been impossible for man to have lived at all in the Presence of the Infinite Glory.

Habakkuk, speaking of this manifestation, says, “God came from Teman and the Holy One from mount Paran. His Glory covered the heavens and the earth was fall of His praise. And His brightness was as the light; He had horns coming out of His hands.” But he adds, “There was the hiding of His power.” Despite its exceeding Glory, the manifestation upon the mount of God at Horeb was a subdued manifestation and yet, though it was thus toned down to human weakness, it could not be borne!

The unveiling of Jehovah’s face, no mortal eye could bear! The voice with which God spoke at Sinai is by Moses compared to the voice of a trumpet waxing exceedingly loud and long—and also to the roll of thunder—and we all know the awe-inspiring sound of thunder when it is heard near at hand, its volleys rolling overhead. How the crash of peal on peal

makes the bravest heart, if not to quail, yet still to bow in reverent awe before God! Yet this is not the full Voice of God—it is but His whisper. Jehovah has hushed His Voice in the thunder, for were that voice heard in its fullness, it would shake not only earth, but also Heaven.

If He were for once to unveil His face, the lightning’s flame would pale to darkness in comparison. The Voice of the Lord God is inconceivably majestic and it is not possible that we, poor creatures, worms of the dust, insects of a day, should ever be able to hear it and live! We could not bear the full revelation of God apart from mediatorial interposition. Perhaps when He has made us to be pure spirits, or when our bodies shall have been “raised in power”—made like unto the body of our Lord Jesus—we may then be able to behold the glorious Jehovah, but as yet we must accept the kindly warning of the Lord in answer to the request of Moses, “you cannot see My face, for there shall no man see Me and live.”

The strings of life are too weak for the strain of the unveiled Presence. It is not possible for such a airy, spider-like thread as our existence to survive the breath of Deity if He should actually and in very deed draw near to us. It appeared clearly at Sinai that even when the Lord did accommodate Himself, as much as was consistent with His honor, to the infirmity of human nature, man was so alarmed and afraid at His Presence that he could not bear it—and it was absolutely necessary that instead of speaking with His own Voice, even though He whispered what He had to say, He should speak to another apart and afterwards that other should come down from the mount and repeat the Lord’s words to the people.

This sufficient reason is supported by another most weighty fact, namely, that God cannot commune with men because of their sin. God was pleased to regard His people Israel at the foot of Sinai as pure. “Moses went down from the mount unto the people and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes.” They had abstained, for awhile, from defiling actions and as they stood outside the bounds they were ceremonially clean—but it was only a ceremonial purity. Before long they were really unclean before the Lord and in heart defiled and polluted. The Lord said of them, “O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!”

He knew that their heart was not right even when they spoke obediently. Not many days after the people had trembled at Sinai they made a golden calf and set it up and bowed before it, provoking the Lord to jealousy so that He sent plagues among them. It is quite clear that after such a rebellion, after a deliberate breach of His Covenant and daring violation of His commands, it would have been quite impossible for God to speak to them, or for them to listen to the Voice of God in a direct manner. They would have fled before Him because of His holiness which shamed their unholiness! And because of their sin, which provoked His indignation. Because of their wandering, instability and treachery of their hearts, the Lord could not have endured them in His Presence.

The holy angels forever adore with that threefold cry, “Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth,” and He could not permit men of unclean lips to profane His Throne with their unholy utterances. Oh no, my Brothers and Sisters, with such a sense of sin as some of us have and as all of us ought to have, we should have to cover our faces and cower down in terror if Jehovah, Himself, were to appear! He cannot look upon iniquity, neither can evil dwell with Him, for He is a consuming fire. While we are compassed with infirmity we cannot behold Him, for our eyes are dimmed with the smoke of our iniquities. If we would see even the skirts of His garments, we must first be pure in heart and He must put us in the cleft of the rock and cover us with His hands.

If we were to behold His stern justice, His awful holiness and His boundless power apart from our ever-blessed Mediator, we should dissolve at the sight and utterly melt away, for we have sinned. This double reason of the weakness of our nature and the sinfulness of our character is a forcible one, for I close this part of the discourse by observing that the argument was so forcible that the Lord Himself allowed it. He said, “They have well spoken, that which they have spoken.” It was no morbid apprehension which made them afraid. It was no foolish dread which made them start, for Wisdom, in the person of Moses, said, “I do exceedingly fear and quake.”

The calmest and meekest of men had real cause for fear. God’s face is not to be seen. An occasional glimpse may come to spirits raised above their own natural level, so that they can, for a while, behold the King, the Lord of Hosts—but even to them it is a terrible strain upon all their powers—the wine is too strong for the bottles. What said John, when he saw, not so much absolute Deity, but the Divine side of the Mediator? “When I saw Him I fell at His feet as dead.” Daniel, the man greatly beloved, confesses that there remained no strength in him and his comeliness was turned into corruption when he heard the Voice of God!

And Job said, “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see You; therefore I abhor myself in dust and ashes.” No, God knows it is not silly fright nor unbelieving fear—it is a most seemly awe and a most natural dread which takes hold of finite and fallible creatures in the Presence of the Infinite and Perfect One! These frail tabernacles, like the tents of Cushan, are in affliction when the Lord marches by in the greatness of His power. We need a Mediator. The Lord knows right well that our sinfulness provokes Him and that there is, in us—in the best here present—that which would make Him to break out against us to destroy us if we were to come to Him without a covering and propitiation. We must approach the Lord through a Mediator—it is absolutely necessary.

God Himself witnesses it is and, therefore, in His mercy He ordains a Mediator, that by Him we may be able to approach His Throne of Grace. May the Holy Spirit make this Truth of God very plain to the consciousness of all of us and cause us to sing with the poet—

*“Till God in human flesh I see,  
My thoughts no comfort find;  
The holy, just, and sacred  
Three are terrors to my mind.  
But if Immanuel’s face appears,  
My hope, my joy begins;  
His name forbids my slavish fear,  
His Grace removes my sins.”*

II. This brings us to consider THE PERSON of the appointed Mediator and in my text we obtain a liberal measure of information upon this point. Read these blessed words, “The Lord your God will raise up unto you a Prophet from the midst of you, of your brethren.” Dwell with sweetness upon this fact that our Lord Jesus was raised up from the midst of us, from among our brethren! In Him is fulfilled that glorious prophecy, “I have exalted One chosen out of the people.” He is one of ourselves, a Brother born for adversity. He was born at Bethlehem, not in fiction, but in fact—He lay in the manger where the horned oxen fed. He was wrapped in swaddling cloths and dependent on a woman’s loving care as any other baby might be. He was like ourselves in His growth from Infancy to Manhood, increasing in stature as we do from our childhood to our riper age. Though the holy Child Jesus, He was yet a Child and, therefore, He was subject to His parents.

And when He came forth as a Man, His was no phantom manhood, but true flesh and blood! He was tempted and He was betrayed. He hungered and He thirsted. He was weary and He was sorely amazed. He took our sicknesses and He carried our sorrows. He was made in all points like unto His brethren. He did not set Himself apart as though He were of an exclusive caste or of a superior rank, but He dwelt among us—the Brother of the race, eating with publicans and sinners—always mingling with the common people. He was not One who boasted His descent, or gloried in the so-called blue blood, or placed Himself among the Porphyro-geniti who must not see the light except in marble halls. He was born in a common house of entertainment where all might come to Him and He died with His arms extended as a pledge that He continued to receive all who came to Him!

He never spoke of men as the common multitude, the vulgar herd, but He made Himself at home among them. He was dressed like a peasant, in the ordinary smock of the country—a garment without seam, woven from the top throughout. And He mixed with the multitude, went to their marriage feasts, attended their funerals and was so much among them, a Man among men, that slander called Him a glutton and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. In all respects our Lord was raised up from the midst of us, One of our own kith and kin. “For this cause He is not ashamed to call us brethren.”

He was our Brother in living, our Bother in death and our Brother in resurrection, for after His Resurrection He said, “Go, tell My Brethren.” And He also said, “My Father, and your Father; My God, and your God.” Though now exalted in the highest heavens, He pleads for us and acts as a High Priest who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. God has graciously raised up such a Mediator and now He speaks to us through Him. O sons of men, will you not listen when such an One as Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Man, is ordained to speak of the eternal God? You might be unable to hear if He should speak again in thunder, but now He speaks by those dear lips of love! Now He speaks by that gracious tongue which has worked such miracles of Grace by its words! Now He speaks out of that great heart of His which never beats except with love to the sons of men—will you not hear Him? Surely we ought to give the most earnest heed and obey His every word.

Moses was truly one of the people, for he loved them intensely and all his sympathies were with them. They provoked him terribly, but he still loved them. We can never admire that man of God too much when we think of his disinterested love to that guilty nation. See him on the mountain as Israel’s advocate! The Lord said, “Let Me alone that I may destroy them, and I will make of you a great nation.” That proposal opened up before Moses’ eyes a glittering destiny! It was within his grasp that he should become the founder of a race in whom the promises made to Abraham should be fulfilled! Would not the most of men have greedily snatched at it?

But Moses will not have it! He loves Israel too well to see the people die if he can save them. He has not an atom of selfish ambition about him. And so with cries and tears he exclaims,” Why should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from Your fierce wrath and repent of this evil against Your people.” He prevailed with God by his pleading, for he identified himself with Israel. Moses did, as it were, gather up all their grief and sorrow into himself, even as did our Lord. True Israelite was he, for he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter! He cast his lot with the people of God.

This is just what our blessed Lord has done. He will not have honor apart from His people, nor even life unless they also live. He saved others, Himself He could not save. He would not be in Heaven and leave His saints behind! He loved the people and so proved Himself to be One chosen out of their midst, a Brother among brethren. Mark well that while thus our Lord is our Brother, the great God has, in His Person, sent us One who is lifted up above us all in the knowledge of His mind. Thus says the Lord (v. 18), “I will put My words in His mouth.” Our Lord Jesus Christ comes to us inspired by God. Not alone He comes, nor of His own mind, but He says, “The Father is with Me: I do always the things which please Him: the Father that dwells in Me, He does the works.” Both in word and work He acted for His Father and under His Father’s inspiration.

Brothers and Sisters, I beseech you not to reject the message which Jesus brings, seeing it is not His own, but the sure message of God! Trifle not with a single word which Jesus speaks, for it is the Word of the Eternal One! Despise not one single deed which He did, or precept which He commanded, or blessing which He brought, for upon all these there is the stamp of Deity! God chose One who is our Brother that He might come near to us and He put His own royal imprimatur upon Him that we might not have an Ambassador of second rank, but One who counts it not robbery to be equal with God, who, nevertheless, for our sake has taken upon Himself the form of a Servant that He might speak home to our hearts. For all these reasons, I beseech you despise not Him that speaks, seeing He speaks from Heaven!

The main point, however, upon which I want to dwell is that Jesus is like Moses. There had been no better mediator found than Moses up to Moses’ day. The Lord God, therefore, determined to work upon that model with the great Prophet of His race and He has done so in sending forth the Lord Jesus. It would be a very interesting task for the young people to work out all the points in which Moses is a personal type of the Lord Jesus. The points of resemblance are very many, for there is hardly a single incident in the life of the great Lawgiver which is not symbolic of the promised Savior.

You may begin from the beginning at the waters of the Nile and go to the close upon the brow of Pisgah and you will see Christ in Moses as a man sees his face in a glass. I can only mention in what respects, as a Mediator, Jesus is like Moses, and surely one is found in the fact that Moses, beyond all that went before him, was peculiarly the depository of the mind of God. Once and again we find him closeted with God for 40 days at a time. He went right away from men to the lone mountaintop and there he was, 40 days and 40 nights, and did neither eat nor drink, but lived in high communion with his God! In those times of seclusion he received the pattern of the tabernacle, the Laws of the priesthood, of the sacrifices of the holy days and of the civil estate of Israel—and perhaps the early records which compose the Book of Genesis. To whom else had God ever spoken for that length of time as a man speaks with his friend?

Moses was the peculiar favorite of God. From the first day of his call, when he was keeping his father’s flock at the back of the desert, right to the day when God kissed away his soul on the top of Nebo, he was a man greatly beloved to whom God manifested Himself as to no other. Hear the Lord’s own words to Aaron and Miriam. “And He said, Hear now My words: If there is a Prophet among you, I the Lord will make Myself known unto Him in a vision, and will speak unto Him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all My house. With Him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches: and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold. Why, then, were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?”

In this our Lord Jesus is like Moses, only He far surpasses him, for the communion between Christ and the Father was very much more intimate, seeing that Jesus is, Himself, essential Deity, and, “in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Cold mountains and the midnight air continually witnessed to His communion with the Father. Nor these, alone, for He abode with the Father! His language was always spoken out as God was speaking within Him. He lived in God and with God. “I know,” He said, “that You hear Me always.” Instead of having to point out when Christ was in communion with the Father, we have rather, with astonishment, to point out the one moment when He was not in communion with the Father, even that dread hour when He cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

Only that one time did the Father leave Him and even then it was inexplicable and He asked the reason for it—though He knew that He was suffering as the Substitute for man—yet did His desertion by God come upon Him as a novelty which utterly overwhelmed Him so that He asked in agony why He was forsaken. Moses, to take another point, is the first of the Prophets with whom God kept up continuous Revelation. To other men He spoke in dreams and visions, but to Moses by plain and perpetual testimony. His Spirit rested on him and he took of it to give thereof to Joshua and to the 70 elders, even as Jesus gave of His Spirit to the Apostles.

Sometimes God spoke to Noah, or to Abraham and others—but it was only upon certain occasions and, even then, as in the case of Abraham and Jacob, they must fall asleep to see and hear Him best. But with Moses, the Lord abode perpetually! Whenever he willed, he consulted the Most High and at once God spoke with him and directed his way. So was it with Christ Jesus. He needed not to behold a vision—the spirit of prophecy did not occasionally come upon Him and bear Him out of Himself—for the Spirit was given Him without measure and He perpetually knew the very mind and heart of God. He was always a Prophet, not sometimes a prophet, like he of old, of whom we read, “The Spirit of God came upon him in the camp of Dan.” Or like others of whom it is written, “The Word of the Lord came to them.”

At all times the Spirit rested upon Jesus—He spoke in the abiding power of the Holy Spirit more so than did Moses. Moses is described as a Prophet mighty in word and deed and it is amazing that there never was another Prophet mighty in word and deed till Jesus came. Moses not only spoke with matchless power, but worked miracles. You shall find no other Prophet who did both. Other Prophets who spoke well worked no miracles, or only here and there—while those who worked miracles, such as Elijah and Elisha, have left us but few words that they spoke—indeed, their prophecies were but lightning flashes and not as the bright shining of the sun.

When you come to our Lord Jesus you find lips and heart working together with equal perfectness of witness. You cannot tell in which He is the more marvelous—in His speech or in His acts. “Never man spoke like this Man,” but certainly never man worked such marvels of mercy as Jesus did! He far exceeds Moses and all the Prophets put together in the variety and the multitude and the wonderful character of the miracles which He did. If men bow before Prophets who can cast down their rods and they become serpents—if they yield homage to Prophets who call fire from Heaven—how much more should they accept Him whose Words are matchless music and whose miracles of love were felt even beyond the boundaries of this visible world?

The angels of God flew from Heaven to minister to Him. The devils of the Pit fled before His voice and the caverns of death heard His call and yielded up their prey! Who would not accept this Prophet like Moses, to whom the Holy Spirit bore witness by mighty signs and wonders? Moses, again, was the founder of a great system of religious law and this was not the case with any other but the Lord Jesus. He founded the whole system of the Aaronic Priesthood and the Law that went with it. Moses was a Lawgiver—he gave the Ten Commandments in the name of God—and all the other statutes of the Jewish polity were ordained through him. Now, till you come to Christ you find no such Lawgiver—but Jesus institutes the New Covenant as Moses introduced the old!

The Sermon on the Mount was an utterance from a happier Sinai and, whereas Moses gives this and that command, Jesus gives the same in sweeter form and in a more Divine fashion and embodies it in His own sacred Person. He is the great Legislator of our dispensation He is the King in the midst of Jeshurun giving forth His commands which run very swiftly and they that fear the Lord are obedient to them. Time will fail us, or we would mention to you that Moses was faithful before God as a servant over all his house and so was Jesus as a Son over His own house! Jesus was never unfaithful to His charge in any respect, but in all things ruled and served to perfection as the Anointed of the Father. He is the faithful and true Witness, the Prince of the kings of the earth.

Moses, too, was zealous for God and for His honor. Remember how the zeal of God’s house did eat him up? When he saw grievous sin among the people, he said, “Who is on the Lord’s side?” and there came to him the tribe of Levi and he said, “Go in and out, and slay you, everyone, his men that were joined to Baalpeor.” Herein he was the stern type of Jesus who took the scourge of small cords and drove out the buyers and sellers and said, “Take these things away: it is written, My Father’s house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves,” for the zeal of God’s house had eaten Him up.

Moses, by Divine Grace, was very meek and, perhaps, this is the chief parallel between him and Jesus. I have said, “by Divine Grace,” for I suppose by nature he was strongly passionate. There are many indications that Moses was not meek, but very far from it until the Spirit of God rested upon him. He slew the Egyptian hastily and in later years he went out from the presence of Pharaoh “in great anger.” Once and again you find him very angry—he took the tablets of stone and dashed them in pieces in his indignation, for “Moses’ anger waxed hot,” and that unhappy action which occasioned his being shut out of Canaan was caused by his “being provoked in spirit so that he spoke unadvisedly with his lips” and said, “Hear now, you rebels! Must I fetch you water out of this rock?” Divine Grace had so cooled and calmed him that in general he was the gentlest of men and when his brother and sister thrust themselves into his place and questioned his authority, it is written, “Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.”

In his own defense he has never anything to say—it is only for the people and for God that his anger waxed hot. Even about his last act of hastiness he says, “God was angry with me for your sake,” not for his own sake. He was so meek and gentle that for 40 years he bore with the most rebellious and provoking nation that ever existed! But what shall I say of my Master? Let Him speak for Himself. “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest: 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.” Our children call Him, “Gentle Jesus, meek and mild.” The Man Jesus is very meek above all men that are upon the face of the earth. He has His indignation—

*“Like glowing often is His wrath,  
As flame by furious blast up blown,”*  
for He can be angry and the wrath of the Lamb is the most awful wrath beneath the sun! But still, to us, in this Gospel day, He is all love and

tenderness. And when He bids us come to Him, can we refuse to hear?

So meek is the Mediator that He is Love itself, Incarnate Love! He is so loving that when He died, His only crime was that He was “found guilty of excess of love.” Can we be so cruel as to reject Him? O Brothers and Sisters, do not refuse to listen to the voice of this Tender One by whom God speaks to you! Our Lord was like Moses in meekness and then, to sum it all up —Moses was the Mediator for God with the people and so is our blessed Lord. Moses came in God’s name and set Israel free from Pharaoh’s bondage. Jesus came to set us free from a worse bondage and He has achieved our freedom. Moses led the people through the Red Sea and Jesus has led us where all the hosts of Hell were overthrown and sin was drowned in His most precious blood!

Moses led the tribes through the wilderness and Jesus leads us through the weary ways of this life to the rest which remains for the people of God. Moses spoke to the people for God and Jesus has done the same. Moses spoke to God for the people and Jesus always lives to make intercession for us. Moses proposed himself as a sacrifice when he said, “If not, blot my name out of the Book of Life.” But Jesus was an actual Sacrifice and was taken away from the land of the living for our sakes, being made a curse for us! Moses, in a certain sense, died for the people, for he could not enter into the land, but had to close his eyes on Nebo.

Those are touching words, “The Lord was angry with me for your sakes”—words which, in a more Divine sense, may be fitly applied to Jesus—for God was angry with Him for our sakes. Right through to the very end our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, is a Prophet like Moses, raised up from the midst of His brethren. O my Hearers, listen to Him! Turn not your ear away from this Prophet of Prophets, but hear and live!

III. I close with that point and if my words are very few let them be weighty. Let us think of THE AUTHORITY of our great Mediator and let this be the practical lesson—Hear you Him. Brothers and Sisters, if our hearts were right, the moment it was announced that God would speak to us through Jesus Christ, there would be a rush to hear Him! If sin had not maddened men, they would listen eagerly to every Word of God through such a Mediator as Jesus! They would write each golden sentence on their tablets! They would hoard His Words in their memories! They would wear them between their eyes! They would yield their hearts to them!

Alas, it is not so, and the saddest thing of all is that some talk of Jesus for gain and others hear of Him as if His story were a mere tale or an old Jewish ballad of 1,800 years ago. Yet, remember, God still speaks by Jesus and every Word of His that is left on record is as solemnly alive, today, as when it first leaped from His blessed lips! I beseech you remember Christ comes not as an amateur, but He has authority with Him—this Ambassador to men wears the authority of the King of kings! If you despise Him, you despise Him that sent Him—if you turn away from Him that speaks from Heaven, you turn away from the eternal God and you do despite to His love! Oh, don’t do it!

Note how my text puts it. It says here, “Whoever shall not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him.” My heart trembles while I repeat to you the words, “I will require it of him.” Today God graciously requires it of some of you and asks why you have not listened to Christ’s voice. Why is this? You have not accepted His salvation. Why is this? You know all about Jesus and you say it is true, but you have never believed in Him! Why is this? God requires it of you! Many years has He waited patiently and He has sent His servant again and again to invite you. The men of Nineveh sought mercy in their day and

yet you have not repented! God requires it of you!

Why is this? Give your Maker a reason for your rejection of His mercy if you can—fashion some sort of excuse, O you rebellious ones! Do you despise your God? Do you dare His wrath? Do you defy His anger? Are you so mad as this? The day will come when He will require it of you in a much more violent sense than He does today! The day comes when you shall have passed beyond the region of mercy and He will say, “I called you and you refused, why is this? I did not speak to you in thunder. I spoke to you with the gentle voice of the Only Begotten who bled and died for men—why did you not listen to Him? Every Sabbath My servant tried to repeat the language of His Master to you—why did you refuse it? You are cast into Hell—why did you not accept the pardon which would have delivered you from it?”

You were too busy! Too busy to remember your God? What could you have been busy about that was worth a thought as compared with Him? You were too fond of pleasure. And do you dare insult your God by saying that trifling amusements which are not worth the mentioning could stand in comparison with His love and His good pleasure? Oh, how you deserve His wrath! I pray you consider what this means, “I will require it of him.” You who still harden your hearts and refuse my Master, go away with this ringing in your ears, “I will require it of him! I will require it of him. When he lies dying alone in that sick chamber I will require it of Him! When he has taken the last plunge and left this world and finds himself in eternity, I will require it of him! And when the thunder wakes the dead and the great Prophet like Moses shall sit on the Great White Throne to judge the quick and the dead, I will require it of Him! I will require it of Him.”

My Master will require of me how I have preached to you and I sincerely wish it were in my power to put these things in better form and plead with you more earnestly. But, after all, what can I do? If you have no care for your own souls, how can I help it? If you will rush upon eternal woe. If you will despise the altogether Lovely One through whom God speaks to you. If you will live day after day carelessly and wantonly, throwing away your souls, oh, then, my eyes shall weep in secret places for you, but what more can I do but leave you to God? At the last I shall be compelled to say, “Amen,” to the verdict which condemns you forever!

God grant that such a reluctant task may not fall to my lot in reference to any of you, but may you now hear and obey the Lord Jesus and find eternal salvation at once, for His dear name’s sake. Amen.

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RAILINGS  
NO. 2999

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 2, 1906. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“When you build a new house, then you shall make a railing for your roof that you bring not guilt of bloodshed on your household, if any man fall from it.” Deuteronomy 22:8.**

[This sermon was originally entitled BATTLEMENTS.]

THIS interesting law which, in its letter, was binding on the Jewish people, in its spirit furnishes an admirable rule for us upon whom the ends of the world are come.

It is not necessary to inform this audience that the roofs of Eastern dwellings were flat and that the inhabitants were accustomed to spend much of their time upon the tops of their houses, not only conversing there during the day, but sleeping there at night. If the roofs were without any fencing or protection around their edge, it might often happen that little children might fall over—and not infrequently grownups might inadvertently take a false step and suffer serious injury, if not death itself. Where there were no railings or low walls around the roof, accidents frequently occurred. But God commanded His people, while they were yet in the wilderness, that when they came into the promised land and proceeded to build houses, they should take care in every case to build a sufficient railing that life might not be lost through preventable casualty.

This careful command clearly shows us that God holds life to be very valuable and that as He would not permit us to kill by malice, so He would not allow us to kill by negligence, but would have us most tender of human lives. Such rules as the one before us are precedents for sanitary laws and give the weight of Divine sanction to every wise sanitary arrangement. No man has a right to be filthy in his person, or his house, or his trade, for even if he, himself, may flourish amid unhealthy accumulations of dirt, he has no right, by his unclean habits, to foster a deadly typhus, or afford a nest for cholera. Those whose houses are foul, whose rooms are unventilated, whose persons are disgusting, cannot be said to love their neighbor—and those who create nuisances in our crowded cities are guilty of wholesale murder. No man has a right to do anything which must inevitably lead to the death or to the injury of those by whom he is surrounded—he is bound to do all in his power to prevent any harm coming to his fellow men. That seems to be the moral teaching of this ordinance of making railings around the housetops—teaching, mark you, that which I would like all housewives, workingmen, manufacturers and vestrymen to take practical note of.

But, if ordinary life is precious, much more is the life of the soul and, therefore, it is our Christian duty never to do that which imperils either our own or other men’s souls. To us there is an imperative call from the great Master that we care for the eternal interests of others and that we, as far as we can, prevent their exposure to temptations which might lead to their fatal falling into sin.

We shall now lead you to a few meditations which have, in our mind, gathered around the text.  
I. First, GOD HAS RAILINGS ON HIS OWN HOUSE. Let this serve as a great Truth with which to begin our contemplations. God takes care that all His children are safe. There are high places in His House and He does not deny His children the enjoyment of these high places, but He makes sure that they shall not be in danger there. He sets railings around them lest they should suffer harm when in a state of exaltation.  
God, in His House, has given us many high and sublime doctrines. Timid minds are afraid of these, but the highest doctrine in Scripture is safe enough because God has railed it—and as no man in the East need be afraid to walk on the roof of his house when the railing is there, so no man need hesitate to believe the Doctrine of Election, the Doctrine of Eternal and Immutable Love, or any of the Divine teachings which circle around the Covenant of Grace—if he will at the same time see that God has guarded those Truths so that none may fall from them to their own destruction.  
Take, for instance, the Doctrine of Election. What a high and glorious Truth of God this is, that God has, from the beginning, chosen His people unto salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the Truth! Yet that Doctrine has turned many simpletons dizzy through looking at it apart from kindred teachings. Some, I do not doubt, have willfully leaped over the railing which God has set about this Doctrine and have turned it into Antinomianism, degrading it into an excuse for evil living and reaping just damnation for their willful perversion! But God has been pleased to set around that Doctrine other Truths of God which shield it from misuse. It is true He has a chosen people, but “by their fruits you shall know them.” Without holiness no man shall see the Lord! Though He has chosen His people, yet He has chosen them unto holiness—He has ordained them to be zealous for good works. His intention is not that they should be saved in their sins, but saved from their sins! Not that they should be carried to Heaven as they are, but that they should be cleansed and purged from all iniquities and so made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light!  
Then there is the sublime brush of the Final Perseverance of the Saints. What a noble height is that! A housetop Doctrine, indeed! What a Pisgah view is to be had from the summit of it—“The Lord will keep the feet of His saints.” “The righteous also shall hold on his way and he that has clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.” It will be a great loss to us if we are unable to enjoy the comfort of this Truth. There is no reason for fearing presumption through a firm conviction of the true Believer’s safety. Mark well the railings which God has built around the edge of this Truth! He has declared that if these shall fall away, it is impossible “to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame.” If those who are true saints should altogether lose the life of God that is within their souls, there would remain no other salvation! If the first salvation could have spent itself unavailingly, there would be no alternative but “a certain looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.” When we read warnings such as, “Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall,” and others of that kind, we see how God has made a railing around this tower-like Truth of God so that saints may ascend to its very summit and look abroad upon the land that flows with milk and honey—and yet their brains need not whirl, nor shall they fall into presumption and perish!  
That wonderful Doctrine of Justification by Faith which we all hold to be a vital Truth of God, not only of Protestantism but of Christianity, itself, is quite as dangerous by itself as the Doctrine of Election, or the Doctrine of the Final Perseverance of the Saints—in fact, if a man means to sin, he can break down every bulwark and turn any doctrine into an apology for transgression! Even the doctrine that God is merciful, simple as that is, may be made into an excuse for sin. To return to the doctrine that we are justified by faith and not by the works of the Law, Luther put it very grandly, very boldly and, for him, very properly. But there are some who use his phrase, not in Luther’s way, and without Luther’s reasons for unguarded speaking—and such persons have sometimes done serious damage to men’s souls by not mentioning another Truth which is meant to be the railing to the Doctrine of Faith, namely, the necessity of sanctification. Where faith is genuine, through the Holy Spirit’s power, it works a cleansing from sin, a hatred of evil, an anxious desire after holiness and it leads the soul to aspire after the image of God. Faith and holiness are inseparable. “If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature.” Good works are to be insisted on, for they have their necessary uses. James never contradicts Paul—it is because we do not understand him that we fancy he does so. Both the doctrinal Paul and the practical James spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Paul builds the tower and James puts the railing around it—Paul conducts us to the summit of God’s House and bids us rejoice in what we see there. And then James points us to the railing that is built up to keep us from leaping over the Truth of God to our own destruction. Thus is each doctrine balanced, bulwarked and guarded, but time would fail us to enter into detail—let it suffice for us to know that the Palace of the Truth of God is railed with wisdom and prudence!  
Take another view of the same thought. The Lord has guarded the position of His saints if endowed with wealth. Some of God’s servants are, in His Providence, called to very prosperous conditions in life—and prosperity is filled with dangers. It is hard to carry a full cup without a spill. A man may travel on the ground well enough, and yet find it hard work to walk on a high rope. A man may be an excellent servant who would make a bad master—and one may be a good tradesman in a small way who would make a terrible failure of it as a merchant. Yet be well assured that if God shall call any of you to be prosperous and give you much of this world’s goods, and place you in an eminent position, He will see to it that His Grace is given suitable for your station and affliction necessary for your elevation!  
The Lord will put railings around you, and it is most probable that these will not commend themselves to your carnal nature. You are going on right joyously, everything is “merry as a marriage bell,” but, all of a sudden you are brought to a dead still. You kick against this hindering disappointment, but it will not move out of your way. You are vexed with it, but there it is. Oh, how anxious you are to go a step farther and then you think you will be supremely happy—but it is just that perfect happiness so nearly within reach that God will not permit you to attain, for then you would receive your portion in this life, forget your God and despise the better land! That bodily infirmity, that lack of favor with the great, that sick child, that suffering wife, that embarrassing partnership—any of these may be the railing which God has built around your success, lest you should be lifted up with pride and your soul should not be upright in you! Does not this remark cast a light upon the mystery of many a painful dispensation? “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept Your Word.” That experience may be read another way and you may confess, “Had I not been afflicted, I would have gone far astray. But now I have kept Your Word.”  
The same prudence is manifested by our Lord towards those whom He has seen fit to place in positions of eminent service. Those who express great concern for prominent ministers, because of their temptations, do well, but they will be even more in the path of duty if they have as much solicitude about themselves. I remember one whose pride was visible in his very manner. He was a person unknown, of little service in the church, but as proud of his little badly plowed, weedy half acre as ever a man could be! He informed me very pompously, on more than one occasion, that he trembled lest I should be unduly exalted and puffed up with pride! Now, from his lips, it sounded like comedy and reminded me of Satan reproving sin. God never honors His servants with success without effectually preventing their grasping the honor of their work. If we are tempted to boast, He soon lays us low. He always whips behind the door at home those whom He most honors in public. You may rest assured that if God honors you by enabling you to win many souls, you will have many stripes to bear—and stripes you would not like to tell another of, they will be so sharp and humbling. If the Lord loves you, He will never let you be lifted up in His service. We have to feel that we are but just the pen in the Master’s hand so that if holiness is written on men’s hearts, the credit will not be ours, but the Holy Spirit must have all the praise—and this our Heavenly Father has effectual means of securing! Do not, therefore, start back from qualifying yourself for the most eminent position, or from occupying it when duty calls. Do not let Satan deprive God’s great cause of your best service through your unholy bashfulness and cowardly retirement. The Lord will give His angels charge over you to keep you in all your ways. If God sets you on the housetop, He will place a railing around you. If He makes you to stand on the high places, He will make your feet like hind’s feet, so that you shall not fall. If God commands you to dash against the enemy singlehanded, still, “as your days, so shall your strength be.” He will uphold you and on the pinnacle you are as secure as in the valley, if Jehovah set you there!  
It is the same with regard to the high places of spiritual enjoyment. Paul was caught up to the third heavens and he heard words unlawful for a man to utter. This was a very, very high place for Paul’s mind, mighty brain and heart as he had—but then, there was the railing—“Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the Revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me.” Paul was not in love with this drawback. He besought the Lord to remove it three times, but still the thorn could not be taken away, for it was necessary as a railing around the eminent Revelations with which God had favored His Apostle! The temptation, if we are at all happy in the Lord, is to grow secure—“My mountain stands firm,” we say, “I shall never be moved.”  
Even much communion with Christ, though in itself sanctifying, may be perverted through the folly of our flesh, into a cause of self-security. We may even dream that we are brought so near to Christ that common temptations are not likely to assail us—and by these very temptations we may fall. Hence it is that as sure as ever we have high seasons of enjoyment, we shall sooner or later endure periods of deep depression. Scarcely ever is there a profound calm on the soul’s sea, but a storm is brewing! The sweet day so calm, so bright, shall have its fall and the dew of the succeeding night shall weep over its departure. The high hill must have its following valley and the flood-tide must retreat at ebb. Lest the soul should be beguiled to live upon itself and feed on its frames and feelings—and by neglect of watchfulness fall into presumptuous sins— railings are set around all hallowed joys, for which in eternity we shall bless the name of the Lord.  
Too many of the Lord’s servants feel as if they were always on the housetop—always afraid, always full of doubts and fears. They are fearful lest they shall, after all, perish, and of a thousand things besides. Satan sets up scarecrows to keep these timid birds from feeding upon the wheat which the great Husbandman grows on purpose for them! They scarcely ever reach the assurance of faith. They are stung by “if’s and “buts,” like Israel by the fiery serpents, and they can scarcely get beyond torturing fear which is as an adder biting their heel. To such we say, Beloved, you shall find, when your faith is weakest, when you are just about to fall, that there is a glorious railing all around you—a gracious promise, a gentle Word of the Holy Spirit shall be brought home to your soul so that you shall not utterly despair. Have you not felt, sometimes, that if it had not been for a choice love-word heard in the past, your faith would have given up the ghost? Or if it had not been for that encouraging sermon which came with such power to your soul, your feet had almost gone, your steps had well-near slipped? Now, the Infinite Love of God, dear child of God, values you far too much to allow you to fall into despair—  
*“Mid all your fear, and care, and woe,  
His Spirit will not let you go.”*  
Railed by eternal Grace shall this roof of the house be—and when you are tremblingly pacing it, you shall have no cause for alarm!  
II. From the fact of the Lord’s carefulness over His people, we proceed, by an easy step, to the consideration that as imitators of God, we should exercise the same tenderness. In a word,

E OUGHT TO HAVE OUR HOUSES RAILED.  
A man who had no railing to his house might himself fall from the roof in an unguarded moment. He might be startled in his sleep and in the dark mistake his way to the stairs, or, while day-dreaming, his steps might slip. Those who profess to be the children of God should, for their own sakes, see that every care is used to guard themselves against the perils of this tempted life. They should see to it that their house is carefully railed. If any ask, “How shall we do it?” we reply—  
Every man ought to examine himself carefully, whether he is in the faith, lest professing too much, taking too much for granted, he should fall and perish. At times, we should close our spiritual warehouse and take stock. A tradesman who does not like to do that is generally in a bad way. A man who does not think it wise to sometimes sit down and give half a day, or such time as he can spare, to a solemn stocktaking of his soul, may be afraid that things are not going right with him. Lest we should be, after all, hypocrites, or self-deceivers! Lest, after all, we should not be born-again, but should be children of Nature, neatly dressed, but not the living children of God, we must prove ourselves whether we are in the faith. Let us protect our souls’ interests with frequent selfexaminations!  
Better still, and safer by far, go often to the Cross as you think you went at first. Go every day to the Cross—still with empty hands and with a bleeding heart, go and receive everything from Christ and seek to have your wounds bound up with the healing ointment of His atoning Sacrifice. These are the best railings I can recommend you—selfexamination on the one side of the house, and a simple faith in Jesus on the other.  
Rail your soul about well with prayer. Go not out into the world to look upon the face of man till you have seen the face of God. Never rush down from your chamber with such unseemly haste that you have not time to buckle on your helmet and gird on your breastplate and your coat of mail.  
Be sure and rail yourself about with much watchfulness and, especially, watch most the temptation peculiar to your position and disposition. You may not be inclined to be slothful. You may not be fascinated by the silver of Demas into covetousness and yet you may be beguiled by pleasure. Watch, if you have a hasty temper, lest that should overthrow you. Or if yours is a high and haughty spirit, set a double watch to bring that demon down! If you are inclined to indolence, or, on the other hand, if hot passions and evil desires are most likely to attack you, cry to the Strong for strength! And as he who guards well sets a double guard where the wall is weakest, so do you the same.  
There are some respects in which every man should rail his house by denying himself those indulgences which might be lawful to others, but which would prove fatal to himself. The individual who knows his weakness to be an appetite for drink should resolve to totally abstain. Every man, I believe, has a particular sin which is a sin to him, but may not be a sin to another. No man’s conscience is to be a judge for another, but let no man violate his conscience. If you cannot perform a certain act in faith, you must not do it at all. I mean if you do not honestly and calmly believe it to be right, even if it is right in itself, it becomes wrong to you. Watch, therefore, watch at all points. Guard yourselves in company, lest you are carried away by the force of numbers. Guard yourselves in solitude, lest selfishness and pride creep in. Watch yourselves in poverty, lest you fall into envy of others. And in wealth, lest you become lofty in mind. Oh, that we may all keep our houses wellrailed, lest we fall and grieve the Spirit of God and bring dishonor on Christ’s name!  
III. As each man ought to rail his house, in a spiritual sense, with regard to himself, SO OUGHT EACH MAN TO CARRY OUT THE RULE WITH REGARD TO HIS FAMILY.  
Family religion was the strength of Protestantism at first. It was the glory of Puritanism and Non-Conformity. In the days of Cromwell it is said that you might have walked down Cheapside, at a certain hour in the morning, and you would have heard the morning hymns going up from every house and along the street. And at night, if you had glanced inside each home, you would have seen the whole household gathered, the big Bible opened and family devotion offered. There is no fear of this land ever becoming Popish if family prayer is maintained. But if family prayer is swept away, farewell to the strength of the Church! A man should rail his house for his children’s sake, for his servants’ sake, for his own sake, by maintaining the ordinance of family prayer. I may not dictate to you whether you should sing, or read, or pray—or whether you should do this every morning or evening, or how many times a day. I shall leave this to the free spirit that is in you, but do maintain family prayer and never let the fire on the altar of God burn low in your habitation.  
So in the matter of discipline. If the child shall do everything it chooses to do. If it shall do wrong and there is no admonition. If there is no chastisement, if the reins are loosely held, if the father altogether neglects to be a priest and a king in his house—how can he wonder that his children grow up to break his heart? David had never chastised Absalom, nor Adonijah—and remember what they became. And Eli’s sons who never had more than a soft word or two from their father—how were his ears made to tingle with the news of God’s judgments upon them! Rail your houses by godly discipline. See that obedience is maintained and that sin is not tolerated—and so shall your house be holiness unto the Lord—and peace shall dwell therein!  
We ought to strictly rail our houses as to many things which in this day are tolerated. I am sometimes asked, “May not a Christian subscribe to a lottery? May not a Christian indulge in a game of cards? May not a Christian dance, or attend the opera?” Now, I shall not come down to debate upon the absolute right or wrong of debatable amusements and customs. The fact is that if professors do not stop till they are certainly in the wrong, they will stop nowhere! It is of little use to go on till you are over the edge of the roof and then cry, “STOP!” It would be a poor affair for a house to be without a railing, but to have a net to stop the falling person half-way down—you must stop before you get off the solid standing! There is need to draw the line somewhere and the line had better be drawn too soon than too late. And whereas the habit of gambling is the very curse of this land—ah, during the last Derby week, what blood it shed! How it has brought souls to Hell and men to an unripe grave!—as the habit of speculating seems to run through the land, and was doubtless the true cause of the great panic which shook our nation a few years ago—there is the more need that we should not tolerate anything that looks like it.  
For another reason, we should carefully discern between places of public amusement. Some that are perfectly harmless, recreative and instructive—to deny these to our young people would be foolish. But certain amusements stand on the border between the openly profane and the really harmless. We say do not go to these—never darken the doors of such places. Why? Because it may be the edge of the house and though you may not break your neck if you walk along the railing, yet you are best on this side of the railing! You are least likely to fall into sin by staying away—and you cannot afford to run risks. We have all heard the old story of the good woman who required a coachman. Two or three young fellows came to seek for the situation. Each of them she saw and questioned alone. The first one had this question put to him, “How near could you drive to danger?” And he said, “I do not doubt but that I could drive within a yard of danger.” “Well, well,” the lady said, “you will not do for me.” When the second came in, the good woman questioned him in like manner, “How near could you drive to danger?” “Within a hair’s breath, Madam,” he said. “Oh,” she said, “that will not suit me at all.” A third was asked the same question and he prudently replied, “If you please, Madam, that is one of the things I have never tried. I have always tried to drive as far from danger as I can.” “You are the coachman for me,” she said, and surely that is the kind of manager we all should have in our households! Oh, let us not so train up our children that in all probability they will run into sin! Let us, on the contrary, exhibit such an example in all things that they may safely follow us. Let us so walk that they may go step by step where we go and not be cast out of the Church of God as a reproach, nor be cast away from the Presence of God. Rail your houses, then! Do not be afraid of being too strict and too Puritan! There is no fear of that in these days—there is a great deal more danger of bringing solemn judgments on our families through neglecting the worship of God in our households!  
IV. THE PREACHER WOULD NOW REMIND HIMSELF THAT THIS CHURCH IS, AS IT WERE, HIS OWN HOUSE AND THAT HE IS BOUND TO RAIL IT.  
Many come here, Sabbath after Sabbath, to hear the Gospel. The immense number and the constancy of it surprise me. I do not know why the multitudes come and crowd these aisles. When I preached yesterday in Worcestershire and saw the thronging crowds in every road, I could not help wondering to see them—and the more so because they listened as though I had some novel discovery to make—they listened with all their ears, eyes and mouths! I could but marvel and thank God. Ah, but it is a dreadful thing to remember that so many people hear the Gospel and yet perish under the sound of it! Alas, the Gospel becomes to them a savor of death unto death—and there is no lot so terrible as perishing under a pulpit from which the Gospel is preached!  
Now, what shall I say to prevent any of my Hearers falling from this blessed Gospel? Falling from the house of mercy—dashing themselves from the roof of the temple to their ruin? What shall I say to you? I beseech you, do not be hearers only! Do not think that when you come here Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays it is all done! No, it is only begun then! Praying is the end of preaching and to be born-again is the great matter. It is very little to occupy your seat, unless you listen diligently, with willing hearts—looked upon as an end, sitting at services is a wretched waste of time! Dear Hearers, be dissatisfied with yourselves unless you are DOERS of the Word! Let your cry go up to God that you may be born-again. Rest not till you rest in Jesus!  
Remember, and I hope this will be another railing, that if you hear the Gospel and it is not blessed to you, still it has a power. If the Sun of Grace does not soften you as it does wax, it will harden you as the sun does clay! If it is not a savor of life unto life, to repeat the text I quoted just now, it will be a savor of death unto death! Oh, do not be blind in the sunlight! Do not perish with hunger in the banqueting house! Do not die of thirst when the Water of Life is before you!  
Let me remind you of what the result of putting away the Gospel will be. You will soon die. You cannot live forever. In the world to come, what awaits you? What did our Lord say, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment.” The righteous enter into life eternal, but the ungodly suffer everlasting punishment! I will not dwell upon the terrors of the world to come, but let me remind you that they are yours unless Christ is yours! Death is yours, judgment is yours and Hell will be yours—and all that dreadful wrath which God means when He says, “Beware, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you.” Oh, run not on in sin, lest you fall into Hell! I would gladly set up this railing to keep you from a dreadful and fatal fall.  
Once more, remember the love of God in Christ Jesus. I heard, the other day, of a bad boy whom his father had often rebuked and chastened, but the lad grew worse. One day he had been stealing and his father felt deeply humiliated. He talked to the boy, but his warning made no impression. And when he saw his child, so callous, the good man sat down in his chair and burst out crying as if his heart would break. The boy stood very indifferent for a time, but, at last, as he saw the tears falling on the floor and heard his father sobbing, he cried, “Father, don’t! Father, don’t do that! What do you cry for, Father?” “Ah, my Boy,” he said, “I cannot help thinking what will become of you, growing up as you are. You will be a lost man and the thought of it breaks my heart.” “O Father!” he said, “pray don’t cry. I will be better. Only don’t cry and I will not vex you again.” Under God, that was the means of breaking down the boy’s love of evil—and I hope it led to his salvation. Just like that is Christ to you. He cannot bear to see you die and He weeps over you, saying, “How often would I have blessed you, but you would not!” Oh, by the tears of Jesus, wept over you in effect when He wept over Jerusalem, turn to Him! Let that be a railing to keep you from ruin!  
God bless you, and help you to trust in Jesus, and His shall be the praise! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: JOHN 6:1-14; 30-45.

Verses 1-6. After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His miracles which He did on them that were diseased. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. When Jesus then lifted up His eyes and saw a great company come unto Him, He said unto Philip, Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this He said to test him: for He Himself knew what He would do. That verse is worth thinking over. How often does Christ seem to ask us riddles and place us in difficulties, so that we begin to say, “What will come of this? How shall we escape from this temptation, or how shall we stand under this trial?” He Himself knows what He will do and it is a very blessed thing when our faith, being tried, shows itself to be strong enough to leave the burden with Him who can bear it, and to leave the difficulty with Him who can meet it! “He Himself knew what He would do.”

7. Philip answered Him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that everyone of them may take a little. That is our way. When our faith is little, we begin calculating the pennyworths that are needed, and we make them out to be so much more than we possess or can possibly scrape together. That is not faith, it is reason—poor, dim, shallow reason which forgets the Infinite and begins to calculate its own limited and insufficient forces!

8-10. One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said unto Him, there is a lad here who has five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. When Christ bids men sit down, He has a dainty carpet for them to sit upon. “There was much grass in the place.” One might have thought that some of those people would have refused to sit down, for it is not everybody who will sit at a table that has nothing on it—but God knows how to move the hearts of men, so these people, if they had not strong faith, yet had faith enough to do as they were told—I wish that we all had as much faith as that!

11. And Jesus took the loaves; and when He had given thanks, He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. “As much as they would.” Note those words, for they are the rule at Christ’s feasts. Of earthly things, He gives us as much as we need—and of heavenly things, as much as we would! “Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.” “According to your faith be it unto you.”

12, 13. When they were filled, He said unto His disciples, gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. “Waste not, want not.” Heavenly economy is to be practiced in the things of God. Christ is not stingy, but He is no waster.

14. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle which Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world. They were convinced through their stomachs! They came to this conviction merely through eating and drinking—and that faith which comes by the senses is no faith at all, or it is a sensual faith which cannot save the soul! These people who came to this belief through eating, were very poor followers of Christ, as He said to them, “You seek Me not because you saw the miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves, and were filled.”

30-32. They said therefore unto Him, What sign show You then, that we may see, and believe You? What do You work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from Heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from Heaven; but My Father gives you the true bread from Heaven. Jesus did not say to them, “I gave that bread to your fathers in the wilderness,” as He might truly have said. It was not Moses who fed their fathers in the wilderness, it was God who had fed them and if they would but think, they would clearly see that it was so. But the Master took them on to another tack and led their thoughts to a higher topic.

33, 34. For the Bread of God is He which comes down from Heaven, and gives life unto the world. Then said they unto Him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. Not knowing the meaning of their own request.

35-39. And Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of Life: He that comes to Me shall never hunger, and He that believes on Me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That you also have seen Me, and believe not. All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from Heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. And this is the Father’s will. Many want to pry between the closed leaves of God’s secret purposes to see what His will is. Now this is it—“This is the Father’s will.”

39-44. Which has sent Me, that of all which He has given Me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which sees the Son, and believes on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise Him up at the last day. The Jews then murmured at Him, because He said, I am the Bread which came down from Heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, I came down from Heaven; Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me draw him. Note how that Doctrine of Sovereign Grace is used by Christ. He seems to wave it, like a lighted torch, in the faces of His adversaries, as if He said to them, “I did not expect you to understand Me. I did not expect you to receive Me. Do not think that you surprise Me by your action. Imagine not that you frustrate My eternal purposes by rejecting Me. I knew that you would not receive Me and that, as you are, you could not come to Me, for ‘no man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me draw him.’”

44, 45. And I will raise Him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that has heard, and has learned of the Father, comes unto Me. May we so hear and so learn of the Father that we may come to Jesus Christ!

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”— 533, 546.  
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CAMP LAW AND CAMP LIFE  
NO. 2177

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, DECEMBER 14, 1890.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON A THURSDAY EVENING, BEFORE LEAVING HOME

FOR HIS WINTER’S REST.

**“For the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you, and to give up your enemies before you, therefore shall your camp be holy that He sees no unclean thing in you, and turn away from you.” Deuteronomy 23:14.**

I WILL scarcely allude to the context, which you ought to notice at home, but I must say as much as this—the Lord cared for the cleanliness of His people while they were in the wilderness, literally so—and this text is connected with a sanitary regulation of the wisest possible kind. What I admire in it is that God the Glorious, the All-Holy, should stoop to legislate about such things. Such attention was very necessary for health and even for life, and the Lord, in condescending to it, conveys a severe rebuke to Christian people who have been careless in matters respecting health and cleanliness. Saintly souls should not be lodged in filthy bodies. God takes note of matters which persons who are falsely spiritual speak of as beneath their observation. If the Lord cares for such things, we must not neglect them. But oh, what condescension on His part that His Spirit should dictate to Moses concerning these grosser concerns! I bow before the majesty of a condescension to which nothing is too low.

Observe, also, how it shows us the all-reaching character of the Law of Moses. It overshadowed everything! It guided, arranged, restrained or suggested all the acts of the people under its tutorship. Wherever they were, in their most public or private acts, the people were always under the supervision of the Law. By reason of their sinfulness, this holy code of regulations became a yoke which they were not able to bear. Still, it was a very necessary and salutary Law, for which they should have been grateful at all times, since it was for their good in every respect and tended to bless them both spiritually and physically, socially and religiously.

Dear Friends, the great thing that I would bring out at this time is the spiritual lesson of the text—how the Lord would have His people clean in all things. The God of Holiness commands and loves purity—purity of all kinds. He says, “Be you clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.” Cleanliness of body is sometimes neglected by persons professing godliness—I speak to their shame. It ought not to be possible for Grace and dirt to meet in the same person. I must confess I feel a great horror at Christian people who are so dirty that one cannot sit in the same pew with them without nausea. This is the trial of many visitors among poor people who profess religion, that certain of them are not clean in their houses and in

their clothes.

Filth may be expected in persons of unclean hearts, but those who have been purified in spirit should do their utmost to be pure in flesh, clothes and dwelling. If cleanliness is next to godliness—and I am sure it is—it ought to be observed by those who profess godliness. Does not the same text which says, “having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,” also say, “and our bodies washed with pure water”? The Christ who redeemed us did not redeem us that we should be covered with filthiness! He has redeemed the body as well as the soul and He has made it to be the temple of the Holy Spirit—surely we must cleanse His temple and not suffer it to be defiled.

I like the idea of those sailors on board ship who knew that the ship was going down, and therefore put on their Sunday best that they might die as clean and neat as they could. I would not care to die in filth, or to live in it. A Christian should be clean in all things—in his person, in his house, in his garments and in his habits. For his own sake, but especially for the sake of others, he should carefully observe sanitary laws lest he be found guilty of the command which says, “You shall not kill.”

Now, if God speaks about this matter of cleanliness, I am sure I may do so and ought to do so. If anyone is offended let him take a basin of clean water and wash the offense away. If anyone thinks me personal, let him have a personal bath and so obliterate the mark. If cleanliness is a point which God does not omit, He would not have His servants silent about it. Still, I pass on from that to the greater lesson of the passage. You will notice that the Presence of God in the midst of His people was all-reaching and everywhere. No part of the camp was exempt from God’s walking in it. Not merely in the Holy Place was God, or in the Holy of Holies between the cherubim, but He was everywhere in the streets of the canvas city and in the outskirts.

When troops of Israelites went out to war and consequently cast up temporary camps, they were to remember that God was still walking in the midst of them—and this was to be the great motive power of their lives—the Presence of God! The high privilege of being a people near unto Jehovah involved continual watching that nothing might offend His Sacred Majesty. O Sirs, every man, whether a Christian or not, ought to remember that God is everywhere—that there is no escaping from His Presence—that even the shades of night furnish no veil under which we may sin with impunity! But as for the chosen, who know the Lord, it is for them to have the most respect unto One so glorious, and yet so graciously near. We may ever pray that—

*“Our weaker passions may not dare  
Consent to sin, for God is there.”*

He is daring, indeed, who would sin in the face of God. Sin to God’s teeth? Approach the Throne of the Great King and be disloyal there? God forbid! The Lord forgive us our audacities! There is a special Presence, higher and other than the universal Presence of God and as this is the peculiar privilege of the saints, it should be to them a constant check, or a perpetual spur. The Presence of God is to us a check to evil and a spur to good. About this Presence and its effects, I am going to speak at this time, as the Spirit of the Lord may help me. Oh, for an anointing from the Presence of the Lord! There are three things which I shall speak of. The first is an instructive comparison, which I may draw from this text. The text speaks about the camp of Israel and that is a comparison which may very aptly set forth the nature of the Church of God, for the Church is spiritually a camp.

Secondly, here is a special privilege—“The Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you, and to give up yours enemies before you.” And then, thirdly, here is demand for corresponding conduct. “Therefore, because the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp, therefore shall your camp be holy, that He sees no unclean thing in you, and turn away from you.” May this lesson be learned by us all this day!

I. First, then, AN INSTRUCTIVE COMPARISON. The Church of God is in many respects comparable to a camp. It is a camp for separation. Men who are encamped are separated from the traders, householders and others near whom they are tarrying. They are separated especially from the adversaries with whom they are at war. When you come near to a camp you are challenged by the sentry, for you must not come there without warrant. In wartime a picket is sure to be in your path whichever way you come near to the camp, for during a campaign warriors are a separated people and must keep themselves so.

Such ought the Church of God to be. We are crusaders and are separated from the mass for the service of the Cross which we bear on our hearts. We are in an enemy’s country and we must keep ourselves to ourselves very much, or else we shall certainly fail of that holy military discipline which the Captain of our salvation would have us strictly enforce. An attempt is being made, here and there, to make the Church like the world and it has already been carried out by actual experiment. The most ridiculous and even discreditable things are, in such cases, done in the name of religion and under cover of Church purposes. O Friends, this custom comes from the lowest depth and is full of the cunning of Satan! It will be our destruction if the attempt should succeed!

The great object of a Christian should be to separate the Church more and more entirely from the world. Our Lord was not of this world, but was crucified outside the gate—“Let us go forth therefore unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.” The reproach today, dreaded by feeble minds, is that of being narrow-minded, bigoted, strict, precise. Let us willingly take it up. It is His reproach—let us not attempt to escape it. Let it be our resolve that as far as ever we can, we will be nonconformists to the ways even of worldly Christians. Let us not be conformed to this world, but transformed in the spirit of our minds. Ours is the holy dissidence of spiritual dissent from evil, the sacred separation of Separatists from error.

Are we a camp, dear Friends? The question might lead us to judge others—I will put it in the singular. Am I a soldier of the Cross, a follower of the Lamb? If so, I must, as a soldier, live in my barracks, or abide in my lines. I must be separated and I must, as a follower of the Lamb, “go forth unto Him outside the camp,” being determined to live the separated life as He sets it before me. Every true Church, then, is a camp for separation.

Next, it is a camp, because it is on the defensive. As I have said before, we are marching through an enemy’s country. The children of Israel marched through the wilderness and the Amalekites frequently harassed them and slew the hindmost of them—as the Amalekites harass us and, alas, they slay the hindmost of us! It is not those that are at the front for their Captain, not those who follow close to the standard, nor those who go forth armed in His strength that fall by the enemy. Those who play about in the rear—who gather up the stones of the desert and hoard them up as a treasure—it is these upon whom the Amalekites pounce!

But their arrows are far flying and none of us is safe from the enemy, except as the Lord keeps us. Therefore we must go about armed at all times. I heard say of a certain clergyman, that he told his bishop, when he went to a ball, that he was “off duty”—but his bishop very properly replied, “When is a clergyman off duty?” I put the same question to a Christian, “When are you off duty?” Never! The policeman wears a badge on his arm to show that he is on duty—you wear nothing upon your arm—it is upon your whole self! Buried with the Lord in Baptism, the sacred watermark is on you from head to foot—the token that from now on you are dead to the world and are alive in newness of life! You cannot strip yourself of so comprehensive a distinction. It is impossible to erase it. It is an indelible token and if you are false to it, then you are traitors, indeed!

If you are living as you should, you are living unto Christ, always and ever, in every place and at all times. You are to serve God in your enjoyments, as well as in your employments—in your leisure as much as in your labor. You are to serve Him, not only in what is mistakenly called His House, but also in your own house. Yes, and you, yourself, are to always be the temple of the living God! Brothers and Sisters, we are soldiers at all times and must never doff our uniforms! We must keep rank and march in close order, for every day is a battle for the Church of God! There is no truce between the Church and error, between the saint and sin! If there is a truce, it is an unholy one and must be broken, for God Himself has proclaimed eternal war between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent! Our condition is one of warfare and nothing else, until the last great victory shall crush the serpent’s head. The Church is a camp, for it is on the defensive.

It is a camp, too, especially, because it is always assailing the powers of darkness. It is carrying the war into the enemy’s territory. That, no doubt, is the special intention of the words of our text. Read the ninth verse, “When the host goes forth against your enemies, then keep you from every wicked thing.” Learn, then, that we are to go forth against the enemy. It is not for the Church of God to protect her own borders and think, “This is enough”—she must go forth to conquer fresh territory for her Lord! There used to be in our Churches too much of contentedness with isolation and inactivity. The hymn went up from a quiet, do-nothing assembly—

*“We are a garden walled around,  
Chosen and made peculiar ground,  
A little spot enclosed by Grace  
Out of the world’s wide wilderness.”*

We dare not feel content to let the wilderness remain what it is! We may not give up vast regions to the dragon and the owl. No, no, dear Friends, we are going to break up more ground and make the little spot into a far wider space. And if the garden is walled around, we hope to build a wall round many more acres of ground and so enlarge the garden of the Great King!

The Church of God is like fire and you cannot say to fire, “You must burn comfortably at the corner of that haystack and never think of going any farther.” “No,” says the fire, “I will burn it all down.” “But there are farm buildings yonder—do not touch those sheds and barns.” The fierce fire is insatiable. It never stops while there is anything to be consumed. Even so, a true Church has within herself an ambition for her Lord that His kingdom may be extended everywhere! And that ambition is as insatiable as that of Alexander, who a conquered world could scarcely content. If there were only one sinner left, it would be worth the while of all the saved millions to continue to pray day and night for that one sinner and to set all its tongues moving to tell to that one sinner the Gospel of Christ!

Alas, we are a very long way off from having a lone soul to watch over! A few are saved and untold millions are perishing! Feeble are the lamps which as yet are kindled—the vast proportion of the world is wrapped in tenfold night. We are as yet only a handful of corn on the top of the mountains and our desire should be to grow till “the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.” We have a world to conquer and we cannot afford to loiter! We have a kingdom to set up for the Lord of Hosts and we must not sleep, for the adversaries of the Lord are raging! We are an army, sworn to war against the Canaanites of error and sin—to cast down their walled cities, to break their idols—and to cut down their groves.

The Church of God is the great army of peace, purity, liberty, love—she wars against war, she wars against sin, she wars against oppression, she wars against falsehood, uncleanness, intemperance, unrighteousness— and her fight has only yet begun. Do you not feel, my Brethren, dwelling in this wicked city of London, that our appropriate description is a camp?

And next, dear Friends, the Church of God is a camp because we are on the march. A camp is pitched in one spot for temporary purposes, for the army is moving on tomorrow and then the camp will be in another place. The Israelites, especially, were not dwelling in the desert—they were only marching through it into the land that God had promised them. It is well for us to remember that we are, ourselves, in a movable camp, marching, marching onward, marching forward—ever marching and moving! This is not our rest. We are not at home. We are on foreign land. Alas, I am afraid that we do not realize this, but are like the children of Israel who took 40 years in the wilderness to perform a journey which, I suppose, might have been accomplished in 40 days or less.

It was not far, after all, from Egypt to Canaan. We should think nothing of it as a journey now. And even for that great mass of people, who necessarily traveled slowly, it needed not to have been a long passage—but they took 40 years over it because they marched this way and that way, in endless mazes, lost, wandering rather than journeying towards a definite spot! Do you not think that a great many Christian people are practicing

the same method of motion without progress? Have you not seen some of them, like the King of France, march up a hill and down again? Is not that the way with most? Bravely they lift the lance and hold the shield. They rush forth to the fight. They ride round the enemy and take stock of him— and come home to tell what they have seen—and that is all they do!

Multitudes are forever playing at being Christians. Do you not note their childish seesaw, up and down, up and down? And their movement leaves them no higher than at the first. God save us from this! The camp must go onward. Thus says the Lord, “Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.” We ought to be advancing in Divine Grace, in knowledge, in earnestness, in holiness, in usefulness—and if not, we scarcely resemble the figure of a camp.

Yet, once more, no doubt a camp, as formed for temporary purposes, was a token of the Church, for although the Church stands still and abides, yet in her individual members she is subject to the same law of decay, death and change as the rest of the world. Soon shall the camp cease and the soldiers become citizens, and the tents be exchanged for mansions. The Church is militant upon the earth for a season only. We are here today and gone tomorrow. O Brothers and Sisters, we are at present rather a camp than a city, for we pass away and our Brethren also, as the days fly by.

I remember this Church and congregation 36 years ago and my Brother, William Olney. Alas, my Brother, W. Olney has himself since crossed the stream! Behind me will recollect it, too, but neither he nor I can recall all the names of our Brother soldiers who were with us then. They are gone from us at our Captain’s call. I say not that they are lost, for they are not so—but they are lost to us for present aid. You cannot say that a thing is lost when you know where it is and we know where they are—but they are not here and we sadly miss them. Others have sprung up, but a whole generation has passed away. Part of our legion have forded the dividing stream—

*“And we are to the margin come,*

*And soon expect to die.”*  
To us, also, there remains a rest, but we recollect that here we have no continuing city, we seek one to come. We endeavor to make the camp as comfortable as the desert will permit, but it can never be a home.

When you are in the East, your tent-bed awaits you. You sleep well, you wake up, there is your breakfast. But very soon they roll up the tent, pull up the poles and put the whole thing on camels—and you are again homeless on the burning sand. You can never reckon upon anything like steadfastly abiding in one place when you are following camp life. Such is the life of the Believer—camp life is his lot—and it is well for him to be prepared to rough it. Here we are in a tabernacle, that is, a tent which is to be taken down—but we are going to a city that has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God! We have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and we are wending our way there—but, as yet, we are like Bedouin Arabs, or like our own soldiers on a campaign when they have no permanent barracks—but abide in tents.

We remember, very sadly, that when rough men get into camp—and soldiers, as a rule are rough enough—they think that they may do anything. In this respect the camp of God is to differ from all other camps, as much as white from black. To this day it is a sort of popular error that a soldier may indulge himself in uncleanness and be less blamable than other people. I have heard the remark, “The young man is in the army. What can you expect of him?” But God’s people are to be soldiers and theirs is to be camp life—and their camp is holy and so must each one of them be. Thus says the Lord, “When the host goes forth against your enemies, then keep you from every wicked thing.” “The Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you, and to give up your enemies before you; therefore shall your camp be holy; that He sees no unclean thing in you, and turn away from you.”

A camp of angels should not be more holy than a Church of saints among whom the Lord God has taken up His abode! Thus much upon the very instructive figure of the text.

II. Secondly, I come to notice A SPECIAL PRIVILEGE. The text mentions a privilege specially promised to Israel, but I am sure, to a very high and real degree, enjoyed by ourselves. “The Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you, and to give up your enemies before you.” By this walking is intended a special Presence of love. The Lord is present in His Church in a higher sense than in the world. The Lord walks in the midst of His Church as a man takes pleasure in the walks of his garden. The Church is the garden of the Lord, His Paradise. “His delights are with the sons of men.” He looks on this one, and on that—all plants of His own right-hand planting—He looks to see where the knife is needed, that He may prune the vine, or where refreshment is needed, that He may water the roots.

The Lord, with unutterable care, is in the midst of His Church. Remember how He says, “I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.” If you want to find God on earth, you must look among His chosen! Where is a father most at home but with his children? God has said, “This is My rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.” While Israel was a dweller in tents the Ark of the Covenant was among them, the token of the Lord’s Presence—and in His warring Church the great Captain of the host is ever lovingly near! Hear how He gives the assurance, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

There are special lines of love to His own which make us, sometimes, ask, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself unto us, and not unto the world?” But so it is our Lord Jesus walks up and down our ranks and sees our order or disorder, our courage or our cowardice—and this is the best reason why we should behave ourselves aright. He loves us and we must not grieve Him. See the force of this argument, “The Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp; therefore shall your camp be holy.” God is present in the camp of His people with a special Presence of observation. He sees all things, but His eyes are, in the first place, fixed on His Church. With burning glance He searches the very heart of professors. I tremble while I speak this word! It is often bowing me to the dust. With regard to the ungodly, I may say of them, “The times of this ignorance God winks at,” but to His people He says, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” There is a discipline in the House of God which is carried on, not by Church officers, nor by the Church itself, but by the Providence of God. Men die before their time and others are sick who might be well—sick, I mean, through ill behavior in the Church of God. Thus says the Apostle— “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” If you are not my child I have nothing to say about your behavior—I leave you to your own father. But if you are my boy, my child at home, I must speak to you, I must correct you for I bear a responsibility towards you. So it is with God. He will bear much from the ungodly which He will not endure from His own people.

Here is a text which I would like to wrap up in my heart—“The Lord your God is a jealous God.” That wondrous love of His must have jealousy linked with it. Our God loves us so much, so entirely—with all the Infinity of His Godhead—that if we do not love Him in return and yield the holy fruits of love—He is grieved and angry. “The Lord your God is a jealous God.” See, then, the argument—if it is so, that God is specially watchful over His Church, let your camp be holy. The Lord cries, “Be you holy; for I am holy.” “Be you clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.” It is not for Jehovah’s camp to be fouled. He would not have any putrid matter, anything offensive remain within the camp literally—and spiritually He will have us keep all filthiness away from His Church. He will have us just, true, pure, sincere, holy—and if we are not so—His anger will burn like fire. Lord, have mercy upon us! Christ, have mercy upon us! What more can we say?

Again, dear Friends, the peculiar privilege of Israel is to have a special Presence of salvation. “The Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp to deliver you.” God is with His people, to help them in their times of trouble, to rescue them out of danger, to answer their cries in their necessity, to save them in the hour of temptation. He is with us to deliver us in all things in which we require deliverance! Have we not found Him so? I could touch this string with no feeble or wavering hand. This very week I have found Him with me, to deliver me in many things—many things that seemed to lay me low—matters which concerned the Lord’s Church. Trouble was there, but the Lord was there, also. Oh, what a blessing it is! “The Lord is there.” Have you any troubles and difficulties, dear Friend, and are you a child of God? Do you belong to Christ? Well, the Lord is with His people to deliver them. Should not this be a grand argument why the camp should be holy, for if He hears our prayers, we are bound to obey His precepts. If He will give us our will, let His will be done on earth, even as it is in Heaven. God help us to do so!

And, next, the Lord is with the camp of His people, not only to deliver them, but as a special Presence for victory. He routs their enemies and gives His saints success. All the hope that the Church has of doing any good in the world must come from the Lord’s being in the midst of her! If any error is to be trampled down as straw for the dunghill. If any sinner is to be snatched like a lamb from between the jaws of the lion. If any dark neighborhood is to be enlightened, it must be because God is with His people. “Without Me you can do nothing.” This word is most true! It is He and He alone, that can give up our enemies before us. Very well, then, let the camp be holy, lest we lose that Presence and He is gone.

Once more, it is a special Presence in covenant. “The Lord your God.” Listen to that word—“Jehovah your God walks in the midst of your camp to deliver you.” The living God is our God! Men have many gods, even in England—gods of their own making—but my God is the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! I believe in the Old Testament God who is the same as the God of the New Testament. I abhor the idea of a new Godhead! Jehovah is One and the same to me. But oh, if He is our God by special covenant. If He has taken us to be His people and we have taken Him to be our God, it is most delightful—but it involves us in a grave responsibility to be a holy people!

If we can say—  
*“‘Tis done, the great transaction’s done.  
I am my Lord’s, and He is mine,”*

then let us be holy and let our whole camp be holy! Otherwise our vows are a fiction and our professions are a lie! Do we wish to provoke the Lord and to vex His Spirit? The Lord save us from this evil! See, then, the special privilege! I have already told you what it involves.

III. So now I have only to dwell for a minute or two upon the last point a little more distinctly—CORRESPONDING CONDUCT. “Therefore shall your camp be holy that He see no unclean thing in you, and turn away from you.” Observe, then, that this rule, that the camp be holy, applies to the most common places wherein we are found. “Therefore shall your camp be holy.” As I have already said, men generally think that they may take great license in a camp. But the Lord says, “Therefore shall your camp be holy.” When you are out for a holiday, be holy. When you say, “Now we have one or two friends coming to the house and we will indulge ourselves somewhat,” be holy and let the conversation and the entertainment be holy. Let not only the Church meeting be holy, but let the family gathering be holy, whether at Christmas, or on a bank holiday, or at another time.

Let the common meals be holy, no excess or murmuring being tolerated. Let the board and the bed be holy. Let the body and the mind be holy. Let the most common act you do be holiness to the Lord. Let the bells upon the horses ring out only this note, “Holiness unto the Lord.” “Holiness becomes Your house, O God,” but holiness becomes, also, all the houses of Your people. Holiness is the ordained livery of a servant of God and he that does not wear this garment has disgraced himself and his Master. He is wearing, in fact, the livery of the King’s enemies! Let him mind what he is doing.

If my memory does not deceive me, when Oliver Cromwell was first contending with the king, the soldiers who joined him were mostly gentlemen farmers and they wore their own buff coats—and as many on the other side were dressed much the same, mistakes were made—and, in a roughand-tumble fight, they did not know cavalier from roundhead. So Cromwell said, upon a certain occasion, that all his soldiers must be dressed in a certain color and not a man should be in his troop who did not come

by such a day with such a coat on.

Well, you say, why should they wear a uniform? Some of them did not like it. But his orders were peremptory, that not a man should be with him if he did not wear the regulation dress, since by their common array they knew each other and could not be mistaken in a scuffle. Holiness is the white raiment of the Believer—be sure that you put it on, because otherwise we shall not know you—and the world will not know you and you will be mistaken for an enemy. I am afraid you will be treated as having gone over to the enemy if we catch you in the usurper’s black instead of the king’s white! The Holy Spirit arrays you in the white raiment of holiness that you may shine out bright and clear and distinct before the sons of men.

But now, notice this, too. While this holiness pertained to their most common things, it was also ordered that every unclean thing was to be put from them. “That He see no unclean thing in you.” This is an awful text—I will not preach about it, but I will just repeat it to you again—“That He see no unclean thing in you.” Ah, me! We often see unclean things in ourselves, do we not? Yes, and we often overlook much uncleanness and do not notice it because our eyes are dim. We have lost, perhaps, the spiritual nostril that would smell the unclean thing. Our senses have become perverted by the foul world in which we live. But then, think of this—the pure and holy God—the thrice holy God—He speaks of Himself in this sort, “That He see no unclean thing in you.”

Brothers, Sisters, what a house-cleaning this calls for! What hard sweeping this requires—that, “He see no unclean thing in you”! Remember, the pith of that text concerning the Paschal Lamb lies in God’s sight of the sprinkled blood. Notice, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” So here the very force of the text lies—“that He see no unclean thing in you.” Oh, for Grace and watchfulness to keep clear of touching the unclean thing! Let us come continually to the washing place—even to the opened Fountain. Let us beseech the cleansing Spirit to operate as with fire and burn His purifying way through and through our souls that in the Church of God the Lord may not see any unclean thing in any one of us!

Note well the fearful warning which is added. If there is in the camp an unclean thing tolerated and delighted in and He sees it—if it becomes conspicuous and grievous to Him, then the worst consequences will follow—“Lest He turn away from you.” Oh, what would happen to us if the Lord were to turn away from us as a Church? Horror takes hold on me at the thought! The pastor will die in due time—that is a small matter—for the Lord can send another. But if the Lord were to pass away from us, what an overwhelming desolation! Ichabod would be written in large capital letters across this house if the Lord were gone! And yet my wonder often is that He has not gone when I remember the unclean things that I have to see and mourn over!

I see very little compared with what the Lord sees, but I see enough to make me tremble! The Lord sees much about us that grieves Him, even when we think there is nothing amiss. Let us pray that the Lord does not go from us! I invite you earnestly to pray that during my absence God may keep all the camp in holy working order—that He may see no unclean thing—and may not turn away from His people. O Lord, in Your love bear with us and abide with us evermore! I have done, but there is a little fragment that follows my text which I want some of you to get before I go. Read this. This follows the text. It is a curious thing that it should follow the text. I think that it is put here on purpose for me to have a word for the sinner before I have done.

“You shall not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto you: he shall dwell with you, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of your gates, where it pleases him best: you shall not oppress him.” I wonder whether any runaway has come into our place of worship tonight? Certainly there are some of Satan’s slaves here! I would recommend you to run away from the devil and not give him a moment’s notice. Flee from his service directly! There is no getting away from sin except by instantaneous flights. Run for it! Run at once! Steal away to Jesus! Do not stop to think twice! The prodigal said, “I will arise, and go to my father,” and he arose and went to his father.

Deliberating about it and giving notice never answers anybody’s purpose in the matter of repentance unto life. Instantaneous flight is your wisdom! Run away in a twinkling! If you do run away and get among the Lord’s people, we will never give you up to your old master. He may come here after you, but we know him, and are not to be deceived by him in this matter. He has come here after many—but we have not given up any of his runaways and, by God’s Grace, we will never part with you, but defy the man-catcher to take you away! Jesus says, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out”—and so, you see, He will harbor you and not return you to your master.

There were slaves in Moses’ day, but if they ran away nobody ever sent them back to their master and therefore it was not much of slavery, after all. The devil has many slaves, but if they run away to Jesus they shall never be sent back! Come, then! Dare to be free from Satan’s power! Strike for liberty! Your tyrant lord has no right to you! I know you sold yourself, but you were not your own to sell—you were stolen goods! The devil can have no more property in you than you had in yourself and that was nothing, for you are not your own! Fly away, poor hunted Dove, to Jesus’ wounds and when once you get there, the hawk cannot reach you! Safe in the Rock of Ages you shall dwell as a dove in the clefts.

Though I have dealt faithfully with the uncleanness of professing Believers, I now invite the vilest and the foulest to come to Jesus for safety

and liberty— *“There is a Fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins  
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains.”*

Ransomed sinners may dwell among us, in whatever place they shall choose! Neither will we oppress them with hard questions or irksome duties, but we will bind them to be free as we are ourselves bound to liberty in the name of the Lord our God! God bless you, dear Friends, and during my absence may you be fed with the finest of the wheat! May the blessing of the Lord rest upon you! If we do not meet again in this wilderness below, may we meet, when camp life is over, in the City above, to go no more out forever! The blessing of the Lord rest on you evermore!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Peter 2.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—668, 745, 87.

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON.  
BELOVED FRIENDS—Up to this date I have had no opportunity to enjoy rest, but have been at first suffering and now slowly recovering. This, however, is not lost time if I have but Grace to improve the trial. Let us always seek sanctification through affliction rather than escape from it. I have no question that there is great wisdom in the Lord’s laying aside His instruments. It is for His own Glory, for thereby He shows that He is not in need of them—and it is for their humbling—for hereby they learn how deep is their need of Him. The uninterrupted reception of blessing through one channel might breed in our foolish hearts an idolatrous confidence in the means and therefore there comes a break in the use of that means, that the Lord may be the more tenderly remembered.

We may be sure that if the Lord dries up a cistern, it is because He would have us fly to the Fountain of inexhaustible strength. I desire to rejoice that, in all these 36 years, with sicknesses so frequently upon me, I have never been compelled to drop either the weekly sermon or the monthly magazine. There has either been an interval of power, or I have been a little forward with the work, by His Grace, when the stroke has laid me aside. May I not say “Up to now the Lord has helped me”? Having received help of God, I continue unto this day, and I shall abide in my calling so long as there is work for me to do for my Lord.

I send my loving Christian salutations to all my hearers and readers, with earnest request for their prayers for myself, personally, and for a blessing upon the sermons and all the work at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. The times are out of course, the walls of human confederacies are crumbling, the fashion of this world is passing away—“but the Word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.”  
Mentone, December 6, 1890.  
Yours in loving service for our Lord Jesus,

*C. H. SPURGEON.*  
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THE ROOT THAT BEARS WORMWOOD

NO. 723

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 2, 1866, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Lest there should be among you a root that bears gall and wormwood.” Deuteronomy 29:18.**

THE people of Israel, after all the wonderful things which God had done for them, should have felt themselves bound forever to their father’s God. They had received the clearest possible proof that Jehovah alone was the living and true God. How could they debase themselves to worship graven images when they had seen such signs and wonders worked by their great I AM? Surely idolatry after such a history as theirs must have been sinful to the worst degree.

They were, however, in great danger from two or three circumstances which in the chapter before us are set before them as a ground of caution. “You know how you dwelt in the land of Egypt,” is the first caution. They had dwelt so long in the midst of the idolatrous Egyptians that it would have been strange if they had not become tinctured with the idolatrous spirit which was so powerful in the land of Ham. Alas, Israel’s hosts drank deep into Egypt’s superstitions, and not long had they been in the wilderness before they made a golden ox, contemptuously called by Moses a golden calf, in imitation of the ox so solemnly adored in Egypt.

Probably the mixed multitude never wholly ceased from idol-worship, for we find it said in Amos, “Have you offered unto Me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? And you have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which you made to yourselves.” The Egyptians were infamous among all nations as almost indiscriminate worshippers of innumerable objects. They not only worshipped beasts, comely in proportion and useful to men, but they bowed down before the snake and the crocodile. They worshipped the beetle that is engendered from filth and the frog that comes up from the slime. “Oh, happy nation,” says one of the old satirists, “whose gods grow in their own gardens,” for they actually bowed down before onions and leeks, as though these were the gods that made Heaven and earth!

Knowing, as we do, that depraved nature is so strongly inclined to worship visible objects, we do not wonder that the contagion of Egyptian idolatry infected the children of Israel. Remember again, that in passing through the wilderness, all the people that Israel came in contact with for forty years were idolaters. With the exception of Moses’ father-in-law, who may have been a priest of God, a spiritual worshipper, it does not appear that there were any tribes on the face of the earth that worshipped the Most High. When the children of Israel passed by Moab or Edom, or when they came into contact with the subjects of Sihon or Og, they found them all prostrate in the same reverence of idols, bowing down before abominations—idols of wood and silver and gold.

We are all too much affected by our surroundings. The imitative faculty is very forcible, especially in a direction pleasing to our fallen nature. And when these people found themselves to be singular and alone, worshipping God whom they could not see, while their neighbors practiced gorgeous rites and mystic ceremonies, it is no wonder that they were strongly tempted to set up idols. Yet further, when they had passed through the forty years in the wilderness, what kind of country were they to enter into? Not a land in which there was a temple to Jehovah—or where the inhabitants would all assist them in cultivating the worship of the only true God—but a land that was full of idols! Where every green hill was consecrated to a false deity. Where the stones of the valley were piled up into a thousand altars. Where every city had its own peculiar deity!

The country was full of temptations to allure them from allegiance to the true God. Israel should have been faithful under every test, but he who knows what is in man will perceive the need of the heavenly caution, and of the warning of our text by which the Lord assured His people that to rebel against Him would be to plant a root that bears gall and wormwood.

Let us apply their history to ourselves. Remember the Egypt out of which we have been redeemed by mighty Grace! Remember the sins which once had the mastery over us! Do we wear no relics of our bondage? Is it so easy to shake off old habits? Is there no hankering after the flesh pots of worldly pleasure? I am sure we have to protest before the Lord’s people that we are in very great danger from our former habits, and that the twitching of the old Adam are not things to be laughed at! Would not our evil hearts soon lead us back to our old slavery if the Grace of God did not prevent it?

Look, moreover, at the people among whom we dwell! Is this vain world a friend to Divine Grace? Do you not, on the contrary, find it to be your perpetual foe? Why, you cannot go out into your trade, or follow your occupation—no, worse—you cannot even tarry at home without meeting with temptations! This world does not worship the true God. It bows down before gods of its own choosing. They may not be of wood or stone, but they are, nonetheless, dangerous! Men say unto their lusts or to their pleasures, to their persons, their intellects, their gains, “These are our gods! These are the pursuits which we count worthy of our immortal minds!”

Are not Believers tempted to follow the same ends and objects? Does not our personal advantage frequently aim at the throne of our hearts? Do we never find our losses, or our gains endeavoring to thrust Jehovah from the rightful dominion of our souls? I am sure, Brothers and Sisters, from the oldest to the youngest, we all feel we are in peculiar danger from the people among whom we dwell. And will it be any better in the future? Have we any reason to expect that the places to which we shall journey between this and the hour of death will be any less full of temptation? May we not expect that as it has been, so it will be even till the end comes? May we not have to meet with temptations even more severe than those which we have encountered? May not the Providence of God call us into circumstances where we will pass through severer tests, and our piety have to endure yet heavier trials? It is probable it will be so.

Until we reach our home in Glory, we shall have need to be often warned and put on our guard lest our evil hearts of unbelief should depart from the living God, and we should become as the rest of mankind are—a people that forget God—and that offer themselves unto strange lords and follow their own devices. These were the Lord’s reasons for warning, and these are my motives, this day, for reminding you that sin is an evil and ruinous thing, “a root that bears gall or hemlock, and wormwood.” Sin, in the text, is styled a root that produces bitterness. This is our main thought this morning. If we have time we shall institute the enquiry as to whether that root is in our hearts, and then, thirdly, we shall show the way of deliverance from the root and from its fruit.

I. SIN IS THE ROOT WHICH BEARS GALL AND WORMWOOD. That this was true in the case of the Israelites is very manifest. Their history tells us the whole generation which came up out of Egypt died in the wilderness because of their sins. Their sin, then, was a root which bore to them the poisonous hemlock, for they left a line of graves along their line of march as a sad memorial of their iniquities—only Joshua and Caleb ever entered into the promised land.

At terrible intervals their sins bore fearful fruit for them. Sometimes the fiery serpents bit them. At other times the plague broke forth among the people, or the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the rebellious. We find them put to rout because of their sin at Ai although they had been victorious at Jericho, for Achan had hidden in his camp the accursed thing which was a root that bore to his nation wormwood and gall.

After Israel had driven out the heathenish nations they gave way to many forms of idolatry—and their land was invaded and they were enslaved or driven into holes and dens. Famine devastated the land and pestilence laid it waste till the repenting people cried unto God in the bitterness of their sorrows and He raised them up a Jephthah, or a Gideon, a Samson or a Barak—but on each occasion the mother of their sorrow was their sin—the cause of their lamentation was their turning aside from their God.

Then came the days of the kings of Israel when the people for awhile feared the Lord. But at length the heart of the people went aside to the calves of Bethel and they were given over to Assyria and carried away captive after being struck in battles innumerable and reduced to be the lowest of nations. Then remember what became of Judah, which was for a time faithful to God. The eyes of their king were put out and themselves driven into cruel bondage far away from their much-loved land, having before their captivity been subject to sieges and famine so terrible that it is said that the woman who was tender and delicate among them did eat her own children by reason of the terribleness of the siege.

After the Lord had pardoned them and brought them back again and given them a name once more among the nations, they revolted from Him again—they smote His Only-Begotten and crucified the Lord of Glory! And what did He do to them? It shall make both the ears of him that hears it tingle to read the story of the siege of Jerusalem written by one of themselves—Josephus. They were crucified till men lacked wood on which to crucify them! They were sold as slaves till men would not buy them at the price of one farthing each, for Jewish slaves had become so common and were so despised! The plow-share was driven over the very site of Jerusalem, and a mandate made that the Jew should never look towards that city.

They were scattered and banished as they are unto this day. Truly the whole house of Israel is God’s witness at this day that sin against Jehovah is a root that bears gall and wormwood. As it was in their case we may rest assured it is in other cases, for God makes no exceptions in His dealings. He is not a judge who punishes one sin and allows another to go unpunished—He deals equal justice to all men. If He spared not Israel, how shall He spare the Gentiles? If Jerusalem escaped not, how shall London escape? If He gave up to the spoiler and to the sword the seed of Abraham His friend, how shall He spare us in the day of His visitation if we sin against Him?

Again, dear Friends, not only does the history of the Jews prove that sin is a root of bitterness, but our judgment tells us that it is most fitting it should be so. If sin were in the long run pleasurable, and really produced advantage to man, it would be a very strange arrangement in the Divine economy. The Judge of all the earth must do right, but would it be right that sinning should be rewarded with blessedness? If the root of sin, instead of bearing gall and wormwood, dropped with honey and streamed with milk, where would be the holiness of the great Governor who so ordained it?

I would even venture to put this to the depraved intellect of those men who rail at Divine justice—I would ask them what they would have? Would they have sin rewarded? Would they have virtue punished? If so, would not the devil be the most fitting ruler of such a dispensation? What sort of God could He be who should make holiness to bring forth misery, and sin to be the perpetual spring of delight? If any one of us, not absolutely mad, could be put into the position of the governor of the world, so soon as we had made laws should we not at once decree that the violation of law should involve punishment?

Why whenever savages become semi-civilized and form themselves into a little state, one of the first things they do is, having made laws, to lay down penalties for the breach of those laws! And men cannot form a government without penal sanctions. I will defy men to do so! If they will reward the breach of their laws and punish those who keep them, it will not be long before a general revolt and universal mutiny will give the law to the winds. It was right, then, and according to the natural order of things, that rebellion against the Law of the great moral Governor should, in the long run, if not at once, involve sorrow and misery.

This Truth of God is continually being denied and yet is all but selfevident. I believe this is the point of teaching which is just now more assailed than any other, namely, the doctrine of the future punishment of sin. I find it is become quite a popular thing to assert that we who preach of Hell and everlasting punishment libel the Character of God. It is constantly asserted that this doctrine is an old worn-out dogma! And, therefore, we beg to bring it before you once again as being, notwithstanding all the gainsayer may say, the Truth of God.

Let no man deceive himself and think that sin will go unpunished! Let no man, be he ever so specious and his words ever so flattering, lead you to imagine that in the next world God will pass by iniquity, for, as surely as this Book is His Word, sin is a most fearful evil, and the wrath to come will be terrible—so terrible that the hardest language ever used by the most vehement speaker falls infinitely short of what the judgment of God will be when His wrath smokes against the sinner, and His curse descends with full force upon the offender!

Sin is a root which has not always budded and blossomed in this life, but which will bud and blossom and bring forth its fruit in the life to come. And the fruit of sin will be more bitter than hemlock and wormwood. I gather this, first, from my reason. Let an intelligent person only think a minute, and I am sure he will be convinced that there must be a terrible punishment for sin. Remember there are other laws in the world besides moral laws. There are what is called by the philosopher physical laws, that is to say, laws which concern matter rather than mind. Now, if men break these laws, does any ill result follow from the violation?

For instance, the law of attraction, or gravitation—that certain bodies shall attract other bodies. Can that be infringed without risk? Here is a man who says he does not believe in gravitation. He does not believe, for instance, standing here on this lofty rock, that he shall fall if he springs off into the air. He declares that he means to try the issue with that antiquated old law, and he laughs at Sir Isaac Newton, and everybody else. He says, “I am not to be bound by such a bugbear as this law of gravitation! I am a freethinker and am not to be led by the nose by your physical creeds.”

We warn him, “You will break your neck if you do.” He says, “Do you mean to represent God to me as such a Being, that if I merely violate one of His laws He will actually put me to pain or even kill me? Do not tell me, I know better, and am not to be trammeled by the superstitions of the dark ages.” Yet let him say what he will, his leap will be fatal and his life will pay the penalty of his rashness. If you rebel against gravitation it will crush you up as a man would a beetle, or a fly—and without a particle of pity—will avenge its insulted authority. See the fool leap from the lofty crag into the air! Ah, unhappy wretch, there is no escape for him!

Notwithstanding his religious belief that he would escape, we find him a mangled corpse at the bottom. The physical laws of God do not stay their action on account of the men who break them, but push on to their purposed end, let the results be what they may. Take another case. It is a law of nature that filthiness shall beget disease. Over yonder a number of persons herd together in impure air. They never cleanse their bodies, or wash their clothes. They leave heaps of filth to rot outside the door. Drainage is neglected. Water is scant and poisonous. The Sanitary Commissioner warns them—“My dear good people, if you do not alter this, you will have the fever or the cholera.”

“What? Do you believe,” says a woman, “that God Almighty is so cruel that He will take away this dear little child from my bosom just because we do not happen to wash ourselves, but prefer to live in dirt and drunkenness?” “Yes,” says the Sanitary Commissioner, “whatever you may think of it, that is the fact. Filth and vice will bring disease” “Well,” says some babbling freethinker, “it is a very shocking doctrine! You slander God! I do not believe it!” Yet the Lord did permit the plague a few weeks ago, right and left, to slay its thousands. Who says it is a cruel decree that foul air should make men sick? Nobody complains of the cruelty of God in His physical laws, although if men set themselves against them there is no sort of pity for them! The physical law goes on and stamps out all rebels against its power.

Go to sea in a leaky ship and see if when the storm comes the sea does not swallow you up without an atom of pity! Or stand under a tree when lightning is abroad, and if the lightning strike that tree and you are under it, see if the lightning will care for you. You have violated the physical law—you may have done it ignorantly—but it has no pity! It just smites with all its force. Now I say if this is a fact which nobody can dispute, that the God of Nature is a terrible God, oh you that worship the God of Nature and say you do not care for the God of Revelation, I ask you what you make out of all this? I ask you whether even Nature itself does not say to you, “If God so terribly avenges His ordinary physical laws when they are broken, how much more surely will He avenge His moral laws when men wantonly and wickedly throw themselves in their way”?

Again, we are not left to this argument alone, for there is one out of the Ten Commandments to which I can only allude which involves more especially the bodies of men. Now, when a man offends against the one Command, we shall see if God does really punish sin. We shall see in the man’s body whether or not sin does produce gall or wormwood. I allude, of course, to the command, “You shall not commit adultery,” which forbids all classes of lasciviousness and uncleanness. No sooner is this Law broken in any case than straightway man receives the recompense which is meet. The men or women who violate this precept soon find that they have not only done wrong to God but wrong to themselves.

Our hospitals and asylums could tell you into what a fearful state men have brought themselves by sins of the flesh. States of body and mind so terrible that the very phrases in which Scripture speaks of future misery might, without exaggeration, be used in describing them! This is rather the physician’s business than mine, but if this were the fit place and the fit time I could prove it—so that your very hair might stand on end. God forbid that any of you should prove in yourselves the misery which this sin brings even on earth!

Now, if the violation of this one Command which happens to touch the body, does, beyond all doubt, make men smart for it. If this one set of sins makes him feel that sin is as poison to the blood and the bones. If such is the case with one Commandment, why not with the rest? And as the other Commands, for the most part, do not seem to bring upon us a punishment here, it is rational to believe that they will bring it upon us in the next state. And as this is a state in which the body evidently suffers from the breach of one Command, it is natural to expect that in the next state the body and soul will suffer for the breach of the other nine!

I believe that every sin creates disease in the soul. I believe that every sinful thought, and word, and deed poisons our spiritual nature. I believe that sin is to be dreaded not merely because God will smite us, but because sin itself will plague us. If a man cuts himself he expects to bleed. And if a man sins he is wounding his soul—and his soul must bleed. If a man drinks poison, he must expect to have it lying in the system if it does not kill him outright. And if a man takes sin into his spirit it lies rankling within. This root will bear hemlock and gall, if not in this life, yet in the life to come.

Still further, to bring out this argument. We have no reason to believe that death will change the character of man at all. I have no reason to believe that my dying, if I am a sinner, will make a saint of me. I certainly can have no thought that if I die as a saint death will make a sinner of me! A man might as well believe the one as the other, and they are both irrational. Death says, “He that is filthy, let him be filthy still. He that is holy, let him be holy still.” Then, a man dying as a sinner, when he gets into the next world, what will he do? Why, he will sin as he did here—not in the same shape and way—but he will in some way go on sinning. He will die a sinner, rise a sinner, live a sinner, and forever live a sinner.

Now, if he forever lives as a sinner, he will continue to get worse and worse in sin, for we all know that it is the nature of sin to grow worse, and sin has a self-developing power within itself. If in the other life the man goes on sinning worse and worse, and even in this life we have many instances that sin brings misery, may we not rationally conclude from the Bible that increasing sin in the next life will bring forth increasing misery, which will be intolerable beyond all conception? I tremble as I see the drift of this line of thought! May you tremble, too, and fly to the Lord Jesus for pardon! Depend upon it, as long as a man goes on sinning the Law will necessitate that he shall be miserable. He is out of accord with the great moral forces, and he must as surely suffer as another man would do who perished in fighting with gravitation or any other physical law.

“Oh,” cries one, “that is not the doctrine we kick against! We speak against God’s punishing sin!” But what if this should be the way in which sin is punished? What if it is written, “Evil shall slay the wicked.” “You have destroyed yourself.” If this is the way in which God punishes sin, even you that sin are compelled to say that it is right. Did anybody ever think it wrong that if a man tried to float upon a stone he should drown? Everybody says, “Why does the fool attempt it? It is a law of Nature that the stone should sink! Why does he kick against it?” Nobody thinks it cruel that he should drown if he ties a millstone to his neck and leaps into the sea. If a man thrusts his hand in the fire, nobody thinks it cruel on God’s part if that man’s hand is burned.

The natural effect of the violation of a Divine command is misery. Oh that men would believe it, and cast out the root which produces wormwood! But we are not, happily, left to our reason about it. We can turn to the Book of God, and call up the witnesses. Ask Noah, as he looks out of his ark, “Does sin bring bitterness?” And he points to the floating carcasses of innumerable thousands that died because of sin. Turn to Abraham. Does sin bear bitterness? He points to the smoke of Sodom and Gomorrah that God destroyed because of their wickedness. Ask Moses, and he reminds you of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, who were swallowed up alive. Turn to Paul, and you do not find Paul speaking with the honeyed phrases of these modern deceivers who would make people believe that sin will not be punished!

He says, “He that despised Moses’ Law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose you, shall he be thought worthy who has trod underfoot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the Covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done despite unto the Spirit of Grace?” Listen to James or Jude, or Peter, and you hear them speak of chains of darkness and flaming fire. Hear John as he writes of the wrath of God and of the winepress of it, out of which the blood flows up to the horse’s bridles! Let the Savior Himself speak to you. He cries, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment.” He is the author of those words, “Where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.”

It is He who speaks of the outer darkness, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth! This Book is as opposite as light to darkness to the mawkish softness of modern heretical divinity which drivels against the just judgment of God! It tells you, (and oh that you might hear it as God’s own voice to you!)—it tells you not that sin will end in pleasure and joy, but that the wrath of God will abide upon you if you do not turn from sin! It tells you that the soul that sins, it shall die. That God’s curse is upon the wicked, and that everlasting punishment is the portion of the impenitent. Dreadful as that Truth of God is, it is clearly revealed, and let it be received and trembled at!

Once again, whereas right reason shows it and Scripture confirms it, I believe that conscience in every enlightened man asserts it. I read the other day, in a lecture against this doctrine, that Augustine was the author of the doctrine of eternal punishment. It was a great piece of news, certainly! But we are further told that it was because he had been a great sinner, and therefore he felt such horror of conscience on account of sin that his mind was morbid and he fancied that he deserved eternal punishment. Well, then, here I stand in the same position as Augustine! Having been a great sinner, too, and because of my great conviction of sin I also feel that sin deserves eternal punishment!

And, dear Friends, I do not believe the witness of Augustine is at all weakened by his having had a clear sense of sin! On the contrary, I accept him as all the better witness because, having known what sin meant and having felt its weight in his own conscience, he was better able to judge what sin deserved! It is strange that men should assert that because the man felt a great horror of sin, therefore he misjudged its desert. That would be the very reason why he should judge correctly! And if the gentlemen who oppose this doctrine had any true sense of sin themselves, they would soon change their present views.

When my heart was awakened to feel the guilt of sin, I never quarreled with God upon the matter of punishment. I felt, “Let God do what He will with me on account of sin, I deserve it all.” I was compelled to bow my head and not so much as lift my eyes to the place where He dwelt. I could but simply say, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” I had no demurrer to plead in court against the Divine sentence. I assented to it. But if there is a man before me who says that the wrath of God is too heavy a punishment for his little sin, I ask him, if the sin is little, why does he not give it up? If it is such a little pleasure to you, why not renounce it?

A gentleman, a man of wealth who is now dead, as I one day walked with him in his garden, took me by the button-hole and said, “What an awful thing, Sir, that I should fling my soul away for the sake of a little worldly mirth when I know that I shall have to smart in Hell for it forever!” He looked me through and through as he spoke to me, but after we had prayed together, and I had laid before him the way of salvation, I was pained to see that he had made his choice for the pleasures of sin. When a man deliberately does that, what can you say but that he must take his choice? If you know that Hell is so dreadful, and you pretend that your sin is so little, why do you choose your sin? Why do you not renounce it?

I will take you on your own footing. You say the punishment is too severe for so small a pleasure. Then why do you take the pleasure? The more terrible the punishment is, the more foolish is it on your part to run the risk of it for the sake of such a paltry gain. Sinner, I charge you by the terrors of Hell—do not buy sin at such a fearful price—but rather say, “I cannot sell my soul so cheaply. I must have something better than the gaiety of life to reward me for being cast away forever.” I put it yet again. The plan of salvation by Jesus Christ is very clear and very plain. It is, “Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” Oftentimes our hearers say, “Oh it is so easy, so very simple—nothing to do but just trust in Christ.”

My dear Hearer, if it is so simple, why not receive it?—  
*“How they deserve the deepest Hell  
That slight these joys above!  
What chains of vengeance must they feel  
That break these bonds of love!”*

If to trust in Christ is so simple, how can you refuse to believe in Him? Why will you live an unbeliever when God Himself has said, “He that believes not shall be damned”? Oh, fly from unbelief, which is the root that bears gall and wormwood!  
II. I must be very brief on the other two heads. IS THERE SUCH A

ROOT AS THIS GROWING IN THE HEART OF ANY ONE OF US HERE? I am afraid there is, because upon looking at the text it appears that some have this root that will bear gall and wormwood in them who are not actually gross outward sinners. They are described as those who forget God. The verse from which the text is taken says of them, “whose heart turns away this day from the Lord our God.”

Is there no heart here that is turned away from God? Very personally do I put this question to you all. Are you all followers of God? If your heart does not love God, the non-loving of God is that root which will bear for you the anguish of Hell. The non-loving of the Most High, even though you never curse or swear, even though you do not break the Sabbath is that root that will bear gall and wormwood. Next we read of “men seeking after another God.” Are you loving someone better than God? Are you living for money—is that your great object? Are you seeking fame? Whatever it is to which you give your whole life, that is your god.

Is there no one here who is living for self? If so, though you may be outwardly a most respectable people, if you are living for anything but God, that root will bring forth gall and wormwood. Ah, my dear Hearers, I feel as if my eyes would burst into weeping while I am talking to you! My head aches, my heart is burning as I think how many there are of you who are in this state! You are living for that which will bring forth to you the wrath to come. Do think of this? If I tell you what is not true reject it, but as God, my Master, has put it into my heart to speak it to you, take warning!

Again, this root is in every man who disbelieves the penalty of sin. The verse following the text speaks of one who said, “I shall have peace though I walk after my own heart.” Are you saying that? If so, you have the evil root in your heart. There is no more sure sign of reprobation than callousness and carelessness! And if you are saying this morning, “Well, I will try it. I will have the pleasures of sin and will run all risks,” then you are the man. I do not say that the root has blossomed yet, but you have it within, and as surely as God’s Word is true, if you die in such a state, you shall forever know that this root produces nothing but gall and wormwood!

III. The last point was to be, HOW ARE WE TO GET RID OF IT? Is there a possibility of being delivered from the gall and wormwood? There is. As many as trust in Christ shall be rid of the gall and wormwood. How? Shall it be poured on the ground so that you shall not drink it? No, it must be drunk! All the bitter results of sin must be endured. Sin produces Hell, and that Hell must be suffered!

But listen, Christ has drunk the gall and wormwood for every soul that trusts Him! He has drunk the gall and wormwood for you, if you trust Him now! Come and rest upon my Master and you shall find that there is not a drop of gall nor wormwood left for you—for in the garden and on the bloody tree Christ endured what you ought to have endured—He felt the full results of sin in His own Person which otherwise you must have felt. “Well,” you say, “thank God for that! But how can I cut up the root itself?”

In order to escape the punishment of sin you must be saved from sin itself, and the way to it is this—you must deeply feel in your own soul that sin is a bitter thing. If you do not feel and acknowledge this you will never find mercy. My dear Hearer, if sin is a sweet morsel in your mouth, it will be bitter in your heart forever! And as long as you love sin you cannot love God. You must go to God and pray, “Lord, tear these sins out of me—do not leave one—neither a little or a great one.” Mark me, you may talk what you will about believing in Christ, but if you love sin you will suffer for sin! Now, lay bare your heart before the Eternal One, and say, “O God, You see my sins, You see the evil I did love, I hate it now, Lord, help me to overcome it! Let me not be the victim of my sins—

*‘The dearest idol I have known,  
Whatever that idol is,  
Help me to tear it from Your throne,  
And worship only You.’*

“As for the past, wash me in the blood of Your dear Son. As for the present, send Your Spirit down to write Your Law upon my heart.”

I did want, this morning, to have pleaded with sinners. I had it in my heart to have put before you the blessing and the curse, and then to have said, “By God’s Grace lay hold on eternal life, and let your sins go! Trust Jesus, and let the pleasures of the world go.” But if I cannot plead with you, I will ask God the Holy Spirit to plead with your consciences afterwards. Sin cannot bring you pleasure. Man, it cannot profit you in the long run. You may get a little money or pleasure now, but you will lose by it in the long run of eternity! If your existence were only on earth, I believe your happiness would be greatest by being a Christian—but this world is only the first step or two in a race that never has an end.

May God the Holy Spirit influence your will that you may choose that which will endure, and not that which will be buried in the tomb! Oh by the frail character of life, by the certainty of death, by the judgment of God, by His hatred of sin, by the flames that know no abatement though briny tears forever flow, fly away to Christ! Oh may you fly to Him now and find life in His death, healing in His wounds, and everlasting mercy through His merits!

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1638 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

MEN WITHOUT HEART, SIGHT, OR HEARING  
NO. 1638

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 8, 1882, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**Yet the Lord has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this day.”  
Deuteronomy 29:4.**

FEELING, sight, hearing. What wonderful things these are! If we could exist without them, what a wretched condition ours would be. The outer world would be unknown to us if the gates of the senses were shut. And the soul would be famished, like Samaria when it was shut up and there was no going in nor coming out. Take away from us the power of perception by touch, smell, taste, sight and hearing—and it would be of small account to us that the world was beautiful—for to our consciousness there would scarcely be a world at all. All the colors of the rainbow, the warmth of the sun, the freshness of the breeze, the sweetness of honey, the charms of music and even the terrors of storms would cease! And the soul would be shut up within the body as within a prison which had neither doors nor windows. The dreariest dungeon of the Bastille would be liberty compared with such a state!

Perhaps the mind would exist, but certainly it could not live. It would be a misuse of language to call it life. When any one of the senses is gone, it involves great deprivation and subjects the person enduring it to the pity of his fellows. But if all were absent, what wretchedness must ensue! Loss of sight or hearing creates among us a large number of sufferers who deserve our sympathy, but what mourning would suffice for those, if there were, indeed, any such, who physically had neither heart to perceive, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear?

Transfer your thoughts, now, from these external senses by which we become conscious of the external world to those spiritual senses by which we perceive the spiritual world, the Kingdom of Heaven, the Lord of that Kingdom and all the powers of the world to come. There is a heart which should be tender, by which we perceive the Presence of God and feel His operations and even behold the Lord, Himself, as it is written, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” There is a spiritual eye by which the things invisible are discerned! Blessed are they to whom the Lord has given to see the things of His Kingdom, which to the unrenewed remain hidden in parables! There is a spiritual ear by which we hear the gentle whispers of the Spirit which frequently come to us internally, without the medium of sounds that can affect the ears. Blessed are those who have the ear which the Lord has purged, cleansed and opened so that it listens to the Divine call!

But there is no blessedness in the case of men devoid of spiritual feeling, sight and hearing. Theirs is a miserable plight! Just what the blind man, the deaf man and the man who is destitute of feeling would be in the outer world—that is what many men are as to the spiritual world. Alas, there are among us, in this congregation this day, and all around us in myriads, poor souls of whom this text is true, “The Lord has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this day.” This is a very, very mournful case. But perhaps the most lamentable aspect of it is that the persons who are thus devoid of the spiritual senses, by which they can converse with the best and highest world, are not conscious of their incapacity, or, if partially conscious of it, seem to be stupidly contented to remain as they are!

The naturally blind man would see if he could! What shall I say of those whose inability to see spiritually is willful and lies more in their will than anywhere else? The man who cannot hear the voice of his fellow would greatly rejoice if the gates of sound once opened to him. But there are none so deaf as those who will not hear—whose deafness is moral—whose inability to hear the voice of God lies in this fact that they deliberately close their ears to the voice of holy exhortation. They are ready enough to listen to the siren songs of temptation. And they bend a willing ear to the subtle deceit of the serpent, but they will not regard the tender, loving wisdom of the Good Shepherd! They are quick of hearing to evil, but deaf to good!

This is the sad part of it—they are blind and do not want to see! They are deaf and do not wish to hear! Our poet says—  
*“How helpless guilty nature lies,  
Unconscious of its load.”*

In this unconsciousness lies the heart of the mischief. Helpless man is unconscious of his own helplessness! Because they say, “We see,” therefore their sin remains. If they were blind and knew it, it were another matter, and signs of hope would be visible. But to be blind and yet to boast of having superior sight—and to ridicule those who see—is the lamentable condition of not a few! They will not thank us for our pity, but much they need it. Eyes have they, but they see not and yet they glory in their blindness! Multitudes around us are in this plight.

When the Prophet says, “Bring forth the blind people that have eyes,” we can only wonder where we should put them all if they were willing to assemble in one place! My own spirit feels very heavy in having to preach upon this subject this morning, but I wish to do so with great tenderness of heart, lamenting while I blame. It seems to me that Moses felt very tenderly to the people whom he here addresses. He puts his meaning in the gentlest conceivable shape when he says, “The Lord has not given you an heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this day.” He does not excuse, but yet he softly chides. He speaks not with the stern severity of Isaiah when he cried in the name of the Lord, “Go and tell this people, Hear you, indeed, but understand not; and see you, indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.”

What a sad thing it is that so many are rich in all things except the one thing necessary. God has given them abundance of earthly possessions, but He has not given them eyes to see His bounty, nor ears to hear His voice of love, nor a heart to perceive His Presence in the mercies which they enjoy. Such see the harvest, but not the Great Farmer! They enjoy the fruitful seasons, but take no delight in the Giver of the rain and the Sender of the sunshine! What a sad condition to be in! Alas, poor rich man! He has so much and yet so little! And what a lamentable sight is the educated man of this world who is learned in all the lore of the ancients and versed in all the science of the moderns! He, who has pried into the secret chambers of knowledge and has observed the skill of the Eternal in the starry heavens and in microscopic life—and yet, with all his attainments, has no knowledge of his Maker—and will not accept the evidence of His Presence!

How sad that we should have to say to such, “Yes, you know all the facts, and yet cannot see beneath their surface. You allow prejudice to blind your eyes to the plain teaching of Creation and Providence. You walk through the studio and admire the pictures—and deny the artist’s existence! Whereas, if you were candid, you would believe in him from his works and then go on to spell out his character from them. Alas, you have not a heart to perceive, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear to this day.” Well spoke the Apostle when he said, “Not many great men after the flesh, not many learned are called.” Often, those that know the most of the secular know the least of the sacred. Eyes that seem as if they could pierce through rocks and read the mysteries of primeval night, turn out to be mere sightless eyeballs as to Divine things.

Yet they know it not, neither guess at their folly. How sad it is that there should be so many who are quick in reasoning and ready in invention, who cannot see that the visible argues an invisible Creator—and that Providential arrangements prove that a Great Father is over all. As Herbert says, they, “walk with their staff to Heaven.” They thread the stars like beads upon a string. They harness the lightning and weigh the starry orbs. And yet they have not discovered their God, who is above, around, outside and within them! They are open-eyed to all things but unto Him who fills all in all! I fear I must apply to them the language of Paul, “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.”

This morning I shall speak, as I shall be helped by the Holy Spirit, first upon a very mournful fact. Secondly, upon a yet more mournful reason for that fact. And thirdly, upon a mournful result which comes out of that fact. May what is said be taken as a word of warning and may God, the Holy Spirit bless it to the conversion of everyone here present who remains as yet unrenewed! I say everyone, for there is not one among you whom I would knowingly exempt from my prayers.

I. First, we shall think upon A MOURNFUL FACT. Here was a whole nation, with but very few exceptions, of whom their leader, who knew them best and loved them best, was obliged to say, “The Lord has not given you a heart to perceive to this day.” The mournful part of it was that this was the nation that had been specially favored of God above all others. God had not entered into covenant with Edom or with Moab. He had not sent the light of His Truth to Egypt, or to Ethiopia, nor to any other of the nations of antiquity. But this comparatively little and insignificant people had been selected that to it might be committed the oracles of God! They were the one candlestick of the human race! They had light in their dwellings while all around them brooded a darkness which might be felt.

By His name, Jehovah the Lord was made known to them when He spoke to Moses in the desert and manifested Himself to him in the burning bush. “He made known His ways to Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel.” He gave to this people Revelation after Revelation, containing guidance, rule, comfort and instruction, even as it is written, “He has not dealt so with any people.” Almost all the Light of God then given was focused upon Israel and yet they had not eyes to see! “God speaks once, yes, twice, yet man perceives it not for need of ears which can hear.” Is not this a dreadful thing? I can understand the other nations being blind and senseless, for they were in the dark and, “the times of their ignorance God winked at,” but for this nation, upon whom the Sun of Righteousness had risen—to choose darkness and abhor the Light is a horrible thing! By the preciousness of the privilege, the sin of its rejection was greatly enhanced.

This is sad, sad to the utmost degree of sadness, but is it not the case with some of you? Are there not among you those who have the clearest Light of God and yet choose the ways of darkness? My dear Hearers, be honest with yourselves and answer! Born of godly parents; singled out to be carefully instructed in the things of God; attending a faithful ministry from your youth up; reading your Bible and being thoroughly versed in its contents and yet, for all that, without godly feeling and gracious perception! I grieve that you should have such privileges and yet remain strangers to salvation! Will it be so forever? Shall it always be said of you, “The Lord has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this day”?

Note again, that not only were they a highly favored people, but they had seen very wonderful acts performed by the Lord Himself. Moses says, “You have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land, the great temptations which your eyes have seen, the signs and those great miracles.” Does it not seem deplorable that they could see God lifting His hand against Pharaoh with plague after plague and yet not acknowledge Him to be the only living and true God? Those plagues smote the gods of Egypt— how could Israel ever turn aside to worship such dishonored deities? Each plague was aimed against some sacred object of Egyptian worship and the marvel is that these defeated idols should still be worshipped by Israel!

Truly the Lord spoke with a loud voice from Heaven—with a voice which even Pharaoh was compelled to hear—and yet His own people heard Him not! They saw the plagues and did not discern the Glory of their God so as to remain faithful to Him. And that Red Sea! Was not that marvel enough? How often have I wished that I could have been there to see the eager waters leap on Pharaoh and all his hosts! What joy to have heard the sound of the timbrel and to have seen the twinkling feet of the maidens as they danced and chanted, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider He has cast into the sea.”

Could men stand there and see that and yet not perceive that the gods of the heathen are idols—and that only Jehovah is the living and true God? And could they shake off the fear and dread of this mighty God from their souls and turn to worship a golden calf which their own hands had made? Yes, such is the deplorable wickedness of man that if God were to work, over again, all the miracles of Egypt in the sight of those of you who are unbelievers, you would not be converted to His fear! You would be staggered by the wonder, but you would not be converted by the witness! Something else is needed over and above all miracles before the blinded eye will care to see, or the hardened heart will begin to feel! You, also, have witnessed great deeds of Grace in our midst, and yet you are not convinced. You even believe in all the miracles of Scripture and in the death and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus—and yet you do not trust Him! Ah me, what can I say? What can I do but mourn over you?

In addition to this, these people had passed through a very remarkable experience. They had been brought out of Egypt by miracle and, by the same power, they had passed through the depths of the sea as on dry land! Moses thus describes their wilderness history—“And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and your shoe is not waxen old upon your foot. You have not eaten bread, neither have you drunk wine or strong drink: that you might know that I am the Lord your God.” All these 40 years they lived by miracles—and yet they neither feared, nor loved, nor trusted Jehovah their God who worked all these signs among them! As a nation they did not receive the spiritual teaching which the Lord set before them.

Do you blame them? Look at your home. Are they the only people who have thus offended? May I not be addressing some, today, whose experience has been singularly full of mercy and love? God has been strangely gracious to you, my Friend. He has led you by a way that you knew not and, if you could but see it, His hand has been conspicuously with you from the time when you left your father’s house unto this day! I know not to whom I may be speaking, but I am persuaded that there are some here whose career has been especially marked by the Providence of God. Yours has been no common journey of life. You have been preserved in accident and restored from sickness. The stars in their courses have seemed to fight for you—and the stones of the field have joined to defend you—and yet you do not observe the hand of the Lord in all this!

The Lord has girded you though you have not known Him! He has guided you, restrained you, delivered you, instructed you even though you have not deigned to think of Him. Yes, He has saved you from the consequences of your own folly, or you would long before this have been a beggar, or a mass of sores, or a prisoner in the most dreaded dungeon! He has interposed to save you from your own folly! And here you are where mercy pleads and Grace holds out her silver scepter. Alas, even to this day you have not a heart to perceive the long-suffering of God, nor eyes to see your obligations, nor ears to hear the wooing of His love—you are still going on in rebellion against God. Shall it always be so? It is grievous that it has been thus so long. Is there no turning? Is there no relenting? Must you die in your sins?

In addition to all this sight and experience, the Israelites had received remarkable instruction. In the wilderness, the Lord taught them by Moses and Aaron. The Tabernacle was pitched in their midst, according to the pattern which Moses had seen on the mountain, and there a worship was instituted, every part of which was singularly rich in instruction, as we all know to this day. There was not a lamb slaughtered, nor a lamp kindled, nor a handful of incense burned on the altar, nor a curtain folded up, nor a silver socket set in its place without some moral and spiritual significance. Had they desired to learn it, they might have discovered in the Tabernacle in the wilderness great stores of teachings as to those things which make for the peace and salvation of men—but they had no heart to perceive, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear—and so the whole apparatus of teaching was lost upon them.

Ah, dear Hearers, you may enjoy the most clear instruction; you may have line upon line, precept upon precept; you may read God’s Book, itself, and you may observe the experience of Christians—and you may have all their love and affection to help you to understand the things of God—and yet for all that you may remain without spiritual perception! All the external processes of holy teaching may spend themselves in vain upon you for 40, 50, 60, or even 70 years and you may still remain blind and unfeeling! You may know the letter of doctrine and yet never perceive its meaning. You may see the logical nature and certainty of a sacred Truth of God and yet never see its bearings upon yourself. Does your present condition prove this assertion? Are you, also without understanding? Are you still untaught in the things of God? O that the Holy Spirit may now create in you a new heart and bestow both spiritual eyes and ears upon you!

One thing else is worth notice. These people had been associated with remarkable characters. They were not all blinded—there were a few among them who were gracious and so were made to perceive. Caleb and Joshua were there, and Aaron and Miriam, but chiefly there was Moses, grandest of men, true father of the nation! It was something to have lived in a camp where you could speak with such a man as Moses, who had seen God, face to face, so that upon his brow there rested the glow of Deity when he came down from the mountain! You, too, my Friends, have met with those whose conversation has been in Heaven and whose lives are bright with communion with the Lord!

If we do not see and will not see where another sees so clearly, we stand condemned! A man who considers himself highly intelligent stands with me upon the hill. He looks out upon a fair landscape over which hangs a wonderful sky bedecked with fleecy clouds. At our feet blooms a wealth of lovely flowers. He tells me that in all this he sees no evidence of God. Is he blind? As for me, I feel myself surrounded by the all-embracing Deity and His Presence is the greatest fact of my consciousness—

*“God has a Presence and that you may see In the fold of the flower, the leaf of the tree; In the sun of the noon, the star of the night; In the storm cloud of darkness, the rainbow of light; In the waves of the ocean, the furrows of land; In the mountains of granite, the atom of sand! Turn where you may, from the sky to the sod, Where can you gaze that you see not God?”*

Now, either I am a liar or else my neighbor is sadly dull of perception! And as I know that I speak the truth, I know, also, that he is blind! If Moses saw, he, by that fact, left the rest of the people without excuse!

That they would not perceive was exceedingly provoking to the Lord, for among them God was manifest in the most remarkable manner. The Lord came from Sinai and the Holy One from Paran. From the top of the smoking mountain He spoke with voice of trumpet and with sound of thunder— the earth shook and trembled beneath His feet! The Lord was among them conspicuously in the flaming pillar by night and in the shadowing cloud by day. Israel saw the Glory of her God! She could not help seeing it and yet the people refused to behold Him and asked, “Is the Lord among us or not?” Moses said of them, “They are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them. O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!” Even to the very end of 40 years of patient instruction they remained without the true knowledge of God!

Ah me! This is sad, most sad! But I fear that in this congregation we have a number who are like they are. Years have not brought them Grace, nor has a lifetime yielded them wisdom! They have seen God’s wonders of Grace upon their friends and relatives. They have also tasted of the Lord’s goodness in their own lives—and they have heard His voice in the preaching of the Gospel, for Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth as crucified among them—and yet they have not seen the Lord and do not hear Him even to this day! This is no new thing, but it is, none the less, a grief of heart to those of us who fear the Lord and feel a love for souls.

Brothers and Sisters, remember that these Jews, in subsequent generations, had great Prophets among them and what was the success of their labor? Did they not cry, “Who has believed our report?” At length they saw the Son of God among them and how did He fare? Jesus Himself, with all His miracles of Grace and words of love, came unto His own people and they received Him not, but cried, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” How true it is that nothing can bless men till almighty Grace renews them! If one should rise from the dead, men would not repent unless they were renewed! There is no miracle that God can do; there is no marvel that Omnipotence, itself, can perform which can make men, who have no spiritual eyes, see! Nothing can make men feel so long as their hearts remain hardened against the Most High. “The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

Verily is it written with truth, “You must be born again.” The unbelief of man, so long as it remains, renders blessing impossible. The Gospels represent our Lord Himself as baffled by man’s refusal to believe, as it is written, “He could not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.” Oh the wretchedness of this state of things! Who shall deliver men from it? Who can attempt the task but God alone?

II. We will now hasten to spend a few minutes in descending into a still lower depth. Let us note THE MOURNFUL REASONS FOR ALL THIS. The reasons for their incapacity to see and perceive lay, first, in the fact that these people never believed in their own blindness. They had no heart to perceive and they did not perceive their absence of perception—they had no eyes with which to detect their own dimness of vision! They were such fools as to dote on their own wisdom! They were so poor as to think themselves rich, so hypocritical as to profess to be sincere! They thought they knew better than their God and so they sat in judgment upon His Providence and styled the provision of His wisdom. They were so quick of perception that when Moses was gone away for a little while, they said, “Make us gods, which shall go before us; as for this Moses, we know not what has become of him.”

They showed their pretended wisdom by suspecting both the Lord and His servant Moses as soon as they fell into any difficulty. “Because there were no graves in Egypt, therefore has He brought us forth that we may die in the wilderness?” They would snatch from Jehovah’s hand the rod of government and become leaders for themselves! Jeshurun forsook God that made him and lightly esteemed the Rock of His salvation. They were wise in their own conceits and, therefore it was that they could not see. Pride is the great creator of darkness, like Nahash, the Ammonite, it puts out the right eye! Men seek not the Light of God because they boast that they are the children of the day and need no light from above!

More than this, these men never asked for a heart to perceive, eyes to see and ears to hear. No man has ever asked for these things and been refused—no soul has cried in its blindness and darkness, “Open my eyes,” but what a gracious answer has always come! It is the prerogative of the Lord Jesus to open the blind eyes, but this He is always ready to do whenever men call upon His name. Let but the poor man cry and the Lord Jesus must and will hear him and pour the daylight into his soul. In Israel’s case there was a distinct refusal to be blest—“But My people would not hearken to My voice; and Israel would have none of Me.”

There was no prayer for the heavenly blessing, but an aversion to it. “You have not, because you ask not.” “They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness.” Rightly are those left in darkness who will not ask God to give them light, or to open their eyes! Is not this the case with some of you? O my Hearers, I must be plain and personal with you—is it not true that some of you are prayerless, Christless, graceless? What will become of you? Your case is all the more to be lamented because you are without excuse! Then, moreover, what little light they did have, they resisted. When they were forced to see, it was only for a moment that they would be instructed—and then they shut their eyes, again. “When He slew them, then they sought Him: and they returned and enquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their Rock and the high God their redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter Him with their mouth and they lied to Him with their tongues.”

When He sent fiery serpents among them, or otherwise smote them, then they perceived His Presence for a while, but soon they turned back and dealt deceitfully. They took up the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of their God, Remphan, and worshipped engraved images in secret in their tents so that they provoked the Lord to jealousy. And He was incensed against them. They loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil! They did not actually cry like Pharaoh, “Who is Jehovah that I should obey His voice?” but in their hearts they meant it. They lusted after the abominable rites of Baalpeor and fell into filthiness in the days of Balaam, although God, Himself, dwelt among them in all His matchless purity and holiness!

Now, this is the gravest crime of all—to leave the holy God for impure idolatries! Oh sinners that love not God, is it not because you love that which is evil? Oh, you that never see Him or seek after Him, is not the cause of your blindness to be found in your love of sin? “He that does evil hates the light.” This willfulness of yours; this desperate bent of your hearts towards evil—how will you answer for it? Our fear for you is great— we are afraid that you will perish through your hardness of heart! Oh that you had a desire towards God! Oh that you willed to turn to Jesus! Oh that His Grace would cure you of your stiff-necked rebellion! Jesus stands here this morning and He cries, “How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not.” He waits to be gracious! Do you doubt this?

He has given you all manner of good things. Do you think He would have refused you eyes to see and a heart to feel if these had been sought? “He gives liberally and upbraids not.” If we, being evil, know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more will our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him? But no—men choose their own delusions! They abide in their darling sins! They perish by suicide! Like Saul, every unbeliever falls upon his own sword. “Israel, you have destroyed yourself.” Yet you delight in your destruction and you enter into league with that which devours you. You are a prisoner, but you hug your chains! You see not, for you willfully blow out the candle! You hear not, for you cover your own ears—you are spiritually dead—but you have chosen corruption!

By prejudice, pride and hardness of heart you have shut out yourself from love. Ah me, that such folly as this should be continued by any who frequent this house of prayer! Can it be possible that you are so foolish? Blessed be the Lord, many of you have eyes to see and ears to hear! Let all such adore the Sovereign Grace which has given these gifts to them. Let them worship the love which has sweetly conquered their stubborn will, leading their captivity captive, and giving them to feel and know and taste of spiritual things! Not to you be the glory, but to the Lord alone! To those who know not the Lord, there is shame and confusion. But to those who have known Him, there is no self-glorification, for, as the wise man says, “The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord has made even both of them.” To be blind of heart is our sin—but to be made to see is the gift of Grace! Our misery is our own work, but our salvation is of the Lord!

III. I conclude by noticing what was THE MOURNFUL RESULT of these people being so highly favored and privileged and yet not seeing nor discerning their God. The result was, first, that they missed a happy portion. I can hardly imagine how happy the children of Israel might have been. They left Egypt with a high hand and an outstretched arm. Their ears were hung with jewels and their purses were filled with riches, while around them manna dropped from Heaven and cool streams flowed at their side! They might have made a quick march to the promised land and at once entered their rest, for their God who had sent the hornet before them would soon have driven out their adversaries! “How should one have chased a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.”

In the land of promise they would have dwelt securely and God would have given them rest. Then would the heavens have heard the earth and the earth would have yielded such harvests that one year in seven they would have had no need either to sow or reap, but would have spent their whole time in praising God! And then a jubilee would have come every seventh seven, in which, with high-sounding cymbals they would magnify the Most High! They would have known no invading enemy and felt neither blast, nor blight, nor mildew! In fact, they would have been the happiest nation under Heaven—“He should have fed them, also, with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied you.”

They flung all this to the side— they would not have God—and so they could not have prosperity. They walked contrary to Him and He walked contrary to them. They would not obey Him and, therefore, His anger smoked against them. Think, moreover, what a glorious destiny they threw aside. Had they been equal to the occasion, by God’s Grace they might have been a nation of kings and priests! They might have been the Lord’s missionaries to all lands; the light-bearers to all peoples! Every arrangement was made to enable them to live a godly, holy, joyous, sanctified life. They ate angels’ food and they might have lived angels’ lives, acting as heralds, to tell others what wonders God had worked for them.

Alas, they could not see the moral grandeur of so high a calling and they thought more of eating flesh than of honoring the Lord and teaching His Law. I would like to say to some of you that God has been setting before you an open door and yet you have not perceived Him, nor loved Him. He would make saints of you and you are content to be money-grubbers. You have judged yourselves unworthy of the prize which He has set before you! You do not know what a happy lot you have declined. Just lately you were a young man—you are getting to middle life now—and you do not know what golden opportunities you have wasted! As Cleopatra melted pearls and swallowed them as a drink, so have you drunk down the possibilities of Glory as if they were common things! What might not God have done with some of you if your hearts had been given to Him years ago! By this time you might have achieved a lifework glorious to God, honorable to yourself and happy to your friends.

The stuff is in you which might have been molded into a minister, a missionary, a soul-winner—and you might have been among the happiest and best of men! Nor does the waste end with yourself! You are causing damage to many others. Your children are growing up to follow your follies, wasting their lives as you have squandered yours. Oh, had you yielded to Jesus years ago your sons might have been your honor and comfort—and your daughters your joy and delight! You have flung away such opportunities as could not be bought for gold! Thus says the Lord, “Oh that My people had hearkened unto Me, and Israel had walked in My ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies and turned My hand against their adversaries. The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto Him: but their time should have endured forever.” Happy are God’s people, but wretched are they who, being placed where they could see God’s hand, yet will not see it—placed where they could hear God’s voice, yet will not hear it, but refuse the Kingdom of Heaven which has come so near unto them.

Another result was that while they missed so high a position, they went on sinning. As they did not learn the lesson God was teaching them, namely, that He was God and that to serve Him was their joy and their prosperity, they went from one evil to another, provoking the Lord to jealousy. From repining and murmuring they went on to rebelling. “Let us make a captain,” they said, “and let us return to Egypt.” From being idolatrous they became lascivious and fell into the sin of uncleanness with the women of Moab. Often they were actual idolaters and always they were unstable of heart. So they went from one sin to another because they had not a heart to perceive, nor ears to hear their God. Therefore they frequently suffered.

A plague broke out one time and a fire at another. At one time they were visited with fever and another time the earth opened beneath them. One day the Amalekites smote them. Another day fiery serpents leaped up from the sand and they died by the thousands, being poisoned by their bites. They suffered much and often—and in all their trials they did but reap what they had sown. A man does not know what he is doing when he sins. We tell our naughty children that we have rods in pickle for them— and this is assuredly the case with the great Father who has chastisement laid up for the people who willfully revolt from Him! He brings forth sorrow and wrath for those who harden their hearts and continue in their iniquities. Ah, my Hearers, how many of you are, this day, reaping what your own hands have sown!

At last this evil ended terribly. The Lord lifted His hand to Heaven and swore that the rebellious generation should not enter into His rest—and they began to die by wholesale till Moses cried, “We are consumed by Your anger and by Your wrath are we troubled.” Not one of the men that came out of Egypt, save only Joshua and Caleb, reached the promised land. Whenever they pitched their tents at eventide, the first thing was to celebrate the funerals of the day. The tribes marched on and on—at the end of the march they stumbled into their graves till the whole of that peninsula in which they had to wander up and down for 40 years became one vast cemetery where the thousands of Israel were buried! Who slew all these? Not by the sword of the enemy nor by the arrow of the foe were they destroyed—but sin laid them in heaps as in the day of battle.

They could not enter in because of their unbelief. The land that flowed with milk and honey lay smiling in the calm sunlight on the other side of Jordan, but they could not enter in because they had no heart to perceive, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear the Lord and His Word. And this is the main misery of your condition, O you careless ones, that you will not be able to enter into God’s rest either here or hereafter! This is the misery of it to me—that I must set Christ before some of you and you will never have Him—that I must extol His atoning blood, but you will refuse to be washed in it! That I mast go on declaring my Lord’s message as long as this tongue can move—bidding you believe in Jesus Christ and find eternal life—but still, of some of you I shall always have to say, “The Lord has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this day.”

Alas, your eyes will be opened one day, in another sense. “The rich man saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom.” Who was that? That was a Jew of the kind I have described who had everything in this life, being clothed in purple and faring sumptuously every day! But he had no heart to perceive nor eyes to see. “In Hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.” Oh, my Hearers, Hell’s torments will open your eyes! Will you wait till then? O you ungodly ones, you will think, then! I pray God you may have sense enough to think now, while thinking will be of use to you. If there is a Heaven, seek it! If there is a Hell, escape it! If there is a God, love Him! If there is a Christ, trust Him! If there is sin, seek to be washed from it! If there is pardon, rest not till you have it! Oh do not mock your Savior! Do not make a game of eternal realities! Be in earnest about this and in earnest at once!

If you must play the fool, trifle with something less precious than your souls! Procure toys less expensive than your own immortal destinies! Oh, that God would bless this word to you careless ones, that you may feel at once that you do not feel as you should and begin to cry to God to give you feeling! Oh, that you may see that you do not see and begin to cry, “Lord, open my eyes!” Oh, that you may hear, this morning, a voice which shall make you feel that you do not hear as you ought to hear and, therefore, must always cry to God to give you hearing! Remember that spiritual life is only from God. It is His gift and it is not bestowed according to merit, but is given by pure Grace to the unworthy. Seek it, and you shall have it, for so it is written, “He that asks, receives; he that seeks, finds, and to him that knocks it shall be opened.”

Will your ears again refuse the language of His Grace? Will you still go to your farm and to your merchandise, to your labor and to your amusement, and reject the voice that calls you to Glory and immortality? Will you trample upon the bleeding love of Jesus? Oh, then, what shall I do and to whom shall I turn? I must go back to my Master, mourning with Isaiah, “Who has believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” Lord, reveal Your arm and then they will believe the report! Amen and Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Deuteronomy 29.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—917, 461, 100 (V. 2). Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
Sermon #1967 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PLAIN GOSPEL FOR PLAIN PEOPLE  
NO. 1967

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 12, 1887, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“For this commandment which I command you this day, it is not hidden from you, neither is it far off. It is not in Heaven, that you should say, Who shall go up for us to Heaven and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, Who shall go over the sea for us and bring  
it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? But the Word is very near unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it.” Deuteronomy 30:11-14.**

OUR Lord Jesus Christ, in John’s Gospel, in the 46th verse of the fifth chapter, says, “Moses wrote of Me.” Hence we may safely interpret much that Moses said, not only of the Law, but also of the Gospel. Indeed, the Law itself was given primarily to drive men to the Gospel. It was meant to show them the impossibility of salvation by their own works and so to shut them up to a salvation which is available even for sinners. The types of sacrifice and purification pointed to the method of pardon for the guilty by faith and acceptance for sinners by a righteousness not their own. This is certainly one of the passages in which Moses wrote of the Savior yet to come.

We are not, however, left to conjecture this, for the Apostle Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has quoted this passage in the 10th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. He has given us a sort of paraphrase of it, not quoting it with verbal exactness, but giving its sense—and then inserting his own interpretation of that sense—which interpretation, seeing that he spoke under the direct influence of the Spirit of God, may be accepted as decisive. The Spirit of God best knew what He meant by the Words which He spoke by Moses. Even if Moses, himself, may not altogether have meant the same, the Spirit’s own meaning must stand. I believe, however, that Moses did intend that which Paul attributes to him and that he saw in the whole Revelation of God under the ancient dispensation, the spirit, the essential spirit of the Gospel which was more fully declared to us by our Lord Jesus Christ. In this instance he was not speaking of the Law as given upon Sinai, if we view it as a Covenant of Works. I showed you this by reading the first verse of the 29th chapter which is the preface to the passage now before us. There we read, “These are the words of the Covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the Covenant which He made with them in Horeb.” We must understand Moses to be speaking, now, of God’s way of salvation as it is set forth in the types, sacrifices and ordinances of the Mosaic dispensation—which Paul calls, “the righteousness of faith.” Paul interprets him as speaking of the Gospel, itself, and using these remarkable words concerning salvation by Grace!

What is meant by these words is this—that the way of salvation is plain and clear—it is not concealed among the mysteries of Heaven. “It is not in Heaven, that you should say, Who shall go up for us to Heaven and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it?” Neither is it wrapped up among the profundities of deep, unrevealed secrecy. “Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, Who shall go over the sea for us and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it?” But the way of salvation is brought home to us, given to us in a handy form and laid within grasp of our understanding—it is spoken to us in human language and brought within the compass of human emotions! We can speak it with our mouths and enjoy it with our hearts. It is a household treasure, not a foreign rarity! It is not so remote from us that only they can know it who travel far to make discoveries. Neither is it so sublimely difficult that only they can grasp it who have soared to Heaven and ransacked the secrets of the Book sealed with seven seals. It is brought to our doors like the manna and flows at our feet like the water from the Rock. It is, as Moses says, “very near to us.” Yes, very near to each one who hears the Gospel, for Moses puts it in the singular—“It is very near unto you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.”

I. And so I begin my discourse, this morning, with this first head—THE WAY OF SALVATION IS PLAIN AND SIMPLE. You have neither to look skyward nor seaward to find it—here it is before you—as near as your tongue, inseparable from you as your heart! You have neither to rise to the sublime, nor sink to the profound—it lies before you an open secret. As says Moses in the last verse of the previous chapter—“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever.”

I think we might have expected this if we consider the Nature of God who has made this wonderful Revelation. When God speaks to a man with a view to his salvation, it is but natural that in His wisdom He should so speak as to be understood! It is not wisdom which leads teachers to become obscure—if they teach at all, they should adapt themselves to the disciple’s capacity. No doubt some men have obtained a reputation for wisdom because they have not been understood, but this was fictitious and unworthy of true men. If they had possessed the highest wisdom, they would have aimed at making matters clear when their objective was to instruct. As a general rule, when a speaker is not clear to his hearers it is because the thought is not clear to himself. This can never be supposed of Him who knows all things and sees all things as they are. The only wise God abounds to us in all wisdom and prudence in His manner of imparting to us the knowledge of His will! Teaching, He does teach and explaining, He does clearly explain. There may be and there is, a sinful dullness in the minds of sinful men, but there is no such obscurity in the Revelation, itself, as to excuse men for this blindness. God, who is infinitely wise, would not give to us a Revelation upon the vital point of salvation and then leave it so much in the dark that it was impossible for common minds to comprehend it if they desired to do so! God adapts means to ends and does not allow men to miss Heaven from lack of plainness on His part!

We expect a plain and simple Revelation because God has made a Revelation perfectly adapted for its end, upon which no improvement can be made. You must have noticed that when an invention first comes before the public eye, it is almost always complicated. And the reason for this lies in the fact that it is, as yet, in its infancy. As the invention is improved, it is simplified. Almost every alteration in a piece of machinery which goes towards its perfecting—goes, also, towards making it more simple and, at the last, when the invention is complete, it is singularly simple. That which comes from the mind of God, being perfect, goes directly towards its desired end! I admit that certain parts of the Divine Revelation are hard to be understood, but these are intended for our education, that we may exercise our minds and thoughts and may, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, thereby grow.

But in the matter of salvation, where the life or death of a soul is concerned, it is necessary that the vision should be plain and our wise and gracious Lord has condescended to that necessity. In all that concerns repentance, faith and the vital matters of pardon and justification, there is no obscurity, but all is plain as a pikestaff! He that runs may read—and he that reads may run.

You might have expected this from God because of His gracious condescension. When He deigns to speak with a trembling seeker, it is not after the manner of the incomprehensible doctor, but after the manner of a father with his child, desirous that his child should at once know his father’s mind. He makes the way so plain that the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein! He breaks down His great thoughts to our narrow capacities—He has compassion on the ignorant and He becomes the Teacher of babes. Truly the knowledge which the Lord our God imparts to us is, in itself, sublime, but His manner of teaching is gentle, for He comes with precept upon precept and line upon line, here a little and there a little. He does not come down to us half-way, but He stoops to men of low estate and while He hides these things from the wise and prudent, He reveals them unto babes. “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.”

Remember, my Brothers and Sisters, that our great Lord always takes care that there shall be no provision made for the pride of men. The pride of intellect He hates as much as any other pride. No flesh shall glory in His Presence. He takes the proud in their own craftiness, while He lifts up the humble and the meek. Therefore, we may expect that He will speak in terms that shall be open to shepherds and fishermen, whom others call unlearned and ignorant men, lest the wise men of this world should exalt themselves over the humbler sort. It is no design of the Lord God Almighty that a class of self-constituted superior persons should monopolize the blessings of the Gospel through the Truths of Revelation being wrapt up in learned terms which the vulgar cannot understand!

The various systems of idolatry endeavored to surround their false teaching with a mystic secrecy, but the Word of our God is a revealer of things hidden from the foundation of the earth. We may be sure that when God deals with men, He will do nothing which shall cause human wisdom to boast itself. None shall glory that, after all, their culture was the one thing necessary to make the Gospel of God effectual. Philosophy shall not pitch its tent in Immanuel’s land and cry, “I am, and there is none beside me!” It is after the manner of God, who bows down to the humble and the contrite, that He should make His salvation the joy of the lowly. “Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings have You ordained strength because of Your enemies.” Those who know the living God do not wonder as they read such words as these—“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, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

We might also expect simplicity when we remember the design of the plan of salvation. God aims distinctly by the Gospel at the salvation of men. He bids us preach the Gospel to every creature. It has need to be a simple Gospel if it is to be preached to every creature! I thank God with all my heart that the sage is here put on a level with the child, for the Gospel must be received by him as a little child receives it! If the Grace of God is given to the least educated person in yonder village, he is as well able to receive the Gospel as the most profound scholar in the university. Would any of you wish to have it otherwise? Could you be so inhuman? Must the Gospel also be enclosed for an aristocracy? Must the cultured few be gratified at the expense of the ruin of the masses? God forbid! But it must be so unless the saving doctrine of the Gospel can be perceived by the untutored many. Every generous heart delights to think that “the poor have the Gospel preached unto them.”

Brothers and Sisters, to save the many, the Truth of God must be very simple and easy to be understood, for the many are busy with necessary labor. From morning to night their hands are going to earn the bread that perishes. Their thoughts must largely be taken up with their daily toil. I grant you that many are too much engrossed with the poor cares of common life, but still, to a large extent they will, by necessary occupations, be shut out from close study and steady thought—so they must have a salvation which can be grasped at once—and held without the strain of perpetual debate. If men cannot be saved without weeks and months of careful study, they will certainly be lost! As good have no salvation as one which is beyond ordinary comprehension! Our working men need a Gospel which can be heard and thought upon while they earn their daily bread. It should be clear as the sun and simple as A B C that they may see it and then hold it in their memories. Give me a Gospel which can be written in a line of a boy’s copy book, or worked on a girl’s sampler—a Gospel which the humblest cottager may learn, love and live upon!

The mass of our fellow men are not only very busy, but from their poverty and other surroundings they never will attain to any high degree of education. We are thankful for all that is done by School Boards and other agencies, but these operate for the present world rather than for eternal and spiritual things. Men may learn all that books can teach them and not be a jot nearer the knowledge of heavenly Truths of God. Heavenly knowledge is of another sort and is open to those who gain no certificates and pass no standards. Those who truly know their Bibles and find, therein, the appointed Savior, have not reached that point by the learning of the schools! Yet we may say of each one of them, “Blessed are you; for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but My Father which is in Heaven.” The Word of Life is meant for men as sinners—not for men as philosophers—and, therefore, the message is made plain and clear.

Moreover, we might expect the Gospel to be very plain because of the many feeble minds which otherwise would be unable to receive it. Remember the children. How glad we are that our boys and girls can know and receive the Savior who said, “Suffer little children to come unto Me and forbid them not”! If, in order to their salvation, our children must all be learned divines. If they must understand the discussions of our monthly and fortnightly reviews before they can know the Lord, they are, indeed, in an evil case. Then might we close our Sunday schools, being convinced that the children must perish, or at least must wait until they reach a riper age! Would you have it so? O Sirs, I am sure you would not! Rather would you help to gather in the lambs.

Remember, also, that many return to feebleness of mind in their old age. How many who displayed considerable strength of intellect in middle life find their faculties failing them as their years multiply! We need a Gospel which an old man can grasp when sight and hearing are failing him, when the memory is weakened and the judgment is enfeebled. We need a Gospel which can be laid hold upon in second childhood, otherwise our venerable sires will miss the staff on which they have leaned so long— and other aged persons who have reached the 11th hour without faith in Jesus must be abandoned in despair! Would you have it so? There is not one among us that would so desire it!

Remember, once more, the many feeble intellects which are to be found on all hands—not imbecile, but still not intellectual. Not without thought and reason, but yet with an exceedingly narrow range of understanding. Shall these be shut out by a complicated, philosophical Gospel? We cannot think so! Rather do we bear testimony that we have known many persons strong in faith, giving glory to God and well instructed in Divine doctrine, although in the judgment of boastful wits they have been utterly despised! The Gospel of our salvation saves the feeble-minded as well as the clever! It reaches the slow and dull as well as the quick and bright. Is it not well it should be so? The Lord has given a Gospel which he may grasp who can scarcely grasp anything else! He has put before us a way of salvation in which trembling feet may safely tread and find no cause of stumbling! Our Gospel needs not that we soar upon wings of imagination up to the Heaven of sublimity, nor dive with profound research into the unfathomable sea of mystery! The Lord has brought it near us, put it into our mouths and laid it near our hearts that we who are of the common sort may take it to ourselves and enjoy its blessings.

What do you think, my Friends, would become of the dying if the Gospel were intricate and complex? How would even the saints derive consolation in death from a labyrinth of mysteries? We are called, at times, to visit persons who are in their last hours—passing to judgment without God and without hope. It is a sorrowful business. It is always a cause of trembling with us, when we have to deal with the impenitent upon the borders of the eternal world. But we would never visit another sick bed if we had not a Gospel to take to such—a Gospel which can be made plain even to those whose minds are bewildered amid the shadows of the grave! We need a Gospel which a man may receive as he takes a draught of medicine, or, better still, as he takes a cup of cold water from the nurse at his bedside. We should expect that it should be very simple, therefore, and so we find it, from the design of the Gospel, to save the many and to save, even, the least intelligent of men!

Furthermore, dear Friends, we see that it is so, if we look at its results. “For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are.” God’s chosen are usually a people of honest and candid mind who are willing to believe rather than to dispute. The Holy Spirit has opened their hearts—He has not made them subtle and quibbling. He has not put them upon the key of perpetual doubting and coming at nothing, but He has tuned them to another note, namely, to incline their hearts and come unto the Lord Jesus and hear that their souls may live! Hence it follows that the mass of those who follow the Lord Jesus are not anxious to be numbered with the wise and the philosophical! They are content, rather, to be believers in Revelation than proficient in speculation. To us, the knowledge of Christ Crucified is the most excellent of the sciences, and the doctrine of the Cross is the loftiest of all philosophies! We had rather receive the Word of our Lord as little children than be held in repute as “men of thought.”

You shall find that those who have preached the Gospel with the most acceptance, whatever their natural gifts and abilities, have almost always been persons who have preferred to use great plainness of speech. They have felt the Gospel to be, in itself, so beautiful that to adorn it with meretricious ornament would be to dishonor it. They could say with Paul, “If our Gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost.” “We use great plainness of speech.” We are not as Moses, who put a veil over his face. True servants of God take away every veil that they can and labor to set forth Christ evidently crucified among the people. The more they have done this, the more has God been pleased to acknowledge their message to the conversion of souls.

But, Beloved, I need not argue from what we expect or see. I bid you look to the Revelation itself and see if it is not near unto us. Even in the days of Moses, how plain some things were! It must have been plain to every Israelite that man is a sinner, otherwise why the sacrifice, why the purging and the cleansings? The whole Levitical economy proclaimed aloud that man has sinned—all the Ten Commandments thundered out this Truth of God! They could not avoid knowing it. It was also plain that salvation is by sacrifice. Not a day passed without its morning and evening lambs. All the year round there were special sacrifices by which the doctrine of Atonement by blood was clearly declared. It was written clear as a sunbeam, “without shedding of blood there is no remission.” Plain enough, also, was the doctrine of faith, for each bringer of a sacrifice laid his hand upon the victim, confessing his sin and, by that act, he transferred his sin to the offering. Thus faith was typically described as that act by which we accept the Propitiation prepared of God and recognize the God-given Substitute.

It was also clear to every Israelite that this cleansing was not the effect of the typical sacrifices themselves, otherwise they would not have been repeated year by year and day by day, for as Paul well puts it, the conscience being once purged, there would be no necessity for further sacrifice. The remembrance of sin was made over and over again to let Israel know that the visible sacrifices pointed to the real way of cleansing and were meant to set forth that blessed Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. In many ways the Jew was put off from resting in forms and ceremonies and was directed to the inner truth, the spiritual substance, which is Christ. Equally clear it must have been to every Israelite that the faith which brings the benefit of the great sacrifice is a practical and operative faith which affects the life and character. Continually were they exhorted to serve the Lord with their whole heart. They were exhorted to holiness and warned against transgression and taught to render hearty obedience to the Commandments of the Lord. So that, dim as the dispensation may be considered to have been as compared with the Gospel day, yet actually and positively it was sufficiently clear. Even then “the Word was near” to them, “in their mouth and in their heart.”

If I may say thus much of the Mosaic dispensation, I may boldly assert that in the Gospel of Christ the Truth of God is now made more abundantly manifest. Moses brought the moonlight, but in Jesus the sun has risen and we rejoice in His meridian beams! Brothers and Sisters, blessed are our eyes that we see and our ears that we hear things which Prophets and kings desired in vain to see and hear! Now our Lord speaks plainly and uses no proverb. In our streets we hear the Gospel and have no need to ride the sky or scour the sea to find it! This day we hear every man in his own tongue wherein was born the wonderful works of God!

II. Secondly, THE WORD HAS COME VERY NEAR TO US. I want your earnest attention to this point. I beg those of you who are unconverted to hear with attention. To us all, the Gospel has come very near—to the inhabitants of these favored isles it is emphatically so. “The Word is very near unto you, in your mouth.” It is a thing which you can speak of; you have talked about it; you still talk of it. It is “familiar in your mouths as household words.” Most of you are able to speak it to others, for you learned it in your Catechisms, you repeated it to your Sunday school teachers. You sing it in your hymns; you read it in books, tracts and pamphlets and you write it in letters to your friends. I am glad that you have it upon your tongues—the more it is so, the better—but how near has it come? Oh, that your tongue may also be able to say, “I believe it. I accept Jesus as my Savior. I avow my faith before men!” Then will it be still nearer. Oh, that God the Holy Spirit may graciously lead you to do so!

The Word of Life is not a thing unknowable and, consequently, unspeakable—it is a thing that can be spoken of by tongues like ours when we sit in the house or walk by the way. The great thought of God has come very near to us when it can be expressed in the speech of men. I dare humbly, but boldly, to speak of my own ministry and of you as my hearers, that the Word of God comes very near to you from this pulpit, for I have always aimed at the utmost plainness of speech and directness of address. There is not lack of plain speaking. The word is on your tongue.

Moses also added, “and in your heart.” By the heart, with the Hebrews, is not meant the affections, but the inward parts, including the understanding. My dear Hearers, you can understand the Gospel! That whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved, is not a dark saying. Salvation by Grace through faith is a doctrine as plain as the nose on your face! That Jesus Christ gave Himself to die in the place of men, that whoever believes in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life, is a thing to be understood of the least educated under Heaven. Moreover, the doctrines of the Gospel are such that our inward nature bears witness to the truth of them. When we preach that men are sinners, your conscience says, “That is true.” When we declare that there is salvation by sacrifice, your understanding agrees that this is a gracious mode by which God is just and the Justifier of him that believes.

Even if you are not saved by it, you cannot help feeling that it is a system worthy of God, that He should save through the gift of His onlybegotten Son as a Sacrifice for sin. If you believe it, this Gospel will appear so plainly true that every part of your nature will attest it. Many of us have accepted this way of salvation—we now love it and delight in it—and to us it seems the most simple and, at the same time, the most sublime system that could be conceived of. Our heart drinks it in as Gideon’s fleece drank in the dew! Our souls live on it and in it as the fish lives in the sea. We rejoice in the Gospel as the flowers smile in the sun! How glad we are that we have not a Gospel wrapped up in hieroglyphics, or entombed in cold metaphysics! It has entered our hearts! It dwells within us and has become our bosom’s Lord.

There are no difficulties and obscurities about the Gospel except such as we, ourselves, create. What we think to be its darkness is really our blindness. If you do not believe the Gospel, why is it that you do not believe it? It is supported by the best of evidence and it is, in itself, evidently true. The reason for your unbelief lies partly in the natural tendency of the human heart towards legalism. Human nature cannot believe in Free Grace. It is accustomed to buying and selling and, therefore, it must bring a price in its hand—to have everything for nothing seems out of the question! The notion of a wage to be earned is natural enough, but that eternal life is the gift of God is not so readily perceived! Yet so it is. I have heard that a missionary trying to make an Oriental understand salvation by Grace set it out in many ways to him and failed until, at last, he cried, “Salvation is a backsheesh of the Almighty.” Then the Eastern caught the idea. Eternal life is the free gift of God which He bestows on men not because of anything in them, or anything that they have done, or felt, or promised, but because of His own infinite bounty and the delight which He has in showing mercy! You cannot get the idea of Grace into a natural man’s head—it requires a Divine surgical operation to open a way for this Truth of God into our mercenary minds. Yes, it requires that we be made anew before we will see it! That God freely forgives and that He loves men solely and only because He is Love, is a thought divinely simple, but our selfish prejudices refuse to accept it.

In many instances it is pride that makes the Gospel appear so difficult. You cannot think that Jesus saves you and that all you have to do is to accept His finished salvation. Like Naaman, you would prefer to do some great thing. You want to be something, do you not? Human nature craves to have a little hand in salvation—to feel something, to groan a certain time, or despair to a certain length—but when the Gospel comes with the one message, “Believe and live,” pride will not consent to be saved on such pauperizing terms! Yet so it is. Accept it and you have it! Stretch out your hand and take what God most freely gives! The Gospel, itself is plain enough to a heart humbled by Grace. When the scales of pride are removed from the eyes, we see well enough. Alas for the unbelief which grows out of this pride and out of our natural enmity against God! Man will believe anybody but his God. Any lie in the newspaper has legs with which to run round the world—but a grand Truth of God that leaps from the lips of Jehovah, Himself, is made to limp in the presence of ungodly men. Unregenerate men cannot and will not believe their God!

This is also caused by the love of sin. Those who do not wish to give up their favorite sins pretend the Gospel is very difficult to understand, or quite impossible to accept—and so they excuse themselves for going on in their iniquity. After all, does any man really feel that it is right to throw the blame of his unbelief upon God? Do you dare to make the Gospel the cause of your ruin? Do you ask pity for yourself, as if you could not help being an enemy to God and a rejecter of His way of mercy? Do you murmur that you cannot see? Who has closed your eyes? There are none so blind as those who will not see—your blindness is willful. You do not understand—do you wish to understand? Nothing is so incomprehensible as that which we do not want to comprehend! If you do not desire to be reconciled to God, is it amazing that you dream that God is unwilling to be reconciled to you? O Soul, I beseech you, do not impute your damnation to your God who, in infinite goodness, has brought His Word so very near to you! Salvation is of the Lord, but damnation is only of man!

There I leave the matter. I can bring you to the water, but I cannot make you drink. May God the Holy Spirit apply to your hearts and consciences the important Truth of God that, whether you enter it or not, “the Kingdom of God has come near unto you!” O Lord, grant that none of these, my Hearers, may put from them Your Word and count themselves unworthy of eternal life!

III. I close with this, that THE DESIGN OF THIS SIMPLICITY AND NEARNESS OF THE GOSPEL IS THAT WE SHOULD RECEIVE IT. Observe how the text expressly words it—“The Word is very near unto you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.” “That you may do it.” You, who have your Bibles open, will note that the 12th verse finishes—“That we may hear it and do it.” The 13th verse also says, “That we may hear it and do it.” That is twice; but when it comes to the third time, in the 14th verse, it is not, “That we may hear it and do it,” but, “That we may do it.” You have had enough of hearing, some of you—you have heard until your ears must almost ache with hearing! You begin now to say, “It is the old story, we are always hearing that and nothing else.” Will you not go a step further and be no longer hearers only? “Now, then, do it.”

The Gospel is not sent to men to gratify their curiosity by letting them see how other people get to Heaven. Christ did not come to amuse us, but to redeem us! His Word is not written for our astonishment, but, “these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and, that believing, you may have life through His name.” The Gospel always has a present, urgent, practical errand. It says to each man, “I have a message from God unto you.” It cries, “Today!” and warns men not to harden their hearts.

Observe, again, how the text puts its last address in the singular. You can hear it in the plural—“That we may hear it and do it”—but the actual doing is always in the singular—“That you may do it.” I cannot come round to everybody in the Tabernacle and take a seat by your side for a minute. But I wish I could do so and put my hand on every unconverted person and say, “The Word is very near unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart that you may do it.”

As the Word of the Lord is not sent to gratify curiosity, so it is also not sent to coolly inform you of a fact which you may lay by on the shelf for future use. God does not send you an anchor to hang up in your boathouse, but, as you are already at sea, he puts the anchor on board for present use. The Gospel is sent us as manna for today, to be eaten at once. It is to be our spending money as well as our treasure!

Oh, my Hearer, as you are a dying man, I charge you to accept at once the present salvation, so that you may at once do what the Word of God requires of you!

It is not even sent to you merely to make you orthodox in opinion as to religious matters, although many persons seem to think that this is the one thing necessary. Remember, that Hell for the orthodox will be quite as horrible as eternal ruin for the heterodox. It will be a dreadful thing to go to Hell with a sound head and a rotten heart! Alas, I fear that some of you will only increase your own misery as you increase your knowledge of the Truth of God because you do not practice what you know! God save us from dead knowledge and give us the gracious action which is the fruit of knowing—“That you may do it!”

Oh, that I could forego language, now, and that my heart could speak in some mysterious inward fashion to your hearts! Oh, that the Holy Spirit would now incline each of you to serious personal attention to this matter! Oh, my Hearer, you have come here to listen to me, “that you may do it!” Oh, that it may be done!

What is to be done? There are two things to be done. First, that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior. Take Him to be your Sacrifice—trust Him wholly and alone from this time forth as your Ransom from sin. Take Him to be your Lord as well as your Savior! Yield yourself up to Him as your Prophet, Priest and King. Let Jesus be your All in All and be you wholly His. The second thing is that you confess your Lord with your mouth. Avow yourself to be a Believer in Jesus and a follower of Him. Do this in His own way, for He has said, “He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved.” But let your confession be sincere—do not lie to the Lord! Confess that you are His follower because you are, indeed so and, from now on, all your life, bear His Cross and follow Him. This is what you are to do—yield yourself up to Him whom God has appointed to save His people from their sins.

“But,” says one, “I thought that there was a certain experience.” Indeed there is an experience, but all true experience ends in this—in leading the heart to accept Christ as its Savior. “But I thought,” says another, “that you would dwell at length upon the work of the Holy Spirit.” I rejoice in that work and will tell you a great deal about it at another time—but the chief work of the Holy Spirit is to strip you of yourself and bring you to receive that simple Word of God which is the subject of this morning’s discourse. “Well,” says one, “I grant you that it is simple! I think it is even too simple.” I know it! I know it! And because it is so simple, you, therefore, kick against it. What folly! Therefore you need the Holy Spirit to bring you to accept it. Sometimes you quarrel because it is too hard and next because it is too easy. This shows how hard and stubborn a thing is the will of man! Almighty Grace is required to bring you to accept your own salvation! To lead you to take Christ to be your Savior needs a miracle of Grace! Let Him save you, that is all—but this is too much for our proud selfconfidence. Oh, strange resistance, proving the deep depravity of man’s nature, that he will not yield even to this!

Again I say, the difficulty is not in the Gospel, but in the man, whose evil heart will not receive the choicest gift of Heaven! If you are willing to have Christ, Christ is yours! The fact that you are willing to receive Him proves that He has come to you. Believe that He is yours and be at peace. If you will now bow before the Christ of God and take Him to be your Savior, you are saved! The simple act of trusting Jesus has brought your justification—and your open confession of Him in His own appointed way shall bring you a fuller realization of salvation. By coming out on the Lord’s side, you shall gather strength to overcome the sins which now beset you and you shall be helped to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling because God is working in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure.

I will preach the Gospel once more and I have done. The Apostle Paul, thinking of what Moses said about going up to the sky or down to the sea to find the sacred secret, says in effect, “That is right, Moses. There was a necessity for someone to come down and an equal necessity for someone to go up—but that necessity exists no longer.” The whole Gospel lies in this—there was One in Heaven at the right hand of the Father, very God of very God and, in order to save you, poor lost and ruined sinner, this adorable Son of God came down, down, down to the manger, to the Cross, to the grave, to the lowest parts of the earth—and down in grief, in rejection, in agony, in death. Because He came under the weight and curse of sin, He came down, indeed! Because Jesus has come down, thus, and borne the punishment of sin, he that believes in Him is justified. By that coming down of the Lord from Heaven, the sinner’s sin is put away and the transgression of the Believer is forgiven. Do you believe this? Do you believe that Jesus bore your sins in His own body on the tree? Will you trust to that fact? YOU ARE SAVED! Doubt it not!

So far this clears you of sin. But it was necessary that we should not merely be washed from sin—for that would leave us naked—but that we should be clothed with righteousness. To that end our Lord Jesus rose again and so came up from the depth. When our Redeemer had finished His going down and so had made an end of sin, He had yet to bring in everlasting righteousness—and so He returned by the way which He went. He rose from the tomb! He rose from Olivet! He rose until a cloud received Him out of His Apostles’ sight! He rose through the upper regions of the air! He rose to the pearl gate! He rose to the Throne of God where He sits as One who has accomplished His service, expecting until His enemies are made His footstool! His Resurrection has brought to light our righteousness and has covered us with it, so that, at this moment, every man that believes in a risen Savior is robed in the royal robes of the righteousness of God! “If you believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.” O Brothers and Sisters, live because Jesus lives, rise because He has risen, sit in Heaven because He sits in Heaven!

“He that believes is justified.” So says the Scripture. Do you see this? I believe it, I believe it with my whole heart and, therefore, I confess it before this multitude with my mouth and I am saved! Will you believe and confess it? Oh, that the blessed Spirit may bring you to this, for this is the entrance into the way of eternal life! This is the dawn of a day which shall never die down into darkness! May the blessed Spirit bring you to this faith and this confession, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Deuteronomy 30 Romans 10:4-10.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—916, 488, 495.

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RELIGION—REALITY!  
NO. 457

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 22, 1862, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“For it not a vain thing for you, because it is your life.” Deuteronomy 31:47.**

IT appears from this closing remark of Moses that there were men in his time who thought religion to be vain, although, under the system which then existed, there were many plain proofs of its usefulness—for they who served God in those days prospered, and national advantages always followed national obedience to God. Under the theocratic government of the Israelites in the wilderness, and in their early history when established in Canaan, their offenses against God’s Law brought upon them famine, plague, or the scourge of marauding hosts—while repentance, and a return to allegiance always brought them a deliverer and a restoration of peace and plenty.

They had visibly before their eyes proofs that God did reward virtue. And yet, notwithstanding this, there were some so besotted against God, that they said, “It is a vain thing to serve the Lord.” Do you wonder, therefore, that there should be many such under the Gospel, today? It would, indeed, be marvelous if there were not many more, for the Gospel is a far more spiritual system than the Jewish dispensation, and its blessings are not of a carnal order. No blessing apparent to carnal eyes rests upon the godly, but sometimes the case appears to be reversed—we see the wicked prosper, and the righteous are trod under foot.

The Christian dispensation is one which requires much faith to receive it. We walk not by sight, but by faith alone. And it is little marvel that when ungodly men see the righteous afflicted, and discover that their comfort lies in matters which only faith can apprehend, they should cry out, “It is a vain thing,” and should turn aside from the ordinances of God. Besides, to confess the Truth of God, there have been so many counterfeits of true religion that it is not remarkable that unconverted men should consider even the genuine article to be but a vain thing.

Men have made pretences of wondrous sanctity, while inwardly full of rottenness. And sinners have learned to argue with terrible logic—“They are none of them good. They are all deceivers. The best of them are hypocrites, and religion, itself, is a vain thing.” However false may be the conclusion here—and we believe it to be utterly so—yet we do not wonder that men, desiring to believe religion to be a falsehood, have found some support for their unbelief in the hypocrisy of professors.

Now we will grant you, this morning, that much of the religion which is abroad in the world is a vain thing. The religion of ceremonies is vain. If a man shall trust in the gorgeous pomp of uncommanded mysteries, if he shall consider that there resides some mystic efficacy in a priest, and that by uttering certain words a blessing is infallibly received, we tell him that his religion is a vain thing. You might as well go to the witch of Endor for

grace as to a priest. And if you rely upon words, the “abracadabra” of a magician will as certainly raise you to Heaven, or rather sink you to Hell, as the performances of the best ordained minister under Heaven.

Ceremonies in themselves are vain, futile, empty. There are but two of God’s ordaining. They are most simple, and neither of them pretend to have any efficacy in themselves. They only set forth an inward and spiritual Grace, not necessarily tied to them, but only given to those who by faith perceive their teachings. All ceremonial religion, no matter how sincere, if it consists in relying upon forms and observances, is a vain thing. So with creed-religion—by which I mean not to speak against creeds, for I love “the form of sound words”—but that religion which lies in believing with the intellect a set of dogmas, without partaking of the life of God—all this is a vain thing.

Again, that religion which only lies in making a profession of what one does not possess, in wearing the Christian name and observing the rituals of the Church, but which does not so affect the character as to make a man holy, nor so touch the heart as to make a man God’s true servant— such a religion is vain throughout. O my dear Hearers, how much worthless religion may you see everywhere! So long as men get the name, they seem content without the substance. Everywhere—it matters not to what Church you look—you see a vast host of hypocrites, numerous as flies about a dead carcass. On all sides there are deceivers and deceived, who write, “Heaven” upon their brows, but have Hell in their hearts. They hang out the sign of an angel over their doors but have the devil for a host within. Take heed to yourselves. Be not deceived, for He who tries the heart and searches the reins of the children of men is not mocked, and He will surely discern between him that fears God and him that fears Him not.

But with all these allowances, we still this morning assert most positively that the religion of Christ Jesus which has been revealed to us of the Holy Spirit by the Apostles and Prophets and especially by the Messiah Himself, when truly received into the heart, is no vain thing. We shall handle the text four ways, taking the word “vain” in different shades of meaning. It is no fiction. It is no trifle. It is no folly. It is no speculation. In each case we will prove our assertion by the second sentence—“Because it is your life.”

I. First, then, the true religion of Christ, which consists in a vital faith in His Person, His blood, His righteousness, and which produces obedience to His commands, and a love to God, IS NOT A FICTION.

I am not going to argue this morning. I was never sent to argue but to teach and speak dogmatically. I assert, in the name of all those who have tried it, that true religion is not a fiction to us. It is to us the grandest of all realities, and we hope that our testimony and witness, if we are honest men, may prevail with others who may be skeptical upon this point. We say, then, that the objects of true religion are, to those who believe in Jesus, no fiction.

God the Father to whom we look with the spirit of adoption, is no fiction to us. I know that to some men the Divine Being is a mere abstraction. As to communing with Him, as to speaking to Him, they think such wonders may have occurred to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob—but to them such things are impossible. Now we do solemnly assure you, as men who would not lie in this matter, that God the Father is to us as real a Person as the man from whose loins we sprang, and that we have as surely talked to Him, and He has as truly spoken to our hearts as ever we have spoken with a friend and have been answered by him.

We tell you that to us the Being of God is a fact which influences our whole life, checks us when we would sin, forbids our weaker passions to rebel, and nerves our nobler powers to do or suffer. Our consciousness, our experience, our emotions, and our whole being tell us that there is a God. We have had personal dealings with Him. He has been with us in our chamber. We have seen His face in the sanctuary. We have cast our cares upon Him. And therefore, to us, the Eternal and indwelling Father is no fiction.

So is it with Christ Jesus. To mere professors, Christ Jesus is never anything but a myth. They believe there was such a man, but He is only an historical personage to them. To true Believers in Christ, however, He is a real Person, now existing, and now dwelling in the hearts of His people. And oh, I bear my witness that if there is anything which has ever been certified to my consciousness, it is the existence of Jesus, the Man, the Son of God. Oh Friends, have we not, when our soul has been in a rapture, thrust our finger into the prints of the nails?

Have we not been so drawn away from the outward world that in spiritual communing we could say He was to us as our Brother that sucked the breasts of our mother, and when we found Him without, we did embrace Him and we would not let Him go? His left hand has been under our head, and His right hand has embraced us. I know this will sound like a legend even to men who profess to be Christ’s followers, but I question the reality of your piety if Christ is not One for whom you live, and in whom you dwell. With whom you walk and in whom you hope soon to sleep that you may wake up in His likeness. A real Christ and a real God—no man has real religion till he knows these.

So again the Holy Spirit, who is with the Father and the Son, the one God of Israel. The God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob, indivisibly One and yet everlastingly Three—the Holy Spirit is also real, for—

*“He, in our hearts of sin and woe  
Makes living streams of Divine Grace arise, Which into boundless glory flow.”*

Tell us there is no Spirit? Why, about this we can speak positively. A fool may say that there is no magnetic influence, and that no electric streams can flow along the wires—but they who have once been touched by that mysterious power know it. And the Holy Spirit’s influence on men is quite as much within the sphere of our recognition, if we have ever felt it, as is the influence of galvanism or magnetism.

Those who have once felt the spiritual life know when it is flowing in, when in strength it is withdrawn, and when it returns anew. They know that at times they can do all things. Their heaviest trial is a joy, and their weightiest burden a delight. And at other times they can do nothing, being bowed down to the very dust with weakness. They know that at times they enjoy peace with God through Jesus Christ, and that at other times they

are disturbed in spirit. They have discovered, too, that these changes do not depend upon the weather, nor upon circumstances, nor upon any relation of one thought to another, but upon certain secret, mystic, and Divine impulses which come forth from the Spirit of God. They make a man more than man, for he is filled with Deity from head to foot—and whose withdrawal makes him feel less than man, for he is filled with sin and drenched with iniquity—till he loathes his own being.

Tell us there is no Holy Spirit? We have seen His goings in the sanctuary, but as we shall have to mention these by-and-by, we pass on, and only now affirm that the Father, Son, and Spirit are to true Christians no fiction, no dream, no fancy. They are as real and as true as persons whom we can see, things which we can handle, or viands which we can taste.

But further, we can also say that the experience which true religion brings is no fiction. Believe me, Sirs, it is no fiction to repent. For there is a bitterness in it which makes it all too real. Oh, the agony of sin lying on an awakened conscience! If you have ever felt it, it will seem to you as the ravings of a madman when any shall tell you that religion is not real! When the great hammer of the Law broke our hearts in pieces it was a stern reality.

These eyes have sometimes, before I knew the Savior, been ready to start from my head with horror, and my soul has often been bowed down with a grief far too terrible ever to be told to my fellow man. When I have felt that I was guilty before God, that my Maker was angry with me, that He must punish me, and that I deserved, and must suffer His eternal wrath—I assure you there was no fiction there! And when the Spirit of God comes into the heart and takes all our grief away, and gives us joy and peace in believing in Christ, there is no fiction then, either.

Of course, to other men this is no evidence, except they will believe our honesty. But to us it is the very best of evidence. We were bid to believe on Christ. It was all we were to do—to look to His Cross, to believe Him to be the propitiation for sin, and to trust in Him to save us. We did so, and oh, the joy of that moment! In one instant we leaped from the depths of Hell to the very heights of Heaven in experience. Dragged up out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay—our feet were set upon a rock and we could sing for very joy. Oh, the mirth! Oh, the bliss! Oh, the ecstasy of the soul that can say*—*

*“Happy, happy, happy day,  
When Jesus washed my sins away,  
Happy, happy, happy day.”*

That was no fiction, surely. If it is so, I will continue to cry, “Blessed fiction! Blessed dream! May I contrive to believe You! May I always be so deluded if this is to be deluded and misled!”

Since then , look at the Believer’s experience. He has had as many troubles as other men have, but oh, what comforts he has had! He lost his wife, and as he stood there and thought his heart would break, he could still say, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.” Child after child sickened before his loving gaze, and as they went one after the other to the tomb where he often wished he could have slept instead of them—while he mourned and wept as Jesus did, yet still he could say, “Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him.”

When the house was burned—when the property vanished—when trade ran ill—when character was slandered—when the soul was desponding and all but despairing, yet there came in that one ray of light, “Christ is All, and all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose.” I can tell you that Christians have often had their brightest days when other people thought they were in their darkest nights. And they have often had the best of dainties when there was a famine abroad.

Is this a fiction? O Sirs, we challenge you to find so blessed a fiction as this elsewhere! I saw last Friday a sight, enough to make one weep, indeed—there in the back room of the house lay a fine youth, a member of this Church, sickening and near to death of consumption. And he talked to me joyously of his prospect of entering into the rest which remains for the people of God! There in the front room, on the same floor, lay his sister, I suppose but some two years younger, withering under the same disease. And there sat the tender mother with her two children, thinking to lose them both within a few days and though she said, it was natural to weep, yet she could say even under this sharp trial, “The Lord’s name be magnified in it all.”

I say there was no fiction there. If you who think there is a fiction that such things could live among Christians—if you could see the poor, cheerfully suffering—if you could mark the sick, and how joyously they bear their pains—if you could see the dying, and hear their shouts of triumph, you would say, “There is a reality here. There is something in true religion. Let me die the death of the righteous. Let my last end be like his!”

But further. As we are sure there is a reality in the objects, and in the experience of true godliness, so are we quite clear that there is a reality in its privileges. One of the privileges of the Christian is prayer. It is the Believer’s privilege to go to God and ask for what he wants and have it. Now, Sirs, I am absolutely certain that prayer is a reality. I shall not tell here my own experience. One reads not his love-letters in the streets—one tells not his own personal dealings with God in public. But if there is a fact that can be proved by ten thousand instances, and which, therefore, no reasonable man has any right to doubt—if there is anything that is true under Heaven—it is true that God hears prayer when it comes not out of feigned lips, and is offered through Jesus Christ.

I know when we tell the story, men smile and say, “Ah, these were singular coincidences!” Why, I have seen, in my life, answers to prayer so remarkable that if God had torn the curtain of the heavens and thrust out His arm to work a deliverance, it could not have been more decidedly and distinctly a Divine interposition than when He listened to my feeble cry for help. I speak not of myself as though I were different from other men in this, for it is so with all who have real godliness. They know that God hears then. They prove it today—they intend to prove it at this very hour.

Communion with Christ is another reality. The shadow of His Cross is too refreshing to be a dream, and the sunlight of His face is too bright to be a delusion. Precious Jesus! You are a storehouse of substantial delights and solid joy. Then, the privileges of Christian love towards one another are real. I know they are not with some men. Why, look at some of your fashionable Churches. If the poor people were to speak to the richer ones, what would the rich ones think of them? Why, snap their heads half off, and send them about their business! But where there is true Christianity, we feel that the only place in the world where there can ever be liberty, equality, and fraternity, is in the Church of Christ.

To attempt this politically is but to attempt an impossibility—but to foster it in the Church of God, where we are all allied to God—is but to nourish the very spirit of the Gospel. I say there is a reality in Christian love, for I have seen it among my flock. And though some do not show it as they should, yet my heart rejoices that there is so much hearty brotherly love among you, and thus your religion is not a vain thing.

Once more upon this point, for I am spending all my time here, while I need it for other points. The religion of Christ is evidently not a vain thing if you look at its effects. We will not take you abroad now to tell you of the effects of the Gospel of Christ in the South Sea. We need not remind you of what it has done for the heathen, but let me tell you what it has done for men here. Ah, Brethren, you will not mind my telling some of the secrets—secrets that bring the tears to my eyes as I reflect upon them— when I speak of the thief, the harlot, the drunkard, the Sabbath-breaker, the swearer, I may say, “Such were some of you, but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you rejoice in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

How many a man has been going by the door there and has said, “I’ll go in and hear Old Spurgeon.” He came in to make merriment of the preacher and very little that troubles him. But the man has stood there until the Word has gone home to him, and he who was likely to beat his wife and to make his home a Hell, has before long been to see me, and has given me a grip of the hand and said, “God Almighty bless you, Sir. There is something in true religion!” “Well, let us hear your story.” We have heard it and delightful it has been in hundreds of instances.

“Very well, send for your wife, and let us hear what she says about you.” The woman has come and we have said, “Well, what do you think of your husband now, Ma’am?” “Oh, Sir, such a change I never saw in my life. He is so kind to us. He is like an angel now, and he seemed like a fiend before. Oh, that cursed drink, Sir! Everything went to the public house. And then if I went up to the House of God, he did nothing but abuse me. Oh, to think that now he comes with me on Sunday! And the shop is shut up, Sir. And the children, who used to be running about without a bit of shoe or stocking, he takes them on his knees and prays with them so sweetly. Oh, there is such a change!”

Surly people say, “Will it last? Will it last?” Well, I have seen it last the eight years of my pastorate, in many cases, and I know it will last forever, for I am persuaded that it is God’s work. We will put it to all the Social Science Societies. We will put it to all the different religions under Heaven, whether they know the art of turning sinners into saints. Whether they can make lions into lambs, and ravens into doves. Why, I know a man who was as stingy a soul as could be, once. And now he is as generous a man as walks God’s earth. There is another, he was not immoral, but he was passionate—and now he is as quiet as a lamb.

It is Divine Grace that has altered these characters, and yet you tell me that this is a fiction! I have not patience to answer you. A fiction? If religion does not prove itself to be true by these facts, then do not believe it. If it does not, when it comes into a neighborhood, turn it upside down, sweep the cobwebs out of its sky, clean the houses, take the men out of the public houses. If it does not make swearers pray, and hard-hearted men tender and compassionate, then it is not worth a button. But our religion does do all this, and therefore we boldly say it is not a vain thing.

Besides, to the man who really possesses it, it is his life. He is not a man, and a Christian, but he is all a Christian. He is not as some are, men and Members of Parliament, who have many things to attend to and attend Parliament, also. But the man who is thoroughly a Christian is a Christian every bit of him. He lives Christianity. He eats it. He drinks it. He sleeps it. He walks it. Wherever you see him, he has his religion. His religion is not like a man’s regimentals which he can take off and go in undress. It is inside of him. It is woven right through and through him. When the shuttle of his religion was thrown, it went right through the core of his heart, and you must kill that man to get his religion out of him.

Racks may tear his nerves and sinews, but they cannot tear away his hope, for it is essentially and vitally part and parcel of himself. Ah, Ladies and Gentlemen, you who think religion is no more real than the life of a butterfly, it is you who are unreal in your fancies and your follies! Religion is the substance, and your life is only the shadow! Oh, you working men, who think that to be godly is but to indulge a dream, you know not what you say. All else is fiction but this. All else is but a moonbeam phantom— this is sun-lit reality. God give you Grace to get it, and then you will feel we have not spoken too strongly but rather have spoken too little of that which is essentially and really true.

II. Secondly, “It is not a vain thing”—that is, IT IS NO TRIFLE. If religion is false, it is the basest imposition under Heaven. But if the religion of Christ is true, it is the most solemn truth that was ever known! It is not a thing that a man dares to trifle with if it is true, for it is at his soul’s peril to make a jest of it. If it is not true, it is detestable. But if it is true, it deserves all a man’s faculties to consider it, and all his powers to obey it. It is not a trifle.

Briefly consider why it is not. It deals with your soul. If it dealt with your body it were no trifle, for it is well to have the limbs of the body sound—but it has to do with your soul. As much as a man is better than the garments that he wears, so much is the soul better than the body. It is your immortal soul it deals with. Your soul has to live forever, and the religion of Christ deals with its destiny. Can you laugh at such words as Heaven and Hell, at glory and at damnation? If you can, if you think these trifles, then is the faith of Christ to be trifled with.

Consider also with whom it connects you— with God—before whom angels bow themselves and veil their faces. Is HE to be trifled with? Trifle with your monarch, if you will, but not with the King of kings, the Lord of lords. Remember that those who have ever known anything of it tell you it is no child’s play. The saints will tell you it is no trifle to be converted.

They will never forget the pangs of conviction, nor the joys of faith. They tell you it is no trifle to have religion, for it carries them through all their conflicts, bears them up under all distresses, cheers them under every gloom and sustains them in all labor. They find it no mockery.

The Christian life to them is something so solemn that when they think of it, they fall down before God and say, “Hold You me up and I shall be safe.” And sinners, too, when they are in their senses, find it no trifle. When they come to die they find it no little thing to die without Christ. When conscience gets the grip of them and shakes them, they find it no small thing to be without a hope of pardon—with guilt upon the conscience and no means of getting rid of it. And, Sirs, true ministers of God feel it to be no trifle. I do, myself, feel it to be such an awful thing to preach God’s Gospel, that if it were not, “Woe unto me if I do not preach the Gospel,” I would resign my charge this moment. I would not for the proudest consideration under Heaven know the agony of mind I felt but this morning before I ventured upon this platform! Nothing but the hope of winning souls from death and Hell, and a stern conviction that we have to deal with the grandest of all realities, would bring me here.

A pastor’s office is no sinecure. A man that has the destinies of a kingdom under his control may well feel his responsibility. But he who has the destiny of souls laid instrumentally at his door must travail in birth and know a mother’s pangs. He must strive with God and know an agony, and yet a joy which no other man can meddle with. It is no trifle to us, we do assure you. Oh, make it no trifle to yourselves! I know I speak to some triflers this morning, and perhaps to some trifling professors.

Oh, professors, do not live so as to make worldlings think that your religion is a trifling thing! Be cheerful but, oh, be holy! Be happy, for that is your privilege. But oh, be heavenly-minded, for that is your duty. Let men see that you are not flirting with Christ, but that you are married to Him. Let them see that you are not dabbling in this as in a little speculation but that it is the business of your life, the stern business of all your powers, to live to Christ, Christ also living in you.

III. But next and very briefly, for time flies. The religion of Christ is no vain thing—that is, IT IS NO FOLLY.  
Thinking Men and Women! Yes, by the way, we have had thinking men and women who have been able to think in so indirect a manner that they have thought it consistent with their consciences to profess to hold the doctrines of the Church of England, and to be Romanists or infidels! God deliver us from ever being able to think in their way! I always dislike the presence of a man who carries a gun with him which will discharge shot in a circle. Surely he is a very ill companion and if he should become your enemy how are you to escape from him?  
Give me a straightforward, downright man, who says what he means and means what he says. And I would sooner have the most gross reprobate who will speak plainly what he means, than I would have the most dandy of gentlemen who would not hurt your feelings, but who will profess to believe as you do, while in his heart he rejects every sentiment and abhors thought which you entertain. I trust I do not speak to any persons here who can think as this. Still, you say, “Well but the religion of Christ, why, you see, it is the poor that receive it.” Bless God it is! “Well but not many thinking people receive it.” Now that is not true, but at the same time, if they did not, we would not particularly mind, because all thinking people do not think aright and very many of them think very wrongly, indeed.  
But such a man as Newton could think, and yet receive the Gospel. And masterminds, whom it is not mine just now to mention, have bowed down before the sublimity of the simple revelation of Christ. And they have felt it to be their honor to lay their wealth of intellect at the feet of Christ. But, Sirs, where is the folly of true religion? Is it a folly to be providing for the world to come? “Oh, no.” Is it a folly to make the Author of your being its first end? “No, no.” Is it altogether a folly to believe that there is such a thing as justice? I think not. And that if there is such a thing as justice, it involves punishment! There is no great folly there.  
Well, then, is it any folly to perceive that there is no way of escaping from the effects of our offenses except justice be satisfied? Is that folly? And if it is fact that Christ has satisfied justice for all who trust in Him, is it folly to trust Him? If it IS a folly to escape from the flames of Hell, then let us be fools. If it IS folly to lay hold of Him who gives us eternal life—oh, blessed folly! Let us be more foolish, still. Let us take deep dives into the depths of this foolishness! God forbid that we should do anything else but glory in being such fools as this for Christ’s sake!  
What, Sirs, is your wisdom? Your wisdom dwells in denying what your eyes can see—a God. In denying what your consciences tell you—that you are guilty. In denying what should be your best hope, what your spirit really craves—redemption in Christ Jesus. Your folly lies in following a perverted nature instead of obeying the dictates of One who points you to the right path. You are wise and you drink poison. We are fools and we take the antidote. You are wise and you hunt the shadow. We are fools and we grasp the Substance. You are wise—you labor and put your money into a bag which is full of holes—and spend it for that which is not bread and which never gives you satisfaction. And we are fools enough to be satisfied, to be happy, to be perfectly content with Heaven and God*— “I would not change my blessed estate  
For all the world calls good or great.  
And while my faith can keep her hold,  
I envy not the sinner’s gold.”*  
Blessed folly! Oh, blessed folly! But it is not a foolish thing. For it is your life. Ah, Sirs, if you would have philosophy, it is in Christ. If you would accomplish the proudest feats of human intellect, it is to attain to the knowledge of Christ crucified. Here the man whose mind makes him elephantine may find depths in which he may swim. Here the most recondite learning shall find itself exhausted. Here the most brilliant imagination shall find its highest flights exceeded. Here the critic shall have enough to criticize throughout eternity. Here the reviewer may review and review again, and never cease.  
Here the man who understands history may crown his knowledge by the history of God in the world. Here men who would know the secret, the greatest secret which Heaven and earth and Hell can tell, may find it out—for the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His Covenant. All the learning of man is doubtless folly to the angels, but the foolishness of God in the Gospel is wisdom to cherubim and seraphim, and by the Church shall be made known to them in ages to come the manifold wisdom of God.  
IV. And now for the last point, hurriedly again—“It is not a vain thing”—that is, IT IS NO SPECULATION.  
People sometimes ask us what we think about the heathen, whether they will be saved or not. Well, Sirs, there is room for difference of opinion there. But I should like to know what you think about yourselves—will you be saved or not? For after all, that is a question of a great deal more importance to you. Now, the religion of Christ is not a thing that puts a man into a salvable state, but it saves him. It is not a religion which offers him something which perhaps may save him. No, it saves him out and out, on the spot. It is not a thing which says to a man, “Now I have set you a-going, you must keep on yourself.” No, it goes the whole way through, and saves him from beginning to end.  
He that says, “Alpha,” never stops till He can say, “Omega,” over every soul. I say the religion of Christ—I know there are certain shadows of it which do not carry such a reality as this with them but I say that the religion of the Bible, the religion of Jesus Christ—is an absolute certainty. “Whosoever believes on Him has eternal life, and he shall never perish, neither shall he come into condemnation.” “I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hands.” “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.”  
“Well,” says one, “I should like to know what this very sure religion is.” Well, it is this—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” Trust Christ with all that you have, and you shall be saved. “Well,” says one, “but when?” Why, now, here, this morning, on the spot—you shall be saved NOW. It is not a vain thing. It is not a speculation, for it is true to you now. The word is near you—on your lips and in your heart. If you will, with your heart, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ you shall be saved, and saved now. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” This is a great and glorious Truth of God and it is true today—“Whosoever believes in Him has everlasting life.”  
“But is it true for me?” asks one. My text says, “It is not a vain thing for you.” “Oh, it will suit other people. It will not do for me.” It will suit you, Sir—“It is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life.” If you have come up from the country, it is no vain thing for you, my dear Friends. If you reside in town, amidst its noise and occupations, it is not a vain thing for you, my dear Hearers. It is not a vain thing for any. If you do but lay hold of it, and it lays hold of you—if you receive the reality and vitality of it into your soul, be you who you may, it will not be a vain thing to you. Not a “perhaps,” or an “if,” or a “but,” or a “maybe,” but a “shall,” and a “will,” a Divine, an eternal, an everlasting and immutable certainty!  
Whoever believes in Christ—let the earth shake, let the mountains rock, let the sun grow old with age, and the moon quench her light— whoever believes in Christ shall be saved! Unless God can change His mind—and that is impossible. Unless God can break His word—and to say so is blasphemy. Unless Christ’s blood can lose its efficacy—and that can never be. Unless the Spirit can be anything but Eternal and Omnipotent—and to suppose so were ridiculous—he that believes on Christ, must at last, before the eternal Throne, sing hallelujah to God and the Lamb.  
“Well,” says one, “it is a vain thing, I’m sure, for me, for I’m only a poor working man. Religion, no doubt, is a very fine thing for gentlefolk but it doesn’t do for a man as has to work hard, for he’s something else to think on.” Well, you are just the man that I should think it would do for. Why, it is little enough you have here, my dear Friend, and that is the very reason why you should have eternal joys hereafter! If there is one man that religion can bless more than another—and I do not know that there is—it is the poor man in his humble cottage. Why, this will put sweets into your cup. This will make your little into enough, and sometimes into more than enough. You shall be rich while you are poor, and happy when others think you are miserable.  
“Well,” says the rich man, “it is nothing to me. I do not see that it will suit me.” Why, it is the very thing for you, Sir. In fact, you are the man who ought to have it, because, see what you will have to lose when you die, unless you have religion to make up for it! What a loss it will be for you when you have to lose all your grandeur and substance! What a loss it will be for you to go from the table of Dives to the Hell of Dives! Surely it is not a vain thing for you.  
“Well,” says another, “but I am a moral and upright person. Indeed, I do not think anybody can pull my character to pieces.” I hope nobody wants to. But this is not a vain thing for you, because, let me tell you, that fine righteousness of yours is only fine in your own esteem. If you could only see it as God sees it, you would see it to be as full of holes as ever beggars’ rags were when at last they were consigned to the dust heap. I say your fine righteousness, My Lady, and yours, Sir Squire from the country, no matter though you have given to the poor and fed the hungry, and done a thousand good things—if you are relying on them, you are relying on rotten rags, in which God can no more accept you than He can accept the thief in his dishonesty. “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we are all as an unclean thing.” It is not a vain thing for you, then.  
“Oh but I am a young man just in my teens and growing up to manhood. I think I ought to have a little pleasure.” So I think, Friend, and if you want a great deal of it, be a Christian. “Oh but I was thinking people should enjoy themselves.” So do I. I never was an advocate for making sheep without their first being lambs, and I would let the lambs skip as much as they like. But if you want to lead a happy and a joyous life, give your young days to Jesus. Who says that a Christian is miserable? Sir, you lie. I tell you to your face that you know not what Christianity is, or else you would know that Christians are the most joyous people under Heaven. Young man, I would like you to have a glorious youth. I would like you to have all the sparkle and the brilliance which your young life can give you. What have you better than to live and to enjoy yourself? But how are you to do it? Give your Creator your heart and the thing is done. It is not a vain thing for you.  
“Ah,” says the old man, “but it is a vain thing for me. My time is over. If I had begun when I was a lad it might have done—but I am settled in my habits now. I feel sure, Sir, it is too late for me. When I hear my grandchildren say their prayers as they are going to bed, pretty dears, when they are singing their evening hymn, I wish I was a child again. But my heart has gotten hard and I cannot say, ‘Our Father,’ now. And when I do get to, ‘Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us,’ I get stuck there. I do not know how to get over that, for I have not forgiven old Jones yet who robbed me in that lawsuit. And then you know I am infirm and have rheumatism and a hundred other pains. I do not think religion will suit me.”  
Well, it is just the very thing that will suit you, because it will make you young again. What? “Can a man be born again when he is old?” That is what Nicodemus asked. Yes, a man can be born again, so that the babe shall die a hundred years old. Oh, to make the autumn of your life and the coming winter of your last days into a new spring and a blessed summer—this is to be done by laying hold of Christ NOW! And then you shall feel in your old veins the young blood of the new spiritual life, and you will say, “I count the years I lived before a death, but now I begin to live.”  
I do not know whether I have picked out every character. I am afraid I have not. But this thing I know, though you may be under there, or up in the corner yonder where my eyes cannot reach you, yet you may hear this voice and I hope you may hear it when you are gone from this house back to your country towns and to your houses*—  
“It is religion that can give  
Sweetest pleasures while we live!  
It is religion must supply  
Solid comfort when we die.  
After death its joys will be  
Lasting as eternity!  
Be the living God my Friend,  
Then my bliss shall never end.”*  
And this is the Gospel which is preached unto you. “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ”—that is, trust Him—“and you shall be saved.” May God bless you for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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THE DIVINE DISCIPLINE  
NO. 3335

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 2, 1913.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
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**“As an eagle stirs up her nest, flutters over her young, spreads abroad her wings, takes them, bears them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.” Deuteronomy 32:11, 12.**

MOSES in this Chapter is speaking concerning Israel in the wilderness. When the great host came out of Egypt, they were, through the debasing influences of slavery—which are not easily or quickly shaken off— not much better than a mere mob. They were not at all fitted to march at once to take possession of Canaan, nor to take part in the compacts of organized social life. Therefore God, instead of taking them by the short way along which they might have passed in a very few days, ordained it so in His Providence that they should wander about for 40 years in the wilderness—partly, it is true, as a punishment for their unbelief, but also in order that the nation might be trained and educated for its future destiny—made as fit as it could be, to be the custodian of the oracles of the Truths of God and to be the receiver of the Revelation which God intended to give to men.

If you will read carefully over the history of the children of Israel in the wilderness, I think you will see that the practical training which God adopted was—if they had been right-minded men—splendidly adapted to bring them to the very highest state of spiritual life. In some respects it was weak through their flesh, but the method, itself, was superlatively excellent. Here was a people taken away from the multitude of gods which they had been known to see on every hand in Egypt and they were taught to reverence an unseen God for whom they had no symbol whatever for some time. And afterwards, when symbolical worship in some form was ordained, yet there was still so little of symbol that Moses could say, “They saw no similitude.” They were trained to worship a spiritual God—in spirit and in truth. They never saw Him, but every morning they had the best testimonies of His existence, for round about the camp lay the manna like hoarfrost, or dew, upon the ground! Their feet grew not weary, neither did their garments become old all those years, and thus about their very clothes on their bodies and before them on their tables, they had constant proofs of the great God existing and caring for the sons of men. The whole of their training, while it educated and developed their patience and their faith, had also the high purpose of teaching them gratitude and to bind them by the cords of love and the bands of a man to the service of God. It was not because the training was not wise in the highest degree, but because they were children that were corrupters and, like ourselves, an evil and stiff-necked generation, that they did not learn even when God, Himself, became their Teacher.

Now in drawing a parallel between the children of Israel and ourselves, we shall invite you to notice, first, in the text—the Divine Instructor, “the Lord alone did lead them.” And then the method of instruction illustrated—they were trained as an eagle trains the eaglet for their flight. First, then, we have—

I. A DIVINE INSTRUCTOR.  
The Israelites had for their Guide, Instructor and Tutor, in order to prepare them for Canaan, none other than Jehovah, Himself! He might employ Moses and Aaron and He did also make use of those marvelous picture books, if I may so call them, of sacrifice, type and metaphor, but still, God, Himself, was their Guide and their Instructor. And it is so with us. The Holy Spirit is the teacher of the Christian Church. Although He uses this Book, of which we can never speak too highly. Although He still uses the ministry of the Word, for which we are thankful as for a candlestick which we trust may never be taken out of its place, still, our true Teacher is God the Holy Spirit. He instructs us in the Truths of God and, meanwhile, it is also God, who, in the rulings and guiding of Providence, is our Instructor if we will but learn. He is teaching us, sometimes by sweet mercies and at other times by bitter afflictions, instructing us from our cradles to our graves if we will but open our eyes to see and our ears to hear the lessons which He writes and speaks. We, alas, are often as the horse and as the mule which have no understanding—and will not be taught by the Providential teachings, but still we have God to be our Teacher—and it is none other than our heavenly Father who is daily training us for the skies. If we are, indeed, His children and can say, “Our Father, which are in Heaven,” we may also go to Him as our Teacher, believing He will, notwithstanding all our folly, make us “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”  
The text speaks of “the Lord alone.” Brothers and Sisters, it is well for us that in Providence we are led by “the Lord alone.” There is an overruling hand after all, notwithstanding our follies and our willfulness, so that God’s purposes are ultimately fulfilled. But I wish this were more true to our consciousness—that we are led by “the Lord alone.” I mean that we waited upon Him at every step of life. I am persuaded that the holiest of characters take more matters to God than you and I are accustomed to do. I mean they not only consult Him, as we do, upon certain great and critical occasions, but those saints who live nearest to Christ, go to Him about little matters, thinking nothing to be too trifling to speak into the ear of Christ.  
Some things about which they will not even consult their kindest and wisest human friends will be matters of consultation between them and their Savior. Oh, what mistakes we would escape, what disasters we would avoid, if “the Lord alone” did guide us! And if we watched the signs of His hands in guiding us, if our eyes were to Him as the eyes of the handmaidens are to their mistress, anxious to know the Lord’s will and always saying to our own self-love, “Down, down, busy will! Down proud spirit! What would You have me do, my Master, for Your will shall be my will and my heart shall always give up its fondest wish when once I understand what Your will is concerning me.” Beloved, I am afraid that some strange god is often with us, even with us who are the people of God! We are united to God and He will gladly teach us—and from Him, alone, should we learn! But oftentimes we harbor idolatrous thoughts in our heart. All selfishness is idolatry! All repining against the Providence of God has in it the element of rebellion against the Most High! If I love my own will and if I desire my own way in preference to God’s way, I have made a god of my own wisdom, or my own affection—and I have not been true in my loyalty to the only living and true God, even Jehovah! Let us search, look and see if there is not some strange god with us. It may be hidden away, perhaps, and we may scarcely know it. It may be hidden, too, in that very part of us where our dearest affections dwell. Some Rachel may be sitting in the tent on the camel furniture under which the false gods are concealed! Let us, therefore, make a thorough search and then invite the Great King, Himself, to aid us. “Search me, O God, try me, and know my ways, and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”  
The great Truth of God which I want to bring forward, if I can, is this— that God in His Providence and in Grace, as far as we have been made willing to learn of Him, is educating us for something higher than this world! This world is the nature in which we dwell. Sometimes we who love the Lord mount up from it with wings as eagles, but we do not stay on the wing. We drop again—we cleave to earth. ‘Tis our mother and it seems as though we can never rise permanently above our kinship to it. Very powerful is it in its attraction over us. Down we go again. We have not yet learned to keep up yonder where the atmosphere is clear and where the smoke of the world’s cares will not reach us. But God is educating us for the skies! The meaning of these trials of ours, the interpretation of our sorrows is this—God is preparing us for another state, making us fit to dwell with angels and archangels and the spirits of the just made perfect! If this earth were all, then, your teachers at school, or your tutors when you passed through college, might have sufficed. But this world is but the vestibule to the next and if you know, as well as man can teach you, how to play your part here with a view only to secular advancement, you are not yet educated at all in the highest sense! God Himself must teach and train you, that you may be fit to sit among the princes of the royal blood before His Throne and to have communion with those celestial spirits who—  
*“With songs and choral symphonies  
Day without night circle His throne rejoicing.”*God is teaching you! God alone can do it and He will do it—but take care that you put away all strange gods and give yourselves up wholly to His guidance, submitting your will and your affections and all parts of your spirit and nature to His teaching so that you may be found fully ready when He shall say, “Come up here to dwell with Me forever.” Now, passing from that, we shall notice very briefly, indeed—  
II. THE METHODS OF THE DIVINE INSTRUCTION.  
These methods of Divine instruction are given to us under the very poetical picture of the eagle training its young ones for flight. God, to accommodate Himself to our poor understandings, sometimes compares Himself to a father with children. At other times to a mother with her little ones. Sometimes even to an animal. In this case, even to a bird of prey, so that we may but learn no depths of condescension are too great for the Great Teacher! He compares Himself here, then, to the eagle. I suppose that Moses was well acquainted with the eagle’s natural habits. He describes it, first of all, as stirring up its nest, as though the young birds were unwilling to stir from their pleasant home. Having from the time of their birth been quiet and happy there, they had no anxiety whatever to try the blue unfathomable oceans of the air! They had no wish to leave the rocky refuge where they had been reared. They feared, perhaps, lest they might fall over the precipices and be dashed in pieces. Therefore is it said, “The eagle stirs up her nest.” She makes it uncomfortable for the little ones so that they may be willing to leave it. And that which would have been obnoxious and burdensome to them, they may come even to desire, namely, to be out of the nest! Someone has quaintly said that the eagle puts thorns into the nest which prick the fledglings so that they are anxious to get away!  
Certain it is that God does thus with those He would train for the skies. He stirs up their nest. Cannot some of you recollect times when your nests were stirred by Providential dealings while you were in sin? All things went well with you for a season, but you forgot God. And His Son, Jesus, had no attractions for you. But suddenly the child sickened or the wife was smitten with death, or trade separated from you, or you, yourselves, were ill, or there was a famine in the land. Then it was, when you were in need, your nest being thoroughly stirred up, that you said, “I will arise and go unto my Father.” The land of Goshen was like a nest to the Israelites. They had no desire to come out of it, but God stirred them up by means of Pharaoh, who kept them in heavy bondage, put them to making bricks and then to making bricks without straw. And then he slew their male children. In all sorts of ways they were made to cry out under the bitter yoke. We know that they loved that nest, for they often longed to be back in it. They talked of the leeks, the garlic, the onions and the cucumbers which they did eat when they were in Egypt, so that the nest seems to have been a tolerably downy one to them at one time! But God so stirred it up that they longed to be away—and even the howling wilderness seemed a paradise compared with the house of bondage. So was it with you! You found that the world was not what it seemed to be. Troubles increased, Providential afflictions trod on each other’s heels and then you turned to your God and remembered your sins. And so He stirred up your nest by inward trouble under conviction of sin. I know my soul’s nest was once very soft. I thought I had done no great evil, that I had kept God’s Commandments from my youth up. But when conviction of sin came, then I discovered my heart to be deceitful above all things and desperately wicked! Then my sins, like so many daggers, were at my heart, My soul was torn in two—I could say with gracious George Herbert—  
*“My thoughts are all a case of knives,  
Wounding my heart.”*  
There was no rest, no peace, no joy, no comfort to be found. Well, that was God stirring up the nest! If there are any of you in that condition now—uneasy and troubled about sin, I am glad of it! Your nest is being stirred and God grant that you may fly from it and never come back to that nest again!  
If all had gone smoothly with you. If sin had always been a sweet morsel to your tongue, we might despair of your ever being saved. But now you feel the smart of it, I trust it is, in order that you may be delivered from the guilt of it and led to find a Savior! Well, since that, dear Friends, how many times we have had our nests stirred up! I do not know your history, but you do, and I ask you now to look it over. Oh, you planned, and planned, and planned, and said, “Now I shall live in this house for the next 20 or 30 years, I shall live here, certainly, as long as I live anywhere.” And now you find yourselves, perhaps, 50 or a 100 miles from it. You were in the service of a certain kind man and you felt very happy in it, but the firm has broken up and where are you now? There is that dear child you have set your heart upon. You have said, “What a mercy it will be to see him growing up! What a comfort he will be to me!” He is not a comfort to you, but just the very reverse, for he is your greatest sorrow! It is God stirring up your nest. Whereas a fear years ago you were in good, sound health, now the eyes begin to fail, or the ears are giving way, or there is some internal complaint, or some constant pain. Whereas years ago you were a master, you are now a servant—whereas years ago everybody looked up to you, now everybody looks down upon you! It is all the stirring up of the nest because you have no abiding city here—because you were too prone to say, “My mountain stands firm. I shall never be moved!” Therefore God has stirred up your nest and He will do it yet again and again! Between now and Heaven how many times will the nest of ours be stirred? Oh, blessed be God for it! “Moab is settled upon his lees: he has not been emptied from vessel to vessel”—and then comes a curse upon him! Sometimes these long periods of prosperity, rest and ease are very unhealthy for us poor unworthy and sinful beings. If we were more like Jesus. If we were more pure and heavenly, we could bear prosperity, but because we are so sinful, I question if any of us can bear it long. If the Master shall give some of us outward prosperity, He will have to whip us behind the

oor in private to keep us right! We must have some thorn in the flesh, some secret grief—there must be some skeleton in the cupboard, some specter in some chamber of the house, or else we shall say, “Soul, take your ease, you have much goods laid up for many years”—and when we do this, we shall be modern fools like the great fool of old! But the gracious Lord will not let His people get into that state. Again and again, and yet again, against their wishes, and contrary to their expectations, He will stir their nest and they shall cry out against it. But if they did but only know the meaning of it, or could read the whole of it in the light of eternity, they would bless the hand which tears away their comforts, seeing Divine Wisdom and Infinite Affection in it all! That, then, is the first thing—God instructs His people to mount aloft by stirring up their nests.  
The next picture is the eagle fluttering over her young. What is that for? She wants them to mount, my Brothers and Sisters! Well, then, in order to teach them to mount, she first mounts, herself—“she flutters over her young.” She moves her wings to teach them that thus they must move their wings, that thus they must mount! There is no teaching like teaching by example. We always learn a great deal more through our eyes and ears than we do merely through our ears. Those of us who cannot preach with our mouths would do well to preach with our lives—which is the very best kind of preaching. So God preaches to us. If He would have us holy, how holy He is Himself! “Be you holy for I am holy.” Would He have us generous? How generous is He! “He spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all.” Would He have us forgive our enemies? How He delights in mercy, Himself! If we need a picture of perfection, where can we get it but in God? “Be you perfect even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.” God shows us His law in His holy actions, He being, Himself, the very mirror and paragon of everything that is absolutely pure and right. Above all, the Lord has been pleased to set us an example of mounting above the world in the Person and life of His own dear Son! Oh, how the eagle flutters when I look upon the Savior!— *“Such was Your truth and such Your zeal, Such deference to Your Father’s will,  
Such love and meekness so Divine  
I would transcribe and make them mine! Cold mountains and the midnight air  
Witnessed the fervor of Your prayer—  
The desert Your temptations knew,  
Your conflict and Your victory, too.  
Be You my Pattern—make me bear  
More of Your gracious Image here!  
Then God the Judge shall own my name  
Among the followers of the Lamb.”*  
Beloved, see how our Lord Jesus this day mounts to Heaven! There He is—He has gone there that our hearts may follow Him! He fluttered to the skies that we might also follow and might rise above the world, setting our affections no longer upon the things of earth, but upon things above where Christ sits at the right hand of God! What way could there be of teaching us tenderness like the tenderness of the Savior? What method of teaching us love like the display of the love of God in Christ Jesus? Brothers and Sisters, I commend you to the picture of the eagle fluttering and thus setting an example to its little ones. You may also see before your eyes the great Incarnate God teaching you how to mount above the trials and temptations of this mortal life and living, even on earth, a celestial life!  
This, however, is not all the eagle does. We read in our text that she then spreads abroad her wings, takes them, bears them on her wings. I suppose this means just this, that spreading her wings she entices her young ones to get between her wings upon her back and then she mounts and flies towards the sun. It may be fable or not, I do not know, that she flies towards the sun to teach her eaglets to bear its blaze. Then, when she has mounted to a good height, she suddenly shifts her wings and throws the young eaglets off—and there they are on their own wings! They begin to descend to earth, not able to keep themselves up, but compelled to fly—but before they fall on the rocks, she makes a swoop and comes under them and catches them on her wings again, gives them a little rest, bears them up once more, and then throws them off again, so that they must fly. But she takes care that these early trials, for which they are scarcely able, shall not end in their destruction, for again she makes another swoop and catches them between her wings once again.  
This is the picture of what God does to us again. We must speak of Him after the metaphor which He, Himself, uses—He takes us up between those mighty wings and bears us as high as we dare go—and only pauses because He knows we cannot now bear more. Then, when we have had full fellowship and looked the sun in the face, and have had bright enjoyment of Heaven, as far as we could bear, He suddenly throws us off and makes us try our own wings, and alas, they are very feeble and weak, indeed. We then discover our own impotence and we think we shall fall like stars and be dashed in pieces! But lo, He comes and underneath us are the everlasting wings—and just when we thought we should surely come to destruction, we find ourselves safely sheltered between the mighty pinions of the Eternal God! Up, again, we mount, and before long we are thrown off again—cast away, as it were, for a time. His face is hidden from us, or else by some outward trial of Providence we are made to try our wings again to see whether our faith will keep us up! And by degrees it comes to pass that we learn to fly till we love flying and are not satisfied to come back to earth anymore! We are loving to fly and often sighing and longing for the day when we shall be permitted to— *“Stretch our wings and fly  
Straight to yonder worlds of joy!”*  
Do you not sometimes feel as if your wing feathers were come, my Brothers and Sisters? Surely you must sometimes feel as though your faith were growing stronger and your communion with Christ getting clearer— as though you anticipated and felt that the time must be drawing near when you could mount to dwell where Jesus is! I am thankful if such is your experience, but I should not wonder if you find that all the wing feathers which you have got will be all too few for you, for you may yet be made to have another descent from between the almighty wings and be made once again to see how great your weakness is. One other thought, however, occurs to us. There is no doubt that the idea of security as well as of teaching is here because when the eagle bears her young ones on her wings, if the archer, or in these modern days the hunter with his rifle should seek to destroy the eaglets, it is plain there is no reaching them without first killing the mother bird. So there is no destroying possible to the true people of God. “Greater is He that is for us, than all that can be against us.” God puts Himself between His people and the danger which threatens them—and unless the foe should be mightier than God, Himself—which is inconceivable, there is no soul that trusts in Him which shall know eternal hurt!  
Oh, how glorious a thing it is to feel, when the light air is all around me and I know that if I fall I would perish, that yet I cannot fall, for God’s wings bear me up! And to feel that though there are hosts of enemies able to destroy me if they can get at me, yet they cannot, for they must first get through God, Himself, before they can get to the weak soul who hangs upon Jesus and rests alone in Him! Well did David say, “In the time of trouble He will hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me: He shall set me up upon a rock.” You know the threefold figure. The “pavilion” stood in the middle of the camp and all the armed men kept watch around the royal tent. There was no slaying the man who was hidden in the royal pavilion unless the king, himself, were destroyed! And unless Divine Sovereignty is overthrown, not one of the elect can perish! Then, again, there was “the secret of the tabernacle.” That was the Most Holy Place into which no one entered but the high priest once a year! And there God said He would put His child, so that they must first break through and dare the very Shekinah and come before the brightness, the destroying brightness, of Jehovah’s face, before they can reach the soul that trusts in the Mercy Seat on which the blood was sprinkled! Then there is the third figure—“He shall set me up upon a rock”—so that the rock, itself, must shake—the Immutability of God, itself, must cease to be and God’s everlastingness must die before it shall be possible for a soul to perish that rests in Him! The eagle takes up the eaglets on her wings and bears them—and so in this way does God lead, train and guide us for the skies!  
Dear Brothers and Sisters, I shall not detain you longer, except to say that if God is training you for the skies—oh, let your hearts go up. Grovel not below—  
*“Go up, go up, my Heart,  
Dwell with your God above!  
For here you cannot rest,  
Nor here give out your love  
Go up, go up, my Heart,  
Be not a trifler here—  
Ascend above these clouds,  
Dwell in a higher sphere!  
Let not your love flow out  
To things so soiled and dim—  
Go up to Heaven and God,  
Take up your love to Him!  
Waste not your precious stores  
On creature love below—  
To God that wealth belongs,  
On Him that wealth bestow.”*  
You are a stranger here. If you are God’s child, then you are a citizen of another country! Are there any bands to bind you here? I thought He had broken them. Have you never said—  
*“The bands that bind my soul to earth  
Are broken by His hand—  
Before His Cross I find myself  
A stranger in the land.”*  
Are there loved ones to bind you here?—  
*“Your Best-Beloved keeps His Throne  
On hills of light in worlds unknown.”*  
All the love you dare to give to all below, if you are true to Christ, can be as nothing compared with the love which you give to Him! Do you not feel your soul now drawn towards Him? At least if you cannot fly on the wings of confidence, fly on the wings of desire! A sigh will mount to Him, or He will come down to it! Only be not fond of this world. Do not let this thick clay cleave to you. You are not earth-born now—you are born from above! This corruptible world must not claim you, for you are born-again of incorruptible seed! You are not this world’s property. You are bought with a price by Him who prays for you that you may be with Him where He is and behold His Glory. I am ashamed of myself that I who talk thus with you should so often grovel here. But this one thing I must say—I am never happy except when my soul is up with my Lord. I know enough of this to acknowledge that it is my misery to feed upon the ashes of this world, to lie among the pots, to serve the brick-kilns of this Egypt! There can be no peace between my soul and this world. Oh, I know this, for this painted Jezebel has mocked me too often and she has become so ugly in my esteem that I cannot endure her! But yet—what shall we say of our nature?—We go back again to the Marah, which was bitter for us to drink and try to drink from it again! And the broken cisterns which held no water before, we fly to again and again! Oh, for more wisdom! The Master has taught us and He has been so long a time with us, but we have not known Him. Yet may He have patience with us until He has taught us to mount above the world and dwell where He is!  
Ah, dear Friends, there are some of you to whom I cannot talk in this fashion because you cannot mount. You have nowhere to mount to! Oh, may the Master stir up your nests! I pray that He may put the thorns of conscience into your pillows tonight. May you recollect those sins which God hates and which God will punish—and if you do remember them and feel bowed down under their weight—then remember that there is one who can help you and who will help you, even the Lord Jesus Christ! Look to Him in the hour of trouble and He will be your Deliverer! May the Lord bless these thoughts to all our souls for Jesus’ sake.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **DEUTERONOMY 29:1-21.**

Verse 1. These are the words of the Covenant, which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the Covenant which He made with them in Horeb. That is the preamble, just as in legal documents there is usually some statement of the purport and intent of the indenture before the matter is proceeded with. These Covenants with God are solemn things and, therefore, they are given in a formal manner to strike attention and command our serious thoughts.

2-4. And Moses called unto all Israel and said unto them, You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the great trials which your eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles: yet the LORD has not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day. You saw all that and yet did not see it—you saw the external work, but the internal lesson you did not perceive. A very mournful statement to make, but God’s servants are not sent to flatter man but to speak the truth—however painful the speaking of it may be.

5, 6. And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes have not worn out upon you, and your shoe did not wear out upon your foot. You have not eaten bread, neither have you drunk wine or strong drink: that you might know that I am the LORD your God. Either there had been means of frequent renewal of their garments, or else by a miracle these garments had never worn out! And the very shoes that they put upon their feet on the Passover night were still on their feet—if not the same, yet still they were shod, though they trod the weary wilderness which well might have worn them till they were bare. “You have not eaten bread, neither have you drunk wine or strong drink”—a nation of total abstainers for forty years! There was no bread in the wilderness for them and there was no wine. It may have been obtained as a great luxury, as it probably was, for we have reason to believe that Nadab and Abihu were slain by fire before the Lord because they were drunk when they offered strange fire—but taking the whole people around, anything like wine had not crossed their lips for forty years, yet there they were, strong and healthy! “That you may know that I am Jehovah your God.”

7. And when you came unto this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, came out against us unto battle, and we smote them. People not used to war, either, and feeble folk! Yet they smote the great kings and slew mighty kings, for the Lord was with them!

8, 9. And we took their land, and gave it for an inheritance unto the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to the half tribe of Manasseh. Keep therefore the words of this Covenant, and do them, that you may prosper in all that you do. This, then, was the Covenant made with the nation— that God would be their God and He would prosper them. As He had done, so would He do—He would be their protector, defender, strength and crown and joy.

10, 11. You stand this day, all of you, before the LORD your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and your stranger that is in your camp, from the hewer of your wood unto the drawer of your water. This National Covenant embraced all the great men, the captains, the wise men, all that were in authority, “your elders, and your officers.” It took in all their children, for it was a Covenant according to the flesh—and their children according to the flesh are included. “Your wives,” too, for in this matter there was no sex. “The stranger also.” Here we poor Gentiles get a glimpse of comfort, even though from that old Covenant we seem to be shut out. “Your stranger that is in your camp” is included. And the poorest and those that performed the most menial service were all to be made partakers of this Covenant, “from the hewer of your wood unto the drawer of your water.”

12-15. That you should enter into Covenant with the LORD your God, and into His oath, which the LORD your God makes with you this day: that He may establish you today for a people unto Himself, and that He may be unto you a God, as He has said unto you, and as He has sworn unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. Neither with you only do I make this Covenant and this oath; but with him that stands here with us this day before the LORD our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day. With the sick that were at home, with the generations that were not yet born, for this was intended to be a National Covenant in perpetuity to their children and their children’s children to the end of time. Had they kept it so would it have stood!

16, 17. (For you know how we have dwelt in the land of Egypt and how we came through the nations which you passed by, and you have seen their abominations, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them). Now you have seen how they worshipped idols. You have seen what you must avoid—you have beheld their folly that you may escape from it.

18. Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turns away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that bears gall and wormwood. For the worship of false gods is the cause of untold mischief and evil—wherever it is found it is a root that bears gall and wormwood—and God would not have it in a single individual, man nor woman, no, not in a single family or tribe!

19. And so it may not happen, when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst. For there were some who so hardened themselves against God that they said, “We shall have peace! Let us do what we like—let us worship these idol gods more and more and more—let us add drunkenness and idolatry to our thirst.”

20. The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and His jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him. Not light upon him, but lie upon him—rest there and stay there!

20, 21. And the LORD shall blot out his name from under Heaven. And the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel. As a huntsman separates a stag from the herd that he may hunt it all day, so shall God with any idolater that should come among His people with whom He made a Covenant that day. Oh, how God hates that anything should be worshipped by us but Himself! How indignant is He if anywhere, anything takes the supreme place in the human heart which ought to be occupied by God alone!

—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 #2113 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

BY THE FOUNTAIN  
NO. 2113

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 3, 1889, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall.”  
Genesis 49:22.**

**“And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of Heaven, for the dew and for the deep that couches beneath” Deuteronomy 32:13.**

DEAR friends, we long to have many converts. We count that Church happy to which God adds daily of such as are being saved. But we are very much concerned about the quality of our converts. We do not wish to make up a Church with a number of shallow professors, whose religion lies upon the surface, and is of a doubtful character. We are very anxious that we should have those in our fellowship who are thoroughly converted, richly experienced and fully instructed in the deep things of God.

We would have as our associates people who are established by principle rather than moved by passion. We would earnestly pray to have a company of Believers added to the Church who shall be like Joseph in character—fruitful trees growing by the well, whose branches ran over the wall. Jacob describes Joseph as a fruitful offshoot and he explains his fruitfulness by his position—he is fruitful “by a well.” When a vine grows near a well which is always full, and when it is able to send its roots down to drink of the unfailing spring, it may very well be fruitful and send forth many branches.

The point is, to get by the well. Or, to use our second text, to tap “the deep that couches beneath.” If we can reach the secret fountains and say to God, with the Psalmist, “All my fresh springs are in You,” then shall we find nourishment for our branches and our fruit and leaf will never fail. “Dwell deep” is a prophetic word of much value to Christians. To live upon land-drainage and casual rains may suffice for ordinary plants. But the trees of the Lord which bring forth much fruit need to penetrate below the topsoil and reach the secret fountains of Divine Grace.

Upon that subject I am going to talk this morning. Our desire is that we may each one of us abide in Christ Jesus and be in constant fellowship with the Father through the Holy Spirit, so that we may, in very truth, be rooted by the well and may drink from “the deep that lies under.” We would be grounded and settled by living and lasting union and communion with the Eternal God. We would know the secret of the hidden life

and be filled with its fundamental principles, its constraining influences, its spiritual powers. We would drink in such supplies, by secret contact with God, that our outward life would bear ample testimony to our private communion with Heaven.

May the Holy Spirit graciously aid us in our meditations while we first notice that this figure describes Joseph’s character—he was all that Jacob styled him. Secondly, that this in itself was a great blessing, for it was used as such by Moses in after years. And thirdly, that it brings with it many other choice favors.

I. First, THIS DESCRIBES JOSEPH’S CHARACTER. He flourished near to God. He was an offshoot of the old tree and he was rooted deep by a well which always watered him. From his childhood until he died, the main point in Joseph’s character was that he was in clear and constant fellowship with God—and therefore God blessed him greatly. He lived to God and was God’s servant. He lived with God and was God’s child. He looked up to Heaven for daily teaching and comfort. And God was with him so as not only to bless him but to bless others for his sake—as, for instance, the house of Potiphar, first—and afterwards Pharaoh, and all the land of Egypt, and all the famishing nations.

In this respect his branches ran over the wall in scattering blessings far and wide—and all this was the result of living in constant communion with God. My dear Hearer, you profess to be a Christian, but have you really had dealings with God? I know you have been baptized and you come to the communion table. But have you pressed beyond the signs to the Lord Himself? Is there a root in your religion, and has that root struck deep into spiritual Truth? And have you received the life and power which come from the spiritual Fountain? Can you say with David, “My soul, wait you only upon God. For my expectation is from Him”?

The first blessing in the Book of Psalms is that the godly man should be, “like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither. And whatever he does shall prosper.” The great matter is being rooted by the Well—the drawing of supplies from the eternal storehouse of Christ Jesus the Lord—in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell.  
How can we fail to be fruitful if we draw our life and all its vigor from the Lord Jesus?

Because Joseph lived near to God, he received and retained gracious principles. There is a great difference between religious principle and religious passion. Many persons are religious by starts and fits—according to their company, their feelings, or their whims. According to the influences under which they come, certain people become good, bad, or indifferent. But when a man lives in the Presence of the Lord, he has fixed principles which rule his heart and guide his life. He fears God, not because others fear Him, but because God is “to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him.”

He believes the revealed Truths of God, not because others believe them, but because he is sure that the Lord has spoken them, and therefore he knows them to be true. If anybody denies the faith, he stands up to it, for it is precious to his heart. His moral conduct and his spiritual life are upright, true, sincere and reverent—not because of the prejudices of education, or the force of example—but because the Lord has placed within him a new heart and a right spirit. He does not resort to another man’s religious cistern. For there is within him “a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

He discerns between the Truth of God and error. For he has learned the Gospel for himself by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. He follows after holiness because he walks with the God of Holiness and the Law of the Lord is written upon the tablets of his heart. The Gospel of the Lord Jesus he receives by the witness of the Spirit. It is true to him, whether others receive it or reject it—he could part with anything and everything sooner than quit his hold upon the everlasting Truth of God. This it is to be a tree by a well, to have a religion based upon principles, to live by vital contact with the Lord.

Many nowadays belong to this denomination or to that by pure accident of birth or position. They have never weighed their opinions in the balances of Scripture. Indeed, many have no idea what their principles are. We have Protestants nowadays who never protest against anything and Nonconformists who conform to everything which is in fashion. All this is bad. Ignorance in reference to Divine Truth is a very fruitful evil. We need an instructed people, if we are to have a fruitful people. Unless we get hold  
upon the Truth of God by the right hand of clear apprehension and hold it as our heart’s treasure, we shall neither know the joy of it in days of calm, nor be held by it in nights of storm.

From where came martyrs in times of persecution, but from those who were in living union with God? From where shall come bold confessors in these apostatizing days, if not from among persons of like character? Unless we get men and women into the Church who, like Joseph, take root in the deep Truth of God’s Word, we shall never see the Church in full health and glory.

Joseph showed his character throughout the whole of his life. As a child, his father loved him, as our translators say, “because he was the son of his old age.” It would be better to understand the words as meaning, because he was a son of old age. He was old and wise in his ways. He was a youth of great thoughtfulness and his thoughts were much with

God. You may judge your waking thoughts by those which come to you in your dreams.

Joseph had dreams at night from God, because in the day he thought of God. No doubt they were supernatural and prophetic dreams. But I now speak after the manner of men—a dream is often the reflection of the wakeful thought. Joseph, as a youth, dwelt very near to God, and therefore he was forced to enter his protest against the evil conduct of his brothers. “Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.” Soon he became a marked young man—his brothers felt he was not one of themselves and they hated him—called him a dreamer—and took the first occasion to get rid of him.

Jacob’s household was in a very sad condition—even the grossest vice was found among his sons. And young Joseph was a speckled bird among them. By their malice he was sold for a slave into Egypt. But no sooner is he there, than we read, “And the Lord was with Joseph.” Potiphar bought him but the Lord made all that he did to prosper. It is difficult for a slave to become the steward of a great man. But Joseph did so. His master took no account of anything—he left it all absolutely in Joseph’s hands and God blessed the house for Joseph’s sake.

And then there came in his way that great temptation. And you remember his gracious answer, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” God was evidently with him, keeping him in the way of innocence—he could not grieve his God, for his God was his delight. By false accusation he was cast into prison. But we read that “the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.” Soon he became the under-jailer and was helpful to the prisoners. His branches were always running over the wall in the form of usefulness to others.

The prison was brightened by his presence. And as soon as he was prepared for the position, a straight path was opened for him from the prison to the court of Pharaoh. In the hour of his elevation he did not forget God. When about to interpret the royal dreams, he said, “God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.” He is a young man greatly gifted, and he may miss preferment if he mentions his religion—but this does not daunt him—again and again he says, “God has showed Pharaoh what He is about to do.” On the throne his God is still with him and guides him in all things and he exclaims, “God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.”

When he sees his aged father, their talk is concerning the Lord God. When he comes to die, he says to his Brethren, “I die but God will be with you.” He gave commandment concerning his bones, that he should not be buried in Egypt, for he was no Egyptian, though he had been lord of the land. He would be carried away to the land of promise in the day when Israel should quit the stranger’s land. Always the Lord his God is the star of Joseph. This is his character—he is in the fear of God all day long.

He was a fruitful bough by a well and that well was his God. This abiding near to God made Joseph independent of externals. His resources were within, and therefore he was not to be injured by things without. His springs were deep, and therefore not affected by circumstances.

He was not dependent upon family surroundings. At home, the society of his father would nourish his early piety but he was just as gracious in the house of Potiphar. The degrading idolatries of Egypt did not make him unfaithful to the unseen God. Some of you young people not only owe your religious impressions to your parents, but I fear that if you were removed from them you would have no religion of your own. Are my fears correct? It is an anxious time when a lad leaves his home to be apprenticed, or to take his first place. If he has nothing but borrowed religion, he will soon yield to ill company. But if he lives in God, for himself, he will stand.

If he has lived upon his parents as a mistletoe lives on the oak, it will be bad for him. But if he has root in himself and has lived upon God, all will be well. Hereditary religion is hopeful when it is also personal religion, but not else. If you are not living in God on your own account, your religion may as well fail you at once. For it will ultimately do so.

Many professing Christians are, I fear, very much dependent upon revival excitement and the currents of godly society, which are often sufficiently strong to bear with them those who have no living principle. If religion seems to prosper, if many press into the congregation, if large numbers throng the inquiry room, these people are very happy and very earnest. But after the summer-tide is over, where are they? This is the great burden which every earnest Evangelist has to bear—so many seem born for God in the heat of a revival who, nevertheless, die away when the warmth of zeal is gone.

Oh, that you, my Brethren, may be planted by a well, so that you may never be dried up by drought! Bless God for revivals and never speak against them. But do not live upon them, nor cause your spiritual health to depend upon them. Those who grow upon hotbeds will not be far from dung. There are evil tendencies connected with fanaticism which are to be dreaded. Get down to the well and let your roots drink up the fresh nourishment, which is essential to the sap of your life and to the fruit of your usefulness. Touching the cool spring, you will know where you are when others are so carried away as not to know what they hear or do.

Say to yourselves, each one of you, “I want Christ in my own heart. I want the love of God shed abroad in my own soul. I want not only to talk about heavenly things, but to know and experience them. I desire to be possessed by the Spirit of Truth and to know His power.” Be not content to live by the casual shower, or by the artificial watering-pot of special

means, or by the mechanical irrigation of routine. But send down the roots of your being into the deep things of God till you tap the great deep of Divine all-sufficiency.

Beloved Friend, I pray you will seek after a spiritual life which is never dependent on outward ordinances. It is a great comfort to be able to hear the Word faithfully preached. And if you hear it, but do not hear it, you miss a great blessing and incur grievous loss. But suppose you are placed where there is no preaching of the Word? Then it will be a happy circumstance if your godliness can survive such a deprivation.

If you were away on some cattle ranch in South America, far from all religious worship—it would be a grand thing to be able to go to your Bible and to your knees and draw near to God alone—and so grow strong enough to send your branches over the wall, by blessing others and beginning to teach or preach for Christ. This is the true way in which vigorous life shows itself. I know that the Lord’s Supper is a sacred ordinance and I would have you come to the Lord’s Table as often as you can, for He has said, “This do in remembrance of Me.”

But if it shall come to pass that you are where no Christian person is near with whom you could break bread—may you have Divine Grace to feed on Jesus Himself! When the tokens of His flesh and blood are denied you, may you be driven to Jesus Himself! Spiritual life loves the outward ordinances, but if it is deprived of them, it survives their absence. For in very deed, heavenly life draws its food from Heaven. Get to God. Oh, get to God through Jesus Christ! An hour’s communion with Him means renewed life. Surely, the cluster of Eshcol must have grown near waters which were ever running. If you would glorify God, live upon God.

I believe—and I am very sorry to have to say it—that a great many nominal Christians live very much upon the minister. I have seen it to be so beyond all question. I have noticed a Church flourish and increase while a certain good man has lived and preached. But when that servant of God has departed, then they have grown cold and have been thinned out and sadly scattered. The weaker sort were drawn and held together by the good man’s preaching. And as they cannot hear him, they will hear no one else, and their seats are empty. May this calamity never happen to this congregation. And yet I fear it would be so with many.

In the days of the Judges, the people seemed wonderfully good while the judge lived. But as soon as he was gone they wandered after idols. O my beloved People, may you become so indoctrinated with the Truth of God that you will never leave it! Be it your resolve that you will never hear anything but the Gospel. Love Christ so well that you will never follow any pretended shepherd who would lead you away from Him. Keep to Christ and Him crucified and live on the Doctrines of Grace when your present leader lies asleep in his grave. Keep to the great Lord of love, whoever the preacher may be. Let it be seen that you have struck your roots too deep, and are fed by supplies too permanent, for you to be dependent upon any man—however much esteemed that man may be.

Above all, it is a great blessing to be so rooted and watered that you can live graciously and uprightly, despite personal interest. There was a time when it seemed the loss of everything for Joseph to keep close to God. A young man can get on well with elder brothers if he will please them by dropping into their habits. But if he opposes them, he will have a sorry time of it. “Joseph, if you want to be happy with Reuben and Simeon and Levi, you must hold your tongue when you see them making free in their morals, or you will bring a hornets’ nest about your head.”

If you would be happy at home, you must remember the old proverb, that when you are at Rome you must do as Rome does. This is the wisdom of this world. But Joseph scorns it. No, he cannot help it. He must abide with God and with holiness. What is the result? The Ishmaelites carry him away for a slave. Poor encouragement this for holy youth! In the house of Potiphar, compliance with his mistress seemed an easy way to honor and pleasure. But he could not yield to her base suggestion. He had rather bear the consequences of her hate. She falsely charges him. He comes under his master’s anger, loses his place and is put in prison. But he cannot help it, he must obey his God.

Are you of this true kind? Many will gladly walk with Christ when He wears silver sandals and a golden girdle. But if He walks barefoot through the mire, they seek other company. Oh, for that godliness which will strengthen you to quit your situation, to lose your wealth, to sacrifice your credit, and to part with your friends sooner than grieve your Lord! Oh, that you may never be unstable as water. For, if so, you will not excel! Your bow will only abide in strength if, like Joseph, the arms of your hands are made strong by the mighty God of Jacob.

You must draw your soul’s nourishment from secret fountains and wait upon the Lord where no eye sees you, or you will soon prove barren and unfruitful. To follow your Savior wherever He goes, you must daily derive your life from Him. I cannot close this first head without saying that while Joseph thus was placed in a position of very high independence of all outward things, he was very conscious of his entire dependence upon God. Take the well away and where was the fruitful bough? Remove “the deep that lies under,” and then the resources even of so great a character as that of the Prime Minister of Egypt would have been dried up.

We can stand alone with God. But we fall without Him—we can bear the brunt of the battle without a friend or an armor-bearer—but if the Lord does not cover our head we are undone. Like Samson, we can slay the Philistines—

*“But if the Lord is once withdrawn,  
And we attempt the work alone,  
When new temptations spring and rise,  
We find how great our weakness is.”*

Dear young Friends, I exhort you to think for yourselves, and judge for yourselves, and act for yourselves with a holy independence of others. Yet never forget where your strength lies and never rely upon  
yourselves.

Never resolve to do anything apart from the Lord. Never say, “I am sufficient,” but always, in conscious insufficiency, fall back upon that Divine Grace which never fails. Self is a mocker, pride is raging and whoever is deceived thereby is not wise. All your usefulness and all your faithfulness will come to an end unless you fix your entire dependence upon Jehovah, the Beginning and the End of all that is good. Keep by the deep Well of boundless love. Draw from the Fountain of all-sufficiency and may the Lord bless you from now on and forever!

II. This brings me now to notice, under my second head, that THIS IS OF ITSELF A GREAT BLESSING. Moses, in my second text, mentions “the deep that couches beneath,” as having its own form of blessing. This was for Joseph’s race a blessing. It is a high favor to know the deep things of God, and to enjoy the far-down securities, enjoyments, and privileges of the children of Heaven.

In deep union to God are to be found the very truth and life of godliness. As for outward religion, what is it? You may practice all the ordinances without fault, and yet you will be godless unless your spirit has had converse with the Lord. A good man in Scripture is said to be a godly man. He is a man of God—God’s man—he lives for God, he lives with God, he lives on God. If you do not believe in God, love God, glorify God—all the outward forms on earth, all the rites that God has given—cannot make up a religion for you that is worth a single penny.

You may be orthodox in creed, as I hope you will be. But unless you really grasp and apprehend the things of orthodoxy and so come to the God of Truth and the Holy Spirit of Truth, you have a set of words and nothing more. A man may possess the catalogue of a library and yet be without a book. And so may you know a list of doctrines and yet be a stranger to the Truth of God. You may have in your hand a map of a fine estate and a list of all the treasures in the mansion—yet you may not have a place where to set your foot. A knowledge of the technicalities of theology is of small use unless you enjoy the Truths of God to which they refer. You must know the Lord and abide in Christ.

Do not say, “I have joined the Church, Sir, and attend the Prayer Meetings, and take my share among the workers.” Yes, I know. But true religion is more than this. It is repentance towards God. It is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. “Dear Sir,” cries one, “I accept what you say. And dispute none of your teaching.” That may be. But this does not content me. If you receive my teaching as the Truth of God, I am sorry. I desire you to receive it as the Word of God. Go to the Bible for yourself. Seek to be taught by the Spirit of God. Ask to have the Truth of God written upon your heart by the Holy Spirit. You have not received the Truth of God rightly unless it comes to you with power as the Word of the living God.

When a man like Joseph can be compared to a fruitful tree by a well because he is rooted in fellowship with God, he has the blessedness of drawing his supplies from secret but real, sources. His life is hid and the support of his life is hidden, too. The world knows him not. But the secret of the Lord is with him. There is the tree, and there is the fruit—these can be seen by all. But none can see the roots which are the cause of the clusters, nor the deep that lies under, from which those roots derive their supply. God’s hidden Ones are a wonder unto many. Oh, to dwell with Him who is invisible and so to become ourselves partakers of an unseen life!

The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. Oh, to have eternal life and to be heirs of an eternal heritage! It is a great thing to cultivate the inner life, for it is the true life. But unless a man dwells with God in secret, he forgets the inward life—he is so taken up with washing the outside of the cup and the platter, that his inward part remains very wickedness. This will never do, for the Lord looks at the heart. We must see to the inward. And we shall fail to do so unless we abide near to God.

The supplies of such a man are inexhaustible. The well is not drawn dry, and the deep that lies under is never emptied. Plants dependent upon irrigation may pine in the drought of summer. But a tree that strikes its roots into the well does not see when heat comes but its leaf is green. It can never exhaust the great fountains. It may drink on and on and yet never diminish its supplies. “God all-sufficient” is a glorious name. Infinite mercy is a storehouse for a starving world. The Lord’s own word is, “My grace is sufficient for you.”

The man who dwells near to God has supplies which can never be cut off. We have heard of cities which have been surrounded by armies and were never captured by assault but were compelled to surrender because the besiegers cut off the water supply—broke down the aqueducts—and so subdued them by thirst. Jerusalem was never thus captured, for there were deep wells within the city itself which never ceased to flow. Ah, my Brethren, he that has a well of living water within him is beyond the enemy’s power!

We can go to God when we are not allowed to go to the service. The priest took away the boy’s Bible. “Yes,” said the child, “but you cannot take away those twelve chapters of John which I have learned.” The mal

ice of man may deny us a place of worship, but it cannot prevent our worshipping the Lord, wherever we may be. Every means of Divine Grace may be denied the Believer, but the Grace of the means will still come to him. God grant that neither sickness, nor traveling, nor watching at the bedside may keep us away from the assembly of His people. But if ever it should so happen, may we then so dwell in God that the upper springs may flow freely and feed the very roots of our spirit!

Supplies gained by nearness to God Himself are constant. Grace is not intermittent. It is not a land spring, but a well. Joseph had Divine Grace as an old man, even as he had it as a youth. A religion that ebbs and flows is a poor thing. We should desire the constancy of the sun and not the changing of the moon. We may have Grace day by day, every day and all day. If yours is a spring from off the deep that lies under, it will be so. I do not say that your root can always take in the same measure of water from the well of life. But I do say that it will always be there for you to take. And I think, also, that to a large extent, you will be able to partake of it with constancy.

Your root will be always in the well and so you may always drink to the full. It is wonderful how trees will grow if planted close by abundant water. I hope to see, before long, a palm which was planted in my presence some years ago. It was one of a number of palms which make a long line in a friend’s garden. They were all of one size when I saw them brought from the nursery, and the next year they all seemed pretty much upon an equality. But very soon this particular palm outstripped its fellows, and now it towers high above all the rest, till you might suppose it to be many years older.

My very good friend, the owner of the garden, said to me, “You know why this palm has so far outgrown the rest? It has sent its roots down below, into that large reservoir and so its life is powerful.” The Arabs say that the palm tree loves to have its roots in the water and its head in the fire—it would have a flowing river below and the burning sun above. Ah, Beloved, may we also grow as the palm tree! And if we get our roots down into the Divine fountains and can sun ourselves in the love of the Lord, we shall grow rapidly and surely.

The supplies of the Believer who dwells deep are pure, as well as full. Grace through the means is apt to be diluted. But when we receive it from God alone, it is Grace, indeed. The best of pipes are apt to mar the water’s taste. All common watercourses mix earth with the water. But “the deep that lies under” is out of reach of defilement. If you can draw from the pure well of the undefiled Gospel, you will do well. Among the Alps how often have I wished to drink! And the guide has forbidden me and told me to wait a little. And then we have come to a leaping fount, most cool and delicious—far better than the streams which, as they ran along, had gathered earth, and decay and evil life.

Did you ever know a stream in England that ran for half a mile without someone turning it into a sewer? And so it would seem at this time, as if God’s own Truth could not be found in the teachings of the pulpit—pure and undefiled as given forth in Scripture by His Spirit. Do we not fear, lest with all our care, we should tincture the infallible Revelation with our thoughts? O Believer, go at once to your God for teaching! Again I remind you of David’s words—“My soul, wait you only upon God. For my expectation is from Him.”

Draw your supplies at first hand. Do as he did who had been made ill with impure milk—he kept a cow of his own. Instead of expositors, read the Bible for yourself. In Bible light the Bible is best seen. If the human water pot fails, it will not matter if you are “a fruitful bough by a well.”

III. Lastly, I would remind you that THIS BRINGS WITH IT OTHER BLESSINGS. If you are by the well, sending your roots into its waters, you will obtain fruitfulness. A fruitful tree is one which is well sustained at the root. Dear Friends, it is by no means wisdom to cry, “I will work hard and try to bear fruit.” Fruit is not produced by work. No vine toils to produce grapes. It buds and blossoms and bears fruit in the order of its nature.

We have a great deal of fruitless working nowadays. Religion is pumped up. Devotion is too often mechanical. Godliness is supplanted by artificial excitement. And love to God by perpetual fussiness. Zeal for God is counterfeited by “much ado about nothing.” If the inner, secret life, is in good order, precious fruit is brought forth both by sun and moon. The gardener never says, “It is time for me to go and work a hundredweight of grapes out of my vine.” Oh dear, no! Beginning early in the year he spies a shoot, and by-and-by there is a tiny flower. And then leaves appear and so on, in regular order—and only at last can he hope to gather the rich cluster from the vine.

There is no noise in the production of the vintage. You never heard a vine groaning, nor saw it sweating, nor noticed it straining a single shoot. If vines get their roots down into good soil, they bring forth fruit, as it were, naturally. May the Lord make us bring forth holiness through the force of the new nature! May He put into us immortal principles and may He sustain them by His own Personal power! And then, naturally and joyfully, in its season, we shall bring forth fruit to His praise and glory, by His Grace.

The next blessing that came with this was unselfishness. Joseph was a bough whose “branches ran over the wall.” He extended his influence beyond his own family. We shall bear but little fruit if our branches are kept within the narrow space of self and relatives. Cultivate godliness for the sole sake of yourself and you will never be very godly. But abound in it for

God’s sake, and for love of those whom Jesus has redeemed, and you will be godly, indeed. Live to love. For to love is to live when the love is set upon God. You should go over the wall to your ungodly neighbor, to the infidel without Christ, to the heathen and the castaway. You should extend your usefulness where none expected it to grow. Then you will be a blessing to many who were far off from you and your God.

I heard of one whose last petition was that God would bury his influence with him. An awful prayer! It was good only so far that it evidenced a recognition of his life’s mistake and some sort of repentance for it. But he was asking for that which could not be granted. For not even God Himself ever kills a man’s influence. The world’s poet truly says, “The evil that men do lives after them.” Most surely the evil lives, even if the good expires. Yet, when we are dead and buried, if we have lived unto God and lived upon God, our branches will run over the wall of the cemetery and our voices will be heard from amid the silence of the sepulcher. Is it not written, “He being dead yet speaks”?

A third blessing that comes with this is fixedness. A fruitful tree by a well, sending its roots down to the water, is well-rooted and cannot be torn from its place. It would not be fruitful if it were not stable. If a tree has no living root, you may pull it up, if you please. But if it is living and growing and drawing up its nutriment from the depth, its roots will furnish it with mighty anchorage. Can you stir a man who has once received into his heart the doctrine of the atoning sacrifice? Not if he has found in it a refuge for despair.

The logician may prove that the death of Christ did not mean Substitution and Propitiation. A fig for his logic—“we have received the Atonement,” and know better. The Doctrines of Grace which I have preached to you, have a hold upon the heart and intellect, like that of certain colors when the wool is dyed ingrain. But when these doctrines have not been sufficiently preached, people are easily carried away with every wind of doctrine. Brethren, the old evangelical doctrine of Luther and Calvin had about it power to create enthusiasm. See how the Huguenots mustered to a sermon when it was death to hear a reformed preacher!

Geneva sent forth men who could gather crowds in regions crimsoned with the blood of their Brethren. Why did the multitudes come together? Would any man jeopardize his life to hear a “modern-thought” sermon? My Brethren, there is something in the old Gospel worth hearing—there is an Election of Grace most precious, a Redemption which really redeemed and a work of Divine Grace within which assures Final Perseverance and eternal Glory. The wish-wash of today’s preaching would have gained the preacher in “the desert” no congregation. But when untold treasures are displayed, saints will come to hear of them.

That Truth of God, which is a matter of life and death to you, will take hold of your heart and soul and you will never part with it. I long to see a race of real men who will know the Truth and believe it in real fashion— men who have received a kingdom which cannot be moved—palaces of God whose foundations are in the rock.

Another privilege of personal nearness to God—such men enjoy safety. Hear how Jacob puts it—“The archers have sorely grieved him and shot at him and hated him.” If you live near to God you will be the target of the ungodly, and the hatred of the world will cause you grief of heart. It cannot be avoided, for the seed of the serpent will nibble at the heel of the seed of the woman. Even to this day is Joseph sold into Egypt and separated from his Brethren—

*“No slacker grows the fight,*

*No feebler is the foe.”*  
Keep close to God and His Word and you will be counted a Nazarene among your Brethren. But this shall not harm you. For it is added, “His bow abode in strength and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.” Deriving his strength from God, Joseph lived above the rage of men. He who keeps His people neither slumbers nor sleeps. Only live upon God—let your expectations be from God only—and you cannot be overcome of adversaries.

They that trust in princes will find them fickle. They that rely upon the multitude will find them lighter than vanity. But they that trust in the Lord shall not be ashamed, nor confounded, world without end. Therefore, strike deep and draw your life from the well. Besides that, Joseph received enrichment. Notice how Moses puts it—he mentions quite a treasury of jewels. The best pearls come out of deep seas. He mentions the precious things of Heaven, the precious fruit brought forth by the sun, the precious things put forth by the moon, the chief things of the ancient mountains, the precious things of the earth—and the fullness thereof—and the goodwill of him that dwelt in the bush.

All these blessings came upon the top of the head of him who was a fruitful bough by a well. Many of you religious people know nothing about precious things. Many professors live on the mere skins and husks of Divine Truth. They have never tasted the sweet kernels. A little religion is a mournful thing—they that drink deep get down to the sweetness. Many people have religion enough to make them wretched. If they had seven times as much, they would be joyful. The restraints and duties and formalities of religion have in them none of the fat things full of marrow, nor of the wines on the lees well refined.

The best wines in God’s House are in the cellar. Those who never go downstairs have no idea of the secret sweetness. A deep experience is a precious experience. The Lord fills certain of His people with pain and grief, that they may know His choicer consolations. We are too apt to let

our roots run along just under the surface and so we get no firm footage. But trouble comes and then we grow downward, rooted in humility. Then we pierce the treasures of darkness and know the deep things of God. If you want a rich Christian, find a man who lives with God in secret and goes deep into Divine Truth.

A shallow Believer is a poor and weak Believer. But the strong Christian is the man who lives on God and will not be put off with anything short of fellowship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This benediction, with which we close our public service, should be the perpetual benediction of every day. Dear Friends, I might add a thousand things but I will not. I will only say this—do, I pray you, dive into the depths. You that are beginning with holy things, begin deep and take sure root. See how soon buildings fall if they have insufficient foundations! Find your foundation in the Rock.

You that have long known the Lord, endeavor to know more and more of Him. Send out more roots into yet deeper and richer ground. Get more nearly to the very heart of God. In an evil time like this, take firm hold. You cannot overcome the drift of an ill current unless you let down your anchor. Yes, and at such a time you may be unusually careful and let down four anchors from the stern, as well as the one in the proper place. We need to be anchored stem and stern in these days. We need to be held to Christ by hooks of steel. Heart, and head, and hand, and every other power had need take hold on the everlasting Truths of God.

For such are the winds that blow today, that we shall be carried about by them like thistle upon the hills, if we have nothing but our own strength to rely upon. God grant us to get closer to Him than ever and to stay there. And may He grant us yet further to use all our opportunities for usefulness, and all our life for fruitfulness to His glory! Amen.

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SMALL RAIN FOR TENDER HERBS  
NO. 1999

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, DECEMBER 25, 1887,  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“As the small rain upon the tender herb.”  
Deuteronomy 32:2.**

THIS is the language of the great Prophet, Moses, “My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.” We read of Moses that he was a Prophet mighty in word and deed—he combined with his incomparable teaching an unequalled degree of marvelous miracle-working. He was equally great as a law-giver and as an administrator. This double power was found in no other Prophet till our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, came. The other Prophets were, many of them, mighty in deed, but not in word. And others were mighty in word, but not in deed. Samuel spoke mightily in the name of the Lord, but his miracles were few. Elijah was a great doer, but few of his words remain. The combination of the two was peculiar to Moses and, afterwards, to Him of whom Moses had said, “The Lord your God will raise up unto you a Prophet from the midst of you, of your brethren, like unto me; unto Him you shall hearken.”

Moses was mighty, indeed, no man could have been more so. He it was that broke the power of Egypt by the 10 great plagues and led forth the once-enslaved people through the Red Sea—and fed them 40 years with bread from Heaven—and formed them into a nation. Heaven and earth and sea seemed to be obedient to Moses! God had girded him with such extraordinary power, yet I greatly question whether his power of word was not greater than his power of action. Although he was slow of speech, yet with Aaron as his spokesman, he faced the terrible Egyptian king and so vanquished him, that he dreaded the word of Moses more than all the armies of the nations! In the five volumes which Moses wrote, which are to this day accepted by us as lying at the base of Revelation, Moses proved his great capacity in word. He was a master with his pen—he neither failed in prose nor in poetry, in law nor in divinity, in history nor in prophecy. Inspiration from above was his strength—he spoke the very Word of God which he had heard when he was with Him on the holy mount.

Yet we perceive that this might of word, which dwelt in Moses, displayed itself frequently in a mild and gentle utterance in the text. He declares that his doctrine should drop as rain and distil as dew and that it should be “as the small rain upon the tender herb.” The highest power is consistent with the lowliest tenderness. He that is mightiest in word is mighty, not so much in thunder, earthquake and fire, as in a silent persuasiveness! God is often most present where there is least of apparent force. The still, small voice had God in it when it was written, “The Lord was not in the wind.” It is a wonderful thing, however, this being “mighty in word.” It is perfectly marvelous how God uses words to accomplish great things. Remember, it is by the Incarnate Word that we are saved at all. It is by the Inspired Word that you are made to know the will of God and it is through the words by which that Incarnate Word is preached unto man that God is pleased to communicate the inner life.

Faith comes by hearing, but there could be no hearing if there were no spoken words. You may wisely covet the power to speak with the words which God’s wisdom teaches, for thus you will be an immeasurable blessing to your fellow men. You may well treasure up those words in your memory, even if you have not the gift to tell them out to others, for they are the wealth of the soul. You may be content to repeat the language of the Book of God, the ipsissima verba, the very Words of Inspiration, if you cannot put together sentences of your own, for the pure Word of God is, by itself, the best thing a man can say! And to repeat a text is often better than to preach a sermon from it. We cannot too widely scatter the actual language of the Holy Spirit, for we cannot tell what work the Divine utterance may perform. Thank God that He uses words, for thus He comes very near to us. Ask Him to open your own lips, that you may show forth His praise! And if that is not granted you, then ask Him to open your ears, that His Words may sink into your souls and prove a savor of life unto life to you.

I intend to make three observations upon my text. Moses says that his doctrine should be as the small rain upon the tender herb.  
I. Our first observation is, MOSES MEANT TO BE TENDER. Moses intended, in the sermon he was about to preach, to be exceedingly gentle. He would water minds as tender herbs and water them in the same fashion as the small rain does. He would not be a beating hail, nor even a down-pouring shower, but he would be, “as the small rain upon the tender herb.” And this is the more remarkable because he was about to preach a doctrinal sermon. Does he not say, “My doctrine shall drop as the rain”? Time was when a doctrinal sermon seemed to be most appropriately preached with clenched fists! The very idea of a doctrinal sermon seemed to mean a fight—a sort of spiritual duel in which the good man was evidently bent upon demolishing somebody or other who held contrary views. I trust we are learning better and that we try, now, to let doctrine distil as rain and drop as dew—“as the small rain upon the tender herb.”  
It is our duty at certain turning points of the road to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, but we are to remember that our contentions are the contentions of love—and that it ill becomes the man who holds the Truth of a loving Savior to hold it in bitterness, or contend for it with rancor. You will possibly think that I have been guilty in this matter, but I cannot make such a confession to any large extent. I have felt no bitterness and, when I have spoken forcibly, I have yet restrained myself from harder things which I might truthfully have brought forth. Yet, I regret that I have been forced into controversy for which I have no taste, and in which I have no pleasure. I have been driven to it—I have never sought it. To spread the Gospel I should choose the gentler method. It is only to defend it that I have to draw the sword. Fight for the Truth of God, yes! Be willing to live or die for the Truth of God, but if you wish to spread it, you will do it best by letting it drop as rain and distil as dew, gently and tenderly, “as the small rain upon the tender herb.”  
It is equally remarkable that this discourse of Moses was a sermon of rebuke. He rebuked the people and rebuked them, too, with no small degree of sternness, when he said, “Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked: you grew fat, you are grown thick; then he forsook God which made him.” He warned the people of their great sin and he did not hesitate to say, “They are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them.” Yet he felt that he had rebuked with the utmost meekness and had still been as the soft dew and gentle rain. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, upbraiding must be done in tenderness! Rebukes given in an unkind spirit had better not be given at all.  
I passed by a preacher, one evening, who was addressing certain villagers in the most terrific strains. He was telling them, “The Lord is coming! The Lord is coming! You will all be destroyed!” There was plenty of sound, though I fear not an excess of sense—and there was a savor of delirious prophecy which went beyond the Scriptures into personal visions and figments of the man’s own brain! I wondered what he hoped to do. The people were standing at their doors, smoking their pipes and taking it in as a curious kind of display. Perhaps better that he should rage like a sea in a storm than give the people no warning and yet I do not suppose any good could come of his shouts. Had he spoken gently to them, one by one, concerning faith in God—had he gone to their doors and spoken of the great love of Jesus Christ—perhaps there would have been some result. But one would not look for good fruit from the boisterous shouts of nonsense! And yet there are many who feel that if a man shouts and perspires, something must be effected.  
Wisdom does not learn her exercises among the athletes, but among calm scholars. We do not blacken peoples’ eyes to make them see, nor bully them into peace, nor kick them into Heaven. To strive, cry, lift up and cause clamorous voices to be heard in the streets is not Christ’s way! Not a syllable have we to say against zeal, even when it breaks over all bounds of propriety—but it is the zeal which we value—and not the outbursts by themselves! We question greatly whether too often physical force is not mistaken for spiritual power—and this is an error of a mischievous kind. We need, if we can, to draw our hearers with bands of love, not with cart ropes and with “cords of a man”—not such cords as we put about dogs and bulls.  
There must be in all rebukes an abounding gentleness, softness and holy sorrow. When Paul is writing a very strong condemnation, he says, “I now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.” Jesus Christ denounces the doom of Jerusalem, but it is with a flood of tears. He cries, “Woe unto you, Chorazin!” but He feels a woe within His own soul while He is uttering woe to them! Dear Brothers, it is well to observe this—that though it was a doctrinal discourse, it was tender. And though Moses was preaching a rebuking discourse, it was still “as small rain upon the tender herb.”  
Yet once more, in this discourse, this swan’s song, this final deliverance of the great Judge in Israel, he was about to declare the wrath of God for here we read words like these—“A fire is kindled in My anger and shall burn unto the lowest Hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend My arrows upon them,” and so on. Never stronger, sterner language! But even this was made to drop as the small rain. And if ever there is a time when the sluices should be pulled up and the floods of sympathy should flow, it is when we preach the wrath of God! I am certain that to preach the wrath of God with a hard heart, cold lips, tearless eyes and an unfeeling spirit is to harden men—not to benefit them. If we preach these terrors of the Lord persuasively, we have hit the nail on the head, for what does the Apostle say?—“Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.”  
Gently, as a nurse persuades a child, though in the background is the rod, we would woo men to Jesus till we win them! Though we tell them that they must have Christ or perish—they must believe in Him or be forever driven from His Presence into outer darkness, we do this because we love them—love them better than those who flatter them! We dare not keep back, for a moment, the fact that sin is a horrible evil and brings with it endless misery. Nor would we dare to soften a syllable of the heavy tidings which we have to bear from the Lord to the impenitent. Yet we have no joy in being the bearers of harsh news—it is the burden of the Lord to us. We wish we had permission to preach always upon cheering themes, as, indeed, we would gladly do if men would turn to Jesus and live! Yet, even now, when we beat the warning drum, we do not forget to interject frequent pauses between the alarming strokes, that Pity’s gentle voice may take its turn in the winning of souls.  
I remember one servant of God who could not help interrupting the great New England minister by crying out, “Mr. Edwards, Mr. Edwards, is He not, after all, a God of mercy?” I hope I should never, under any circumstances, give occasion for such a question! Though the Lord is a God of vengeance upon such as refuse His Son and reject His Grace, yet is He abundant in mercy, tenderness and long-suffering! And He delights not in the death of any, but that they should turn unto Him and live! Therefore let us give space for Mercy to persuade while Justice threatens! The right spirit in which to preach the terrors of God is the spirit of the text. We are to make even our solemn warnings drop, “as the small rain upon the tender herb.” Moses meant to be gentle. Though it was a doctrinal discourse, a searching and rebuking discourse—and a discourse full of the threats of God—yet he displayed in it his customary meekness.  
Now, beloved Friends, if Moses meant to be tender, how much more truly was Jesus tender! The representative of the Law aimed at tenderness—how much more the Incarnation of the Gospel! He who came with 10 broken Commands to threaten men was tender—how much more He who comes with five wounds and fountains of eternal pardon to persuade men! How winning is the meek and lowly Lamb or God! The moment we look to His life, we see that wondrous tenderness displayed in His doctrine, for His teaching was compassionate in manner. Somehow, I cannot imagine our Lord Jesus Christ preaching with tones and manners at all similar to certain of His professed followers who thunder at men with a vehemence devoid of sympathy! He did thunder in indignation, but the lightning of conviction was by far the more noticeable—and with the lightning there always came a shower of pity.  
The Sermon on the Mount, I have sometimes thought, was such as an inspired woman might fitly have preached! It is so full of heart and so exceedingly pitiful. For the most part, throughout His ministry, though masculine to the last degree, yet there is a softness, a pathos of love—as if in the Person of Christ we had both man and woman, as in the first Adam at the creation. Jesus is the Head of the race, completely combining, in His own Person, all the vigor of the man and all the affection of the woman. He is, as it were, both Father and Mother to the children of men, blending everything that is sweet in manhood and womanhood in one Individuality and showing it all in His style which is as forcible as a hero’s energy in the day of battle—and yet as gentle as a nurse with her children.  
All the mannerisms of Christ are wooing. And, therefore, we read, “Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him.” Hence we have Him saying, “Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not.” To Him the sick came by instinct as to a Physician peculiarly set for the healing of humanity! To Him the bereaved sisters, the widowed mothers and the outcast lepers ran with eager hope! Yes, to Him the wildest of maniacs yielded, feeling the irresistible spell of His love. Oh yes, our Lord’s manner was gentleness, itself.  
Furthermore, His style of speech was compassionately considerate, even as the dew seems to consider the withered grass and the small rain to adapt itself to the tender herb. In His teaching He evidently thought of the feebler sort and suited Himself to those depressed by grief. You find no hard words thrown in to make the speaker seem wise. There are difficulties about His doctrine inherent to the nature of truth, but they are never aggravated by His style. I suppose nobody ever went to Him and said, “Rabbi, what did You mean by such-and-such a word?” They knew the meaning of the words, though not always did they catch the inner sense. Their misapprehension was never the fault of the words which He used. His use of the parabolic style was especially remarkable—He kept on saying the Kingdom of Heaven is like—like this, like that. When He feeds the multitude, He never gives them indigestible food—His menu is always bread and fish—and likewise, when He preaches, there is no indigestible Truth.  
For the most part, in the early days of His preaching to the outside multitude, He gave them little more than moral truth, for that was all they were able to bear. It sometimes amuses me to see how certain “modern thought” men prove themselves to belong to the outside many—and not to the inner circle of disciples—for they take the Sermon on the Mount and extol it as the summit of the doctrine of Jesus, whereas it was only His discourse to the multitude and not such spiritual teaching as He gave to His Apostles when alone. There were gleams and specks of the Divinelyspiritual Truths of God flashing out of the moral Truth like flames from a fire, but for the most part He gave the crowd that which it could receive and not that which would have been above their heads.  
He crumbed the bread into the milk and gave the people a portion fit for their childhood. He fed them with milk, for they were not yet able to bear that strong meat which His servant Paul was afterwards permitted to bring forth in a lordly dish for the feeding and feasting of those who have had their senses exercised in spiritual things. The Lord was very careful as to the manner of His teaching and, as to the matter of His teaching, too, even to His chosen. “I have yet many things to say unto you,” He said, “but you cannot bear them now.” There was a gradual development in His teaching as He saw the minds of men were prepared to receive the Truth which He should speak—from which method of wisdom and prudence let His disciples learn a lesson!  
Furthermore, note well that the Truth which our Lord spoke had always a refreshing effect upon those that were spiritually alive. Our blessed Master’s sermons were, “as the small rain upon the tender herb,” not merely for the softness of their descent, but for the wondrous efficacy with which they came. His Words fell not as fire-flakes to destroy, nor as the dust from the wilderness to defile, but always as the warm shower to cherish. What a delight it must have been to have listened to the Lord!  
Oh, to hear Him preach just once! Ah, though He should rebuke me and do nothing else—yes, though He should thunder at me and do nothing else—how gladly would I listen to His voice and say, “Speak, Lord; for Your servant hears”! Surely this heart of mine would be more than glad to be as a fleece of wool, filled with the dew of His blessed doctrine! There must have been an unutterable sweetness, a delicious persuasiveness, a Divine power about the speaking of Jesus, for, “Never man spoke like this Man.” His lips were as lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh. Whatever He spoke was fragrant with infinite love and gentleness and, therefore, it revived the spirit of the contrite ones.  
So we learn that Moses meant to be tender and Jesus was tender. What else do we learn? Why, that all the servants of Jesus Christ ought to be tender, for, if Moses was so, much more should we be! I know there are many here tonight who are preachers of the Gospel. Dear Brothers, let us endeavor, with all our might, to be always considerate towards those whom we address! Let us think of them as tender herbs, for many are so in their weakness, sorrowfulness, instability and ignorance! I am persuaded that we fix too high a standard when we preach and assume that our people know a great deal more than they do. I am sure we frequently need to go over, again, the elements, the fundamentals, the simplest doctrines of the Gospel to our congregations, for, though there are some that are fathers for whom we are grateful, yet it is true, today, as it was in Paul’s day, we have not many fathers—and we ought not to preach with an eye to the few fathers—but with an eye to the many children!  
We shall do well if the babes in Grace are fed by us and to do this our preaching must be, “as the small rain upon the tender herb.” We must try to the utmost of our ability to be very plain and simple, for many will not understand us even then. I was greatly pleased with a complaint brought against me the other day, to which I plead guilty and I expect I shall plead guilty to it for many a day to come. Someone said, “Mr. Spurgeon gives us meat, but there’s no gristle—he cuts out all the bone.” They wanted a bit or two of hard bone, just to try their teeth on. Alas, many have broken more than a tooth over the novel teaching of “modern thought!” Now, I have never been particularly earnest, when feeding my flock, to seek out the poisonous pastures just to see how much of injurious fodder they could bear without getting sick. No! I have had regard to those who are not yet able to discern the differences in spiritual things and, therefore, I have led them to those ancient pastures where the saints were content to feed in days gone by.  
I think we cannot be too simple, nor too plain, nor set out the precious things of God in too clear a light. The little ones of God have very great needs and must have our special care. These tender herbs are very apt to be dried up and, yet, being tender, they are not able to drink in a great shower all at once. When I have been traveling, especially in southern France and Italy, I have come upon places where the river has burst its banks and covered all the land with water—then, instead of blessing the fields, it has swept everything out of them, buried them in mud—and killed the crops. There is a great difference between irrigation and inundation! But some preachers forget this. A sermon may sometimes act in that fashion to some of God’s dear tender ones—it may be a perfect deluge of doctrine, sweeping up by the roots those feeble plants which are not very deeply rooted in the faith. They shall not perish, but we must avoid everything which has a tendency to destroy even the least of them.  
We do well to give the tender herbs the Water of Life, little by little. It must be, “Line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little,” for God’s children are like our children and need little and often, rather than much and seldom! There is a loaf of bread and there is the child—you need to get that loaf of bread into the child. Well, you must do it by degrees, or else you will never do it at all! You will choke the child if you attempt to insert too much at a time into his limited storeroom. Take the bread and break it down—and in due time he will appropriate that quarter loaf and a great many loaves

esides, for little children have great appetites! God’s children cannot, all of them, receive a mass of doctrine all at once—but they have a fine appetite and if you give them time, they will gradually appropriate, masticate and inwardly digest all the Truths of God so that they will be nourished and made to grow! Let every minister of Christ remember this and patiently instruct his hearers as they are able to bear it.  
And so, dear Friends, I will say one thing more upon this point, which is, let every Christian remember this, for every Christian is to try and bring souls to Christ. We are all to be teachers of the Gospel according to our ability— and the way to do it is to be “as the small rain upon the tender herb.” Perhaps, dear Friend, you say, “Well, I should be small rain, without any great effort, for I have not much in me.” Just so, but yet that small rain has a way of its own by which it makes up for being so small. “How is that,” you ask ? Why, by continuing to fall day after day! Any gardener will tell you that with many hours of small rain there is more done than in a short period with a drenching shower. Constant dropping penetrates, saturates and abides. Little deeds of kindness win love even more surely than one bounteous act. If you cannot say much of Gospel Truth at one time, keep on saying a little—and saying it often! If you cannot come out with a wagonload of grain for an army, feed the barn fowls with a handful at a time! If you cannot give the people fullness of doctrine like the profound teachers of former ages, you can at least tell what the Lord has taught you and then ask Him to teach you more!  
As you learn, teach! As you get, give! As you receive, distribute! Be as the small rain upon the tender herb. Do you not think that in trying to bring people to Christ, we sometimes try to do too much at once? Rome was not built in a day, nor will a parish be saved in a week! Men do not always receive all the Gospel the first time they hear it. To break hearts for Jesus is something like splitting wood—we need to work with wedges that are very small at one end—but increase in size as they are driven in. A few sentences spoken well and fitly may leave an impression where the attempt to, all at once, force religion upon a person may provoke resistance and do harm. Be content to drop a word or two to-day and another word or two tomorrow. Soon you may safely say twice as much and in a week’s time you may hold a long and distinctly religious conversation! It may soon happen that where the door was rudely shut in your face, you will become a welcome visitor, but had you forced your way in at first, you would have effectually destroyed all future opportunity.  
There is a great deal in speaking at the right moment. We may show our wisdom in not doing and in not saying, as much as in doing and saying. Time is a great ingredient in success. To speak out of season will show our zeal, but not always our sense. We are to be instant out of season as well as in season, but this does not involve incessant talking. I commend to everyone who would be a winner of souls by personal effort the symbol of our text, “as the small rain upon the tender herb.” The rain is seasonable and in accordance with its surroundings. The rain does not fall while a burning sun is scorching the plants, or it might kill them. Neither is it always falling, or it might injure them. Do not bring in your exhortations when they would be out of place and do not be incessantly talking even the best of the Truths of God, lest you weary with chatter those whom you desire to convince with argument. If you will wait upon the Lord for guidance, He will send you forth when you will be most useful, even as He does the rain. God will direct you as to time and place if you put yourself at His disposal!  
Thus have I spoken, perhaps, at too great a length, upon the first head— Moses meant to be tender.  
II. The second head is MOSES HOPED TO BE PENETRATING—“as the small rain upon the tender herb.” Now, small rain is meant to enter the herb so that it may drink in the nourishment and be truly refreshed. The rain is not to drench the herb and it is not to flood it—it is to feed it, to revive it, to refresh it. This was what Moses aimed at. Beloved, this is what all true preachers of Christ aim at! We long that the Word of God which we speak may enter into the soul of man, may be taken up into the innermost nature and may produce its own Divine result.  
Why is it some people never seem to take in the Word of God, “as the small rain upon the tender herb?” I suppose it is, first, because some of it may be above their understanding. If you hear a sermon and you do not understand at all what the good man is talking about, how can it benefit you? If the preacher uses the high-class pulpit-language of the day, which is not English, but a sort of English-Latin—produced rather by reading than by conversation with ordinary mortals—why then the hearer usually loses his time and the preacher his labor!  
One said to me, “If I went to such-and-such a place, I would not need my Bible, but I should need a dictionary, for otherwise I should not know what was meant.” May that never be the case with us! When people cannot understand the meaning of our language, how can we expect that they can drink in the inner sense? I exhort any hearer here to whom it has not occurred that he must understand the sermon to be benefited by it, to seek out always, both in his hearing and in his reading, that kind of teaching which he can grip and grasp! He will rise to higher things by this means, but he cannot rise by that which never touches him. We cannot feed upon that which is high above and out of our sight. Ballooning in theology is all very fine, but it is of no use to poor souls down here below who cannot hope to be allowed a place in the car. Tender plants are not refreshed by water which is borne aloft into the clouds—they need it to come down to earth and moisten their leaves and roots! And if it does not come near them, how can they be refreshed by it? The fountains of Versailles are very grand, but for the little flowerpot in a London window, a cupful from a child’s hand, poured near the root, will suffice.  
Many do not drink in the sacred Word of God because it seems to them too good to be true. This is limiting the goodness of God—God is so good that nothing can be too good to be looked for from Him. How many fail to grasp a promise because while they say it may be true in a sense, they do not receive it in the sense intended by the Spirit of God! They dwarf and diminish the sense and, in the process, they evaporate the real meaning and the Word of God becomes of no effect to them. In many an instance, the Gospel does no mighty works because of their unbelief. Depend upon it, God’s Word is a great Word, for He is a great God—and the largest meaning we can find in it is more likely to be true than a smaller one.  
Many persons do not receive the Gospel promise to the full because they do not think it is true to them. Anybody else may be blessed in that way, but they cannot think it probable that they shall be! Though the Gospel is particularly directed to sinners, to such as “labor and are heavyladen,” and to such as need a Savior, yet these good folks think, “Surely Grace could never reach to me.” Oh, how we lose our labor and fail to comfort men because of the unbelief which pretends to be the child of humility, but is really the offspring of pride! The small rain does not get at the tender herb because the herb shrinks from the silver drops which would cherish it.  
No doubt many miss the charming influences of heavenly Truths of God because they do not think enough. How often does the Word fail to enrich the heart because it is not thought over! The small rain does not get to the root of the tender herb, for time and opportunity are not allowed to it. O you that would profit by the ministry of the Gospel, take this for your golden rule—hear once, meditate twice, and pray three times! I prescribe to you, as a composition and compound of excellent virtue, that there should be at least twice as much meditating as there should be hearing! Is it not strange that people should think sermons worth hearing, but not worth meditating upon? It is as foolish as if a man thought a joint of meat worth buying, but not worth cooking, for meditation is, as it were, a sort of holy cookery by which the Truth of God is prepared to be food for the soul.  
Solomon says, “The slothful man roasts not that which he took in hunting” and, verily, there are many of that sort, who hunt after a sermon and when they have found it, they roast it not—they do not prepare it as a Truth of God should be prepared before it can be digested and become spiritual meat. Why get books if you never read, or clothes if you never dress, or carriages if you never ride? Yet any one of these things is more sensible than hearing sermons and never meditating upon them! Do not do so, dear Brothers and Sisters, I pray you!  
We are not members of the Society of Friends, although I hope we are friends and members of a society, but we should try and do after the service what they try to do during the service. Let us keep silence and let the Truth sink into us. We should be all the better if occasionally we were famished of words, for too often we are smothered with them. It would be profitable to have the supply of words stopped, that we might get below the language and look inward at the hidden sense, that we might reach the heart of the Truth and feel its energetic operation upon our heart and soul. We are too often like men who skim over the surface of the soil while there are nuggets of gold just out of sight, which we might readily secure if we would but stop and dig for them. You cannot hope to feel the efficacy of that which is preached, so that it shall be to you as the small rain upon the tender herb unless you thoughtfully consider it.  
And, once more, we ought to pray that when we hear the Word of God, we may be prepared to receive it. It is of great importance that we should open the doors of our soul to let the Gospel enter. Hospitality to Truth is charity to ourselves. Some people sit, while we are preaching, like men in armor and, though the Gospel bow is drawn with all our force, the arrow rattles on their mail. It is only now and then that, Divinely guided, the arrow finds out a joint in their harness. But the profitable way to hear is to come here without armor of prejudice, or stubbornness and lay yourself open to receive the arrow—then will it be “the arrow of the Lord’s deliverance.” Gideon’s fleece became wet with the dew, for it was ready to receive it. Every bit of wool has an aptitude, a sponginess, to suck up dew—and the moisture of the atmosphere fell where it was welcome when it fell on that fleece! The fleece was a nest for the dewdrops to rest. So let it be with our spirits. I pray God to make it so.  
“The preparation of the heart in man is from the Lord.” May He so prepare us that when the doctrine preached shall come to us as the small rain, it may not fall on stones and dead wood, but on growing herbs, which, though tender, will, nonetheless, gladly accept the blessed gift of Heaven and return thanks for it!  
III. I shall conclude with this third reflection, that MOSES HOPED TO SEE RESULTS. You may, perhaps, say that you do not see this in the text. Will you kindly look again? “As the small rain upon the tender herb.” Now, observe, in looking about among mankind, that, whenever wise men expect any results from their labors, they always go to work in a manner suited and adapted to the end they have in view. If Moses means that his speech shall bless those whom he compares to tender herbs, he makes it like small rain. I see clearly that he seeks a result, for he adapts his means.  
There is a kind of trying to do good which I call the “hit-or-miss” style of doing it. Here you are going to do good—you do not consider what method of doing good you are best fitted for, but you aspire to preach and preach you do! Of course, you must give a sermon and a sermon you give. There is no consideration about the congregation and its special condition, nor the peculiar persons composing it, nor what Truth of God will be most likely to impress and benefit. Hit-or-miss, off you go!  
But when a man means to see results, he begins studying means and their adaptation to ends—and if he sees that his people are strong men and women and he wants to feed them, well, he does not bring out the milk jug, but he fetches out a dish of strong meat for them! You can see he means to feed his people, for he has great anxiety when preparing their spiritual meat. When a person wants to water plants and they are tender herbs, if he looks for results, he does not drench them—that would look as if he had no real objective, but simply went through a piece of routine. Moses meant what he was doing. Finding the people to be comparable to tender herbs, he adapted his speech to them and made it like the small rain.  
Now, what will be the result if we do the same? Why, Brothers, it will come to pass thus—there will be among us young converts like tender herbs, newly planted, and if we speak in tenderness and gentleness we shall see the results, for they will take root in the Truth and grow in it. Paul planted and then Apollos watered. Why did Apollos water? Because you must water plants after you have planted them, that they may the more readily strike into the earth. Happy shall you be, dear Friends, if you employ your greater experience in strengthening those whose new life is as yet feeble! You shall have loving honor as nursing fathers and your wise advice shall be, “as the small rain upon the tender herb,” for you shall see the result in the young people taking hold of Christ and sucking out the precious nutriment stored away in the soil of the Covenant that they may grow thereby.  
Next, when a man’s discourse is like small rain to the tender herb, he sees the weak and perishing one revive and lift up his head. The herb was withering at first. It lay down as you see a newly-planted thing do, faint and ready to die. But the small rain came and it seemed to say, “Thank you,” and it looked up, lifted its head and recovered from its swoon. You will see a reviving effect produced upon faint hearts and desponding minds. You will be a comforter! You will cheer away the fears of many and make glad the timid and fearful. What a blessing it is—when you see that result—for there is so much the more joy in the world and God is so much the more glorified!  
When you water tender herbs and see them grow, you have a further reward. It is delightful to watch the development and increase of Grace in those who are under our care. This has been an exceedingly sweet pleasure to me. I quote my own instance because I have no doubt it is repeated in many of you. It has been a great delight to me to meet men serving God and preaching the Gospel gloriously who were once young converts and needed my fostering care. I know men, deacons of Churches, fathers in Israel, that I remember talking to 20 or 25 years ago, when they could not speak a word for Jesus, for they were not assured of their own salvation. I rejoice to see them leaders of the flock, whereas once they were poor, feeble lambs! I carried them in my bosom and now they might almost carry me. I am glad enough to learn from them and sit at their feet.  
It is a great thing for a father to see his boys grow into strong men, upon whom he may lean in his declining days. “Blessed is the man that has his quiver full of them”—they were the children of his youth and they are the comfort and joy of later days. You, dear Friends, in your own way, you shall comfort the youngsters who are just seeking the Savior and then, in later years, when you hear them preaching and see them outstripping you in gifts and in Graces, you will thank God that you were like the small rain to them when they were very tender herbs!  
Once more, we water plants that we may see them bring forth fruit and become fit for use. So shall we see those whom God blesses by our means become a joy to the Lord, Himself, yielding fruits of holiness, patience and obedience, such as Jesus Christ delights in. His joy is in His people. And when He can rejoice in them, their joy is full. Let us try to be little in our own esteem, that we may be as the small rain. Let us try to be a little useful, if we cannot reach to great things—the small rain is a great blessing. Let us try to be useful to little things. Let us look after tender herbs. Let us try to bring boys and girls to Jesus. Let us look after the tender plants of the Lord’s right hand planting, those who are babes in Grace—the timid, trembling, half-hoping, half-fearing ones. Let us come down from the seventh Heaven to bless this fallen earth.  
We have been reading about the trumpets and the “star called Wormwood”—let us come down from those high matters to commonplace affairs. Let us quit clouds and skies—and condescend to men of low estate. Let us come down from communing with the philosophers of culture and the Apostles of a new theology—to the ordinary people who live around us and cannot comprehend these fine fictions! Let us come down to the streets and lanes and do what we can for the poor, the fallen, the ignorant. Let us go with Jesus in the gentleness and sweetness of His Divine compassion, to the little children in years and the babes in Grace. So shall we be like Moses! So shall we be, better still, like the Lamb of God, to whose name be glory forever and ever!  
Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON — Deuteronomy 32:1-31**  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”— 28 (VERS. I), 403, 518.

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UNBELIEF CONDEMNED AND FAITH COMMENDED  
NO. 1784

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 8, 1884, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“They are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.” Deuteronomy 32:20.  
“Blessed is that man that makes the Lord his trust.” Psalm 40:4.**

THESE two texts will serve to show the different estimate which God has of unbelief and of faith. He says of unbelievers, in my text taken from Deuteronomy, “They are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith”—as much as to say that the absence of faith proves them to be froward, presumptuous, willful, disobedient—a people at cross-purposes with God. He says not only that they are perverse and froward, but He adds an emphatic word—“they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.” The second text most clearly shows us that God has a high approbation for faith, for He, Himself, by the Holy Spirit, says, “Blessed is that man that makes the Lord His trust.” Here, then, we have set before us a great evil to which we are sadly inclined—and a great Grace which we greatly need. May God the Holy Spirit work faith in us by His own gracious power! Alas, it is still true that “all men have not faith.” Even when an Apostle preached, we read of the congregation, that some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. There is that division among you at this time. Oh, that unbelievers may become Believers before this service ends!

I will tell you what I shall be driving at this morning—I have a special character in view and I long to be made useful to persons of that sort. Outspoken and naked unbelief the most of you abhor. Should unbelief display itself in its real hideousness, you who have been brought up religiously would be startled at its approach, would close the door immediately and bolt it fast lest such a demon of the deep should gain an entry into your souls! Consequently, unbelief, when it attacks the regular hearer of the Gospel, takes care to disguise itself. It pretends to be something other than it is. It does not walk abroad in all its natural deformity, but it approaches us as the Gibeonites came near to Israel when “they did work wilily and went and made as if they had been ambassadors.”

There are those here who do not doubt, for a moment, the existence or goodness of God—neither have they any question about the Inspiration and Infallible Truth of Holy Scripture—and yet they are entertaining within their hearts an unbelief which eats as does a canker! A deadening unbelief is upon them so that they abide in darkness and take no pains to come into the Light of God. Yet they do not condemn themselves, but rather look for pity as though it were their infirmity and not their fault. To them, unbelief acts like Jezebel when she tired her hair and painted her face. Oh, that my words could strip off the disguise of this evil thing! Of this most deceitful form of unbelief I would say, as Jehu said of Jezebel, “Throw her down.” And then I would cry—Go see, now, this cursed thing and bury it, for it is a horrible evil. That which prevents men from finding salvation by putting their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ is an enemy so hateful and malicious that no quarter must be given to it! No excuse must be made for it—it must be utterly destroyed from under Heaven!

Dear Friend, you tell me that you are by no means an infidel or a skeptic, and yet you do not believe so as to find peace with God! You tell me that you cannot believe, which is a confession that you are so false at heart that you cannot believe the Truth of God! It is well that you should admit this gross depravity, but I have reason to fear that you are hardly conscious of the horrible nature of the crime which you acknowledge! I beg you to lay to heart this fact—that unless you have faith in Jesus you will perish just as surely as if you were an open denier of the Word of God and a reviler of His Son! There are, doubtless, degrees in the terribleness of the punishment, but there are no degrees in the certainty of the fact that every unbeliever will be shut out from the blessing of the Gospel of Christ! “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.”

I want you to remove every flattering unction from your souls and to know for sure that, “He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God” (John 3:18). Dream not that because you do not happen to be an avowed atheist, or deist, or agnostic, that, therefore, your own form of unbelief is harmless! We read of Israel in the wilderness that, “they could not enter in because of unbelief”—yet they were not atheists! A passive unbelief will ruin a man as surely as an active infidelity! Suppose that an enemy is on this side of a river, destroying everybody? To find safety, the river has to be crossed, and there is but one bridge. Yonder man declares that he will never go over such a bridge—he does not believe in it! He asserts that it is a rotten old thing which would break down under his weight. He hates the structure. He will not even call it a bridge at all! He ridicules all who venture upon it. It is clear that he will stay on this side of the river and die by the pursuer’s sword. He is the type of the avowed skeptic!

But where are you? You say with unfeigned distress, “I am horrified to hear that man talk so of that excellent bridge. I believe that it is well constructed and that it has carried hundreds of thousands over it. I cannot bear to hear a word said against it, for my dear father and mother found refuge by crossing it and they are now in the land of peace.” Yet you do not escape by that bridge, yourself, though well aware of your danger! Do you answer, “Well, I do not feel worthy to go over it.” Why, that is nonsense! It is as if you should say, I cannot swim and, therefore, will cross over the river by means of the bridge. Your unworthiness cannot be a reason for refusing to accept a free salvation! On the contrary, it is a reason why you should accept it at once. However, it matters little what your excuse may be—you will perish forever if you do not believe in Jesus!

Take another illustration. A fatal disease is abroad and a remedy has been discovered of the most effectual kind. One man denounces the medicine, the physician who invented it and the apothecaries who distribute it—he can hardly find words enough in the dictionary with which to express his contempt for what he calls a monstrous quackery. He will evidently receive no benefit from the medicine. That is not your case—you are of quite another mind. You esteem the medicine, reverence the physician and even feel an affection for the apothecaries who distribute it! No question about the matter has ever crossed your mind—on the contrary, you are an advocate for the great remedy and believe firmly that it has healed multitudes of persons. Why do you not take the wholesome medicine yourself? You tell me that you are trying to get better and that you do not quite see how the medicine can heal you.

This shows that you mistrust the power of the medicine to heal you just as you are. You will derive no more benefit from it than the other man who rails at it! It is quite impossible that any man should receive the blessing which comes through the atoning blood of Christ unless he has faith—and whether he goes to the length of an utter contempt of the great Sacrifice, or stands off from it because he does not feel as he could desire—he will surely die without forgiveness. Out of Christ, the doom of eternal wrath will fall on you whether near to the Kingdom of God or far off from it.

I want to talk with those unbelieving people who are not avowedly skeptical. Some of these I have seen and I know that they are a numerous class. They are very sincere and are really seeking after salvation, but the one thing which they refuse to do is to believe in the Lord Jesus. They will not trust their God! They will not believe in the promise which He has made to us in Christ Jesus! They would suffer any penance. They would give anything they possess. They would cut off their right arm—they would consent to lose their eyes—if they might but be saved! But this one matter of trust in God and accepting His way of salvation is the point in which they quarrel with the Most High. Upon this matter, in which the Lord will assuredly never yield to them, they stand out very obstinately, and so prove that they are “a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.” If they would obtain the Lord’s blessing, the only way to it is faith. Oh, that they would hold out no longer, for, “Blessed is that man that makes the Lord his trust.”

I. To begin, then—our first statement is UNBELIEF IS FROWARDNESS—“they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.” One very frequent disguise of unbelief is that of humility. “I feel myself such a great sinner. I feel so much evil to be in my heart, I dare not believe in Jesus!” If you judged by appearances you might think this unbelief very modest, but, indeed, it is not so. It imitates the tone of humility, but it cannot catch the accent. This deceptive vice dares to hint that the sinner’s unworthiness is a reason why Jesus should not be trusted! What? Would any man tell me that his own wickedness is a reason why he should distrust me? That would be too absurd! Because you are such a sinner, is God, therefore, a deceiver and not to be trusted? This is not humility, but audacity!

Our fearing to trust the promise of God because we are evil is a most perverse piece of wickedness. Surely, God is true, even if we are liars! Our falsehood does not make Him false, or deprive Him of His right to be believed! Do we dare to tell Him that He cannot save when He assuredly promises to save us if we trust Him? Do we deny His willingness to save when He sends us gracious invitations and entreats us to turn to Him? This is insolence—not penitence! However great a sinner you may be, there is forgiveness with God that He may be feared, for, “all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.” Do not deny this. Do not be so profanely bold as to call Jesus a liar!

Unbelief also claims to be timid. It cries, “I am afraid to come to Christ, afraid to trust Him with my soul.” This is not true fear, but an evil pride! The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau! The sound is that of an amiable timorousness, but the spirit is that of frowardness. Friends, if you truly feared God, you would tremble at the idea of distrusting Him. It is a very daring act of impiety to question any promise of the Most High—it is the height of rebellion to deny the power of the death of His dear Son! That kind of timidity and humility is to be shunned and to be abhorred which dares to make God’s love a dream and His mercy a fiction! Since the Lord’s mercy endures forever; since Jesus has never yet cast out a soul that has come to Him, it is folly to talk of being afraid to come to Him! Dread doubting and fear not to trust your God!

Unbelief is a very froward thing. We repeat the statement and go on to prove it because, in the first place, it calls God a liar. Can anything be worse than this? God says, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved,” and the unbeliever replies, “I cannot believe that Jesus will save me.” That is to say, translating it into plain English—You do not think that God speaks the Truth! You do not believe that God is able to make His promises good to you. You do, in effect, imagine that He has said a great deal more than He means, or promised more than He is able to perform! At any rate, you think it unsafe to trust Him with your soul. I beseech you, if you must transgress, do not select a sin so presumptuous and so provoking as the sin of denying the Truth of the Most High! “He that believes not God has made Him a liar because he believes not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.”

Oh, you poor, timorous soul, as some would call you, I will not flatter you, or excuse you, for I am afraid you must be very proud or you would not look the great Father in the face, and say, “You will not receive me if I come back to You like the prodigal child”—when, again and again, He invites you to return and promises to receive you. O Soul, can you dare to look up to the Cross of Jesus and say, “There is no life in a look at the Crucified One for me”? Can you even think of the Holy Spirit and then say that He has no power to change a heart so black and hard as yours? Oh that this miserable slander of God and of His Christ might be stopped!

Again, unbelief is great frowardness because it refuses God’s way of salvation. No man can read the Scriptures without seeing God’s way of salvation is not by works nor by feelings, but by trusting in the Son of God who has offered a full atonement for sin. Now the sinner says, “Lord, I would do or suffer anything if I might, thereby, be saved.” God’s answer is, “Trust in My Son”—and this is put into a great many shapes to make it plain! Jesus says, “This is the work of God”—the highest and noblest work—“that you believe on Him whom He has sent.” But the soul wriggles away from this believing in Jesus. It cries, “Surely I must feel this, that, and the other!” Oh foolish heart! Stop all these vain observations and listen to this one thing—“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved!” If you will make the Lord your trust, you shall be blessed—but if you will not, you are assuredly accursed—seeing you have rejected the blood of the Eternal Sacrifice, refused the way of mercy which Infinite Love has appointed and done despite to the Spirit of God. To what a pitch of madness you have reached! You will sooner destroy your own soul than treat your God as you would treat an honest man! You can trust your wife, your husband, your father, or your friend—but you will not trust your Maker! You will sooner go to Hell than trust yourself with Christ! Ah me! Ah me!

Unbelief is a very froward thing, again, because it very often makes unreasonable demands of God. When Thomas said, “Unless I put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe,” he was speaking very frowardly. I have heard the sinner say, “Oh, Sir, if I could have a dream! If I could be broken down with anguish, or if I could enjoy some remarkable revelation—THEN I would believe God!” This, also, is frowardness. And so you dare look the Eternal in the face and say, “You shall be a liar to me unless You will gratify my whims and wishes, and do this or that to prove what I admit to be true.” Will you say to your fellow man, “Sir, you have offered to help me in this time of need. I am quite willing to depend upon you for that help, provided you will do it in my way—the way which you propose for my assistance I utterly reject”? You will probably turn your friend against you if you talk so!

Beggars must not be choosers—certainly not with God! If I mistrust a friend who has been good to me all my life, it is an unjust thing. And if I tell him that I cannot believe him unless he will do what I choose to demand of him, I am insulting him. This towards man is evil—but what is it towards God? What? Must God do according to our mind and play the lackey to us or else He shall be under this penalty—that we will not believe His Word nor accept His gracious forgiveness? Shame on unbelief, that it should be so insulting to the God of Heaven before whom angels bow with veiled countenances! Surely, the devil, himself, cannot go further than unbelief—nor so far—for he believes and trembles!

Unbelief is very froward, next, because it indulges hard thoughts of God. Why do you not trust your God to save you by the blood of Jesus? Do you say that, “Salvation by faith is too good to be true”? Is anything too good to come from God, who is infinitely good? Is He not Love? Do you say, “If I were to come to Him, He would not receive me”? How dare you say that when it is written, “Him that comes to Me I will by no means cast out”! “Oh, I have so offended that if I were to cry, ‘Father, I have sinned,’ I could not expect Him to forgive my offense.” This is a base slandering of the heavenly Father! What penitent has He ever repelled? You know not how good He is—He is inconceivably gracious, He delights in mercy! It is His joy to pass by transgression, iniquity and sin. Have you never heard that, “as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than your ways, and His thoughts than your thoughts”? Has He not declared that He will abundantly pardon? Has He not said, “Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool”? Why will you so cruelly defame the Ever-Merciful One? Turn from this wickedness or you will destroy your own soul!

And yet again, unbelief is a very froward thing because it disparages the Lord Jesus. It tramples upon the blood of the Son of God! The unbelieving sinner virtually asserts that he has discovered the limit of the Savior’s power to save and that he stands just over the margin to which His Grace extends, for he thinks that Jesus may save anyone except himself! O Soul, do you doubt the infinite virtue of the Divine Sacrifice? Do you question the power of the intercession of the risen Lord? Is it not true, as He has said it, that He is, “able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He always lives to make intercession for them”? “Oh, but I am such a singular person.” And are you so singular that you have a right to limit the Holy One of Israel? Oh, if you did but know my Lord and Master, you would not talk so, for He, with a word, can cast out devils, heal the sick and raise the dead! He has but to say “Son, your sins are forgiven you,” and they are forgiven! He has but to look on you, poor sinner, and you shall live! Yes, be assured that if you will look on Him, you shall live! Has He not said, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth”? Has He not also said, “He that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live”? If you believe, you shall see the Glory of God! Trust Him, trust Him! He deserves your trust, for He is a great Savior for the greatest of sinners.

And do you not think it is another instance of great frowardness that unbelief casts reflections upon the Holy Spirit? It seems to say, “I feel sorely afraid and, therefore, there is no peace for me. I am too hardened and foolish for the Holy Spirit to lead me to faith in Jesus and, therefore, I will not trust.” “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” Change you, man? Why, He has turned millions from darkness to the Light of God! Look upward— see what hosts surround the Throne of Glory and “day without night” magnify His saving Grace! Not save you? Who are you that you should stand out against the witness of the Spirit of Truth? Will you refuse the three-fold witness of the Spirit, the water and the blood? Who are you that you should set yourself up as a kind of vanquisher of Grace, conquering Grace by your sins and saying to the ocean of God’s love, “This far shall you come, but no further”? Your unbelief is a very froward thing—nothing can be said for it—it dishonors Father, Son and Holy Spirit! It denies the Inspired Scripture and keeps your soul in cruel bondage.

This vile unbelief has in it a tendency to destroy the Gospel itself. If it could but have its own way, it would undermine the whole fabric of salvation. When a man says that God cannot save him, he suggests that there maybe others in the same case. Where, then, is Christ’s wisdom in bidding us preach the Gospel to every creature? If it would be vain for one man to believe, each one of us would be afraid that it would be vain for us, also, and where, then, would be the Gospel promise? If it could be proven that any one man, if he believed in Jesus, would not be saved, then the Gospel itself would be disproved! Who among us would have any ground for believing in Christ if we knew it were possible to believe in Him and yet to be cast away? What is this but to rob us all of hope? Why, man, you are scuttling the ship! I mean that such is the tendency of your unbelieving talk.

If Jesus is not worthy to be trusted and you seem to say so by your own refusal to trust Him, then all of us who are resting upon Him for salvation are under a delusion! Do you mean to say this? If you, as a sinner, cannot be saved upon believing in Christ, then the whole Gospel is called into question—you have broken the whole staff of bread for the souls of men! Oh, wicked unbelief! God-dishonoring, soul-killing unbelief! Dear Hearer, be warned against it, for it will shut you out of Heaven unless you shut it out of your heart!

II. And now, secondly, we turn to the better side of our subject and remark that FAITH HAS THE DIVINE APPROVAL. “Blessed,” says God, “is that man that makes the Lord his trust.” We are sure that it so. Wherever there is faith, God is pleased with it, for faith is the sure mark of God’s elect. We can only know them by their believing in the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. God would never have set that of which He disapproved to be the mark of His eternal choice, but, as He makes faith in Jesus to be the token of His covenanted ones, He must approve of it. Remember that God has been pleased, in His great love, to make this the main requirement of the Gospel. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.”

The Lord puts faith into the very forefront because He delights in it. I find not that the Lord has promised salvation to love, or to patience, or to courage—admirable as these Graces are—He has put this crown upon the head of faith. “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” The Lord must certainly approve of that which He makes to be the grand necessity of salvation! Do you not know that God has made faith to be the one thing necessary in the matter of prayer? If you come before Him in prayer, He will not ask you to bring your hands laden with gifts, nor to drop from your tongue choice words of eloquence! But you “must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him,” or else you can have nothing at His hands. If, then, God has made the efficacy of prayer to turn upon faith, He must have a high estimate of it! He has made faith to be the master key by which all the chambers of His treasury may be unlocked and, therefore, depend upon it, He will never cast it out as unwarranted and presumptuous. “Blessed is that man that makes the Lord His trust,” whoever that man may be!

Beside that, He has been pleased to make faith to be the mode and manner of the spiritual life. “The just shall live”—how? By works? No— “the just shall live by faith.” There is no living except by faith. Let any child of God try to live by sense or reason, even for a day, and see how miserable he will be! It comes to this with me—I must believe my God or else I perish. I can walk the waves by faith—but, beginning to doubt—I sink. It is only as I trust that my soul can bear her daily burden and perform her daily duty. If, then, God has made faith to be the way of His people, rest assured it can never be wrong for a soul to exercise faith in Him. Why, Brothers and Sisters, look what God has done to make us believe! He cannot object to our trusting in Him, seeing He works to that end! For this purpose the Scriptures are in our hands. John says, “These are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ” (John 20:31). The Lord multiplies His exceedingly great and precious promises that we might have strong consolation and find it easy to put our trust in Him!

His Holy Spirit comes on purpose to work faith in the soul and the witness of the Holy Spirit in the Word, and in the hearts of His people, is intended to create and nourish faith in God. The Lord rewards faith even in this life! Read the 11th Chapter of Hebrews—see what men gained, what they enjoyed, what they did by faith! Unbelief does nothing, gets nothing, rejoices in nothing! But faith wins the blessing. The Covenant was made with Abraham, who “staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief.” Who are Abraham’s seed? Why, they that trust as Abraham trusted, that exhibit a whole-hearted confidence in God, feeling that what He has promised, He is able, also, to perform! Oh Souls, you cannot have too much faith in God! You need never say, “May I believe?” It is altogether another question—How dare you doubt your God? “But is it true,” asks one, “that faith means trusting in God?” That is it. God bids you trust Jesus and you shall be saved. Will you accept His testimony and trust Jesus? That is the whole of it.

In common life we exhibit faith in man and no one blames us for a legitimate trust. A man says that he has received a thousand pounds. How is that? He has nothing in his hand but a bank-note and that is merely a bit of paper. Yet he is quite confident that he has the thousand pounds because he has faith in the Bank of England and in its promises. That is my own mind as to God’s promise—it is to me the thing which it promises, even as the note for £1,000 is a thousand pounds. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” If you believe God as you believe your friend, you are saved—for faith has brought you into the state of salvation. But this is what men will not come to. They will stop and mutter and sputter, and spin all kinds of cobwebs—and invent all sorts of theories in order to evade the sweet necessity of trusting in the Lord! Simply and wholly to hang upon the bare arm of God and trust the merit of His Son—this is what they will not come to—for they are “a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.”

Furthermore, it is not unreasonable, but it is highly reasonable that God should take pleasure in faith. Beloved, look at yourselves. Judge of the Lord from yourselves in this matter—for the Lord Jesus permits you so to judge of the Father’s mind. You who are fathers, what would you say of your child if he did not believe your promise? If he said that he could not trust you, what would you think of him? If your boy had offended, but refused to ask pardon because he could not believe that you would forgive him, what would be your judgment of his character? Would you be pleased with him if he would not confess that he was wrong, but took to sulking because he thinks you are unwilling to forgive? Would you take pleasure in such a child as that? No, but one of the beautiful things about your little children is just this—that they have not a thought or a care— but trust you implicitly! They never question where Monday’s dinner will come from—father has always found food—father will always do so.

If you make them a promise of a treat on Saturday, look how they will jump for joy! Though there is still a week to come before that promise is to be fulfilled, yet they begin to live on the prospect of it and they enjoy the pleasure a hundred times over by the expectation of it! They will ask you tomorrow whether it is not already Saturday. You are pleased that your children should trust you—it would be most unpleasant for you if they did not. When children have lost confidence in their parents, farewell to domestic peace! If you, being evil, love to be trusted, must it not be so with God? If you, a poor sinner, come and say, “Lord, I have greatly sinned, but I believe You are such a greatly loving Father that you can blot it all out for Jesus’ sake,” do you not think that He will be pleased to hear your confidence? But He cannot be pleased with you when you say, “Lord, I know all about Your Gospel and its blessings, but I really cannot trust You!” Oh, naughty words! Vile words! How can they look for favors who thus throw dirt into the face of God? How shall He bestow His Grace on men who will not even believe Him?

God will accept our faith, for it is in conformity with our position towards Him. What position ought the creature to occupy to its Creator? Should it not constantly depend upon Him? What position should a sinner occupy towards His Savior? Should He not rely upon Him most heartily? What position should a child of God occupy towards the Divine Father but one of loving confidence? Brothers and Sisters, God loves faith because faith supplies the missing link between us and Himself! If we cannot keep His Law perfectly, as, indeed, we cannot, for we have already broken it—yet if we trust Him, our heart is right before Him! The complete confidence of the heart is the essence of obedience and the fountain of it. A servant who thinks evil of his master cannot be an acceptable servant to any man—he will be looking out for his own interests and, whenever they come crosswise with those of his master, we know what will happen! But if, after having acted very crookedly, the man should have proof of his master’s affection for him, and should come to the belief that his master is a model of goodness, then you have laid the foundation of another kind of service, such as no wages can purchase! From a loving trust there will proceed patience, diligence, zeal, fidelity, obedience and everything which is suitable in a servant towards a good master.

So, when a soul comes to make the Lord its trust, it has set out upon the right track, and though it is but at the head of the way, yet it will make advances and arrive at no mean degree of rightness with God. “Oh,” says one, “it seems such a small matter to simply trust.” It may seem so, but within the compass of that little thing there lies a force whose power it would be difficult to measure. Every Grace in embryo lies within true faith! It is a virtue which contains within it seed enough to sow all the acreage of life with holiness! O my Hearer, God blesses faith, therefore, I pray you, render it to Him! God has put His curse on unbelief—oh, may His Spirit help you to shake yourself free of it this day!

III. My time has failed me and, therefore, I must close by noticing, in the last place, this fact—that FAITH IS BLESSEDNESS. “Blessed is that man that makes the Lord his trust.” To believe in God is to be blessed by God. “Oh, but,” says one, “I believe in God and I am in great trouble.” Just so, and within that trouble there dwells a measureless blessing! Your trial is the veil which covers the face of a loving God. Faith will make you sing with the author of this Psalm, “I waited patiently for the Lord.” Faith says, “I am in deep trial, but all things work together for my good. It is, therefore, a great gain to me to be as I am. All these griefs and woes are but a heavenly surgery to cure me of the malady of inbred sin.” This enables the Believer to receive correction with patience. He knows that all is right and, therefore, the child of God frets not and does not kick against the pricks. As in the old days of surgery, a brave man laid himself down and gave himself up to the knife, so does the Believer resign himself to sharp affliction because he knows that it is necessary for his spiritual life and will tend to his perfection in Grace. Thus faith distils a potent medicine from poisonous plants and extracts light out of darkness. Is not this enough to make a man blessed?

Faith, again, releases the afflicted out of trouble. Turn to the Psalm, again, and read—“I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He has put a new song in my month, even praise unto our God: many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.” If you are shut in by affliction, like a man in a deep pit and, if instead of rising out of it by your exertions, you only sink lower, like one who struggles to rise out of miry clay. If you see no way of escape, whatever, do not despair or resort to desperate means, or think bad of God, but just pray and trust—and soon, like David, you shall bear witness to the blessedness of trusting! “Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.” The Lord knows how to deliver the righteous when they cannot guess how He will do it! Jehovah is not limited in ways and means. Is the Lord’s arm waxed short? Trust in the Lord in the dark and He will bring forth your righteousness as the light and your judgment as the noonday. Thousands of saints who have tried and proved the faithfulness of the Lord unite in chorus to declare that He has delivered His people and will deliver them!

The man that makes the Lord his trust is blessed because his faith creates in him a deep peace. It is responsibility which causes the wear and tear of life—at least it is so in my case. Now, he who trusts a matter with the Lord sees that the fulfillment of the promise lies with God and not with him. When we trust in the Lord, we cease to worry because it is the Lord’s business to answer to our faith—

*“Tis mine to obey, ‘tis His to provide.”*  
He who takes the Lord for his Guide no longer worries about the way. He who takes Him for his Watchman rests in perfect peace. He who accepts Him as a Savior looks for sure salvation at His hands. There is a wonderful calm in the heart when we can commit our way unto the Lord—then we delight ourselves in the Lord—and He gives us the desires of our heart. That blessed act of casting every burden upon the Lord is faith’s masterpiece and it gives a sweet quietus to all care. To rest in perfect peace of mind is the best blessedness beneath the stars—and we have it, for we hear the Spirit say concerning all the people of God, “And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them: He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him.”

Now, suppose you and I were laboring to reach Heaven by our own merits? Then we might bid farewell to peace, for all the way we would be terribly afraid that we had not done enough, or suffered enough, or prayed enough, or repented enough. There is no rest upon that bed, for it is shorter than a man may stretch himself. But, “we who have believed, enter into rest.” Jesus is our Rest—in Him we have peace with God. If I could make the Lord Jesus my trust and yet be lost I should be a great loser, but I should not lose so much as God would! How is that? I should lose my salvation, but the Lord would lose His Glory, His truthfulness, His goodness! His Gospel would be dishonored and His Son robbed of His reward. That cannot be! When a man trusts his money with a firmly established bank, he does not sit up all night to protect his cashbox and iron safe. No, his money is out of his own keeping and he feels at ease about it. Thus we commit our body, soul and spirit into the pierced hands of Jesus who has redeemed us, and we know and are confident that He is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him until that day. None can know perfect rest of heart but those whose minds are stayed on God by a sincere trust in Him.

Faith, in addition to bringing peace, creates a holy elevation of character, and that is blessedness. The man who lives by sight and walks according to the judgment of the flesh is confined within a range too narrow for blessedness. He is not much above the brute that perishes! His provender and stall are the main dependence of his joy! But the man that lives by faith ranges among eternal things and drinks from celestial fountains! His is a high, sublime, mysterious life. Is it not the life of God in man? I have compared the ascent of faith to climbing a succession of lofty stairways. Up from the depths we have already risen by no other means than faith in the Invisible! Not a single step before us can we see. Beneath and around, clouds and darkness roll in enormous masses—the mist hangs thick over our pathway. Like the world, which the Lord hangs upon nothing, so our life has no visible dependence! We put down our foot on what seems thin as air and behold—it is firm as a rock beneath us! Rising, ever rising, we tread from stair to stair and are safe as the Throne of the Eternal—but we never see more than one step at a time and at times scarcely so much as that. Sight brings us no comfort, but Faith fills us with delight, for above her head shines out as clear as the sun, the Words of the Immutable Jehovah!

“Ah,” cries one, “I could not live with nothing to depend upon!” Oh, my Brother, is God nothing? Elijah had nothing to depend upon, for Cherith dried up and the ravens came no more with bread and meat. And the widow woman had only flour enough for one more meal—yet the little meal in the barrel wasted not and the cruse of oil never failed! Isaiah had nothing to depend upon but God, you know—that is to say, he had only everything. The Believer has nothing to depend upon except his God, but what more does he need? What more could he have? Mark how yon heavens stand without a pillar! See how the round world floats in space without a stay! What more does the universe require than the power of the Eternal? O Believer, get out into these deep waters where there is sea room for faith and no weak creatures to interfere with unmingled reliance upon God—for blessed is that man whose life is rendered sublime by an undivided confidence in the living God!

Lastly, blessed is the believing man when he thinks of dying, for he is sure and certain that he cannot truly die. Faith has so linked him with the one living God that he feels immortality pulsing through his entire nature! When he comes to lie on the bed of sickness and gradually decays, he has no fear of his departure! On the contrary, he looks forward with expectation to be delivered from the bondage and sinfulness of this mortal life and to be admitted into the liberty and perfection of the life eternal! Look at him as he quits the shores of earth—he is not torn away by violence, forced unwillingly into an unknown hereafter—no, he undresses for his last rest solemnly but expectantly! A song is on his lips and glory is in his heart! He has finished his work; he has been washed from his sin; he has embraced the promise and now he falls asleep upon the breast of his Redeemer—assured that he shall wake up in the likeness of his Lord! “Mark the perfect man and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.”

Oh, Souls, if you will believe, you shall have both Heaven on earth and Heaven in Heaven! But if you will not believe your God—your Savior— many sorrows shall be to you and, in the end, you will destroy yourselves forever! It matters not what excuses you make about this, or that, or the other—if you will not trust your God, He will have nothing to do with you! If you cannot believe Him. If you will make His Son to be false. He must say at the last, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” It cannot be otherwise! This shall make the great division between you and the righteous—that you believe not in Him—while they have made the Lord their trust. If you believe in the Lord Jesus, you shall be numbered with His chosen! And all His promises shall be fulfilled to you, for with you has He made an everlasting covenant which shall stand fast forever and ever when all visible things have melted away! May God uplift you from the miry clay of unbelief to the rock of confidence in Him, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 40.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—192, 738, 685. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #304 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

MEMENTO MORI  
NO. 304

**DELIVERED OF SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 18, 1860, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

**“O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.”  
Deuteronomy 32:29.**

MAN is unwilling to consider the subject of death. The shroud, the mattock and the grave, he labors to keep continually out of sight. He would live here always if he could. And since he cannot, he at least will put away every emblem of death as far as possible from his sight. Perhaps there is no subject so important which is so little thought of. Our common proverb that we use is just the expression of our thoughts, “We must live.” But if we were wiser we should alter it and say, “We must die.” Necessity for life there is not, life is a prolonged miracle. Necessity for death there certainly is, it is the end of all things.

Oh that the living would lay it to heart. Some years ago, a celebrated author—Drelincourt, wrote a work on Death, a valuable work in itself, but it commanded no sale whatever. There were no men who would trouble themselves with Death’s heads and cross-bones. And to show how foolish man is, a certain doctor went home and wrote a silly ghost story, not one word of which was true, sent it to the bookseller, he stitched it up with his volume and the whole edition sold. Anything men will think of rather than death—any fiction, any lie. But this stern reality, this master truth, he puts away and will not suffer it to enter his thoughts.

The old Egyptians were wiser than we are. We are told that at every feast, there was always one extraordinary guest that sat at the head of the table. He ate not, he drank not, he spoke not, he was closely veiled. It was a skeleton which they had placed there, to warn them that even in their feastings, they should remember there would be an end of life. We are so fond of living, so sad at the very thoughts of death, that such a memento mori as that would be quite unbearable in our days of feasting. Yet our text tells us that we should be wise, if we would consider our latter end.

And certainly we should be, for the practical effect of a true meditation upon death would be exceedingly healthful to our spirits. It would cool that ardor of covetousness, that fever of avarice, always longing after and accumulating wealth. Oh, if we did but remember that we should have to leave our stores, that when we have gotten our most, all that we can ever

inherit for out body is one six feet of earth and a mouthful of clay. It would certainly help us to set loose by the things which we here possess. Perhaps, it might lead us to set our affections upon things above and not upon the moldering things below.

At any rate, thoughts of death might often check us when we are about to sin. If we look at sin by the light of that death’s lantern by which the sexton shall dig our graves, we might see more of the hollowness of sinful pleasure and of the emptiness of worldly vanity. If we would but sin on our coffin lids, we should sin far more seldom. Surely we should be kept back from many an evil act if we remembered that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. And, maybe too, these thoughts of death might be blessed to us in even a higher sense, for we might hear an angel speaking to us from the grave, “Prepare to meet your God,” and we might be led to go home and set our house in order, because we must die and not live. Certainly, if even one of these effects shall be produced by considering our latter end it would be the purest wisdom continually to walk arm in arm with that skeleton teacher—Death.

I propose this morning, as God shall help me, to lead you to consider your latter end. May the Holy Spirit bend your thoughts downward to the tomb. May He guide you to the grave, that you may there see the end of all earthly hopes, of all worldly pomp and show. In doing this, I shall thus divide my subject. First, let us consider Death. Secondly, let us push on the consideration by considering the warnings which Death has given us already. And then, further, let us picture ourselves as dying—bringing to our mind’s eye a picture of ourselves stretched upon our last bed.

I. In the first place, then, LET US CONSIDER DEATH.  
1. Let us begin by remarking its origin. Why is it that I must die? From where came these seeds of corruption that are sown within this flesh of mine? The angels die not. Those pure ethereal spirits live on without knowing the weakness of old age and without suffering the penalties of decay. Why must I die? Why has God made me so curiously and so wondrously—why is all this skill and wisdom shown in the fashioning of a man that is to endure for an hour and then to crumble back to his native element—the dust?  
Can it be that God originally made me to die? Did he intend that the noble creature, who is but a little lower than the angels, who has dominion over the works of God’s hands, beneath whose feet He has put all sheep and oxen, yes, and the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea and whatever passes through the paths of the sea—did he intend that that creature should waste away as a shadow and should be as a dream that continues not? Come, my soul, let this melancholy thought thrust itself upon your attention. You die because you sin! Your death is not God’s primal ordinance, but it is a penalty brought upon you on account of the transgression of your first parent.  
You would have been immortal if Adam had been immaculate. Sin, you are the mother of Death! Adam you have dug the graves of your children! We might have lived on, in everlasting youth, if it had not been for that thrice-cursed theft of the forbidden fruit. Look, then, that thought in the face. Man is a suicide. Our sin, the sin of the human race, slays the race. We die because we have sinned. How this should make us hate sin! How we should detest it because the wages of sin is death! Brand then, from this day forward, the word Murderer on the brow of sin.  
2. In considering Death, let us go a step further and observe not only its origin but its certainty. Die I must. I may have escaped a thousand diseases, but Death has an arrow in his quiver that will reach my heart at last. True, I have one hope, a blissful hope, that if my Lord and Master shall soon come, I shall be among the number of them that are alive and remain, who shall never die, but who shall be changed. I have that fond anticipation that He will come before this body of mine shall crumble into dust and that these eyes shall see Him when He shall stand in the latter day upon the earth. But, however, if it is not so, die I must. “It is appointed unto all men once to die, and after death the judgment.  
Run! Run! But the Pursuer shall overtake you. Like the stag before the hounds we fly swifter than the breeze, but the dogs of Death shall outstrip us—fever and plague, weakness and decay. He has but to let slip these dogs and they are on us and who can resist their fury? There is a black camel upon which Death rides, say the Arabs and that must kneel at every man’s door. With impartial hand he dashes down the palace of the monarch as well as the cabin of the peasant. At every man’s door there hangs that black knocker and Death has but to uplift it and the dread sound is heard and the uninvited guest sits down to banquet on our flesh and blood. Die I must.  
No physician can stretch out my life beyond its allotted term. I must cross that river Jordan. I may use a thousand stratagems, but I cannot escape. Even now I am today like the deer surrounded by the hunters in a circle, a circle which is narrowing every day. And soon must I faint and pour out my life upon the ground. Let me never forget, then, that while other things are uncertain, Death is sure.  
3. Then, looking a little further into the shade, let me remember the time of my Death. To God it is fixed and certain. He has ordained the hour in which I must expire. A thousand angels cannot keep me from the grave an instant when that hour has struck. Nor could legions of spirits cast me into the pit before the appointed time—

*“Plagues and death around me fly,  
Till He please I cannot die;  
Not a single shaft can hit,  
Till the God of love sees fit.*

All our times are in His hand. The means, the way I shall die, how long I shall be in dying, the sickness and in what place I shall be seized with the contagion—all these are ordained. God has in His mind’s eye the wave that shall engulf me, or the bed in which I shall breathe out my last. He knows the stones that shall mark my sleeping place and the very worm that shall crawl over this face when it shall be cold in death.

He has ordained everything. And in that Book of Fate it stands and never can it be changed. But to me it is quite uncertain. I know not when, nor where, nor how I shall breathe out my life. Into that sacred ark I cannot look—that ark of the secrets of God. I cannot pry between the folded leaves of that book which is chained to the Throne of God, wherein is written the whole history of man. When I walk by the way I may fall dead in the streets. An apoplexy may usher me into the presence of my Judge. Riding along the road, I may be carried as swiftly to my tomb. While I am thinking of the multitudes of miles over which the fiery wheels are rimming, I may be in a minute, without a moment’s warning, he sent down to the shades of death.

In my own house I am not safe. There are a thousand gates to Death and the roads from Earth to Hades are innumerable. From this spot in which I stand there is a straight path to the grave. And where you sit there is an entrance into eternity. Oh, let us think, then, how uncertain life is. Talk we of a hair—it is something massive when compared with the thread of life. Speak we of a spider’s web—it is ponderous compared with the web of life. We are but as a bubble. No—less substantial. As a moment’s foam upon the breaker, such are we. As an instant spray—no, the drops of spray are as enduring as the clouds of Heaven compared with the moments of our life.

Oh, let us, then, prepare to meet our God, because, when and how we shall appear before Him is quite unknown to us. We may never go out of this hall alive. Some of us may be carried from here on young men’s shoulders, as Ananias and Sapphire of old. We may not live to see our homes again. We may have given the last kiss to the beloved cheek and spoken the last word of fondness to those who are near to our hearts. We are on the brink of our tombs—

*“Ten thousand to their endless home  
This solemn moment fly.  
And we are to the margin come,  
And soon expect to die!”*

4. But I must not linger here, but go on to observe the terrors which surround Death. I would call to your memory today the pains, the groans the dying strife, which make our frightened souls start back from the tomb. To the best men in the world dying is a solemn thing. Though, “I can read my title clear to mansions in the skies,” and know that I have a portion among them that are sanctified, yet must it always give some trembling to the flesh, some quivering to the human frame, to think of breathing out my soul and launching on an unknown sea.

He that can laugh at death is a fool—stark, staring mad is he. He who can make jokes with regard to his end will find that if he should die jesting, it will be no jest to be damned. When this tent is being taken down, when this clay tenement begins to creak and shake in the rough north wind of Death, when stone after stone tumbles from its place and all the bonds are loosened, it will be a terrible moment then. When the poor soul stands beneath the temple of the body and sees it shake, sees rifts in its roof, sees the pillars tremble and all the ruins thereof falling about it, it will be an awful moment—a moment which, if it were continued and lengthened, would be the most dread picture of Hell that can be presented to us, for Hell is called the second Death.

An endless dying, the pangs of death prolonged eternally, the woes and the grief of dissolution made to last without an end—that, I say—is one of the most terrible pictures of Hell. Death itself must be a tremendous thing. Let me think, too, that when I die I must leave behind me all that I have on earth. Farewell to that house which I have so fondly called my home. Farewell to that fireside and the little prattlers that have climbed my knee. Farewell to her who has shared my life and been the beloved one of my bosom. Farewell! All things—the estate, the gold, the silver. Farewell, earth. Your fairest beauties melt away, your most melodious strains die in the dim distance. I hear no more and see no more.

Ears and eyes are closed and men shall carry me out and bury their dead out of their sight. And, now, farewell to all the means of grace. That passing bell is the last sound of the sanctuary that shall toll for me. No Church bell now shall summon me to the House of God. If I have neglected Christ I shall hear of Christ no more. No grace presented now— no strivings of the Spirit—

*“Fixed is my everlasting state,  
Could I repent, ‘tis now too late.”*  
Death has now closed up the window of my soul. If I am impenitent, an everlasting darkness, a darkness like that of Egypt, that may be felt, rests on me forever. You may sing, you saints of God, but I must scream

eternally. You may gather round the Sacramental Table and remember your Master’s death, but I am cast away forever from His presence, where there is weeping and waning and gnashing of teeth.

This is to die, my Friends and to die with a vengeance, too. To the Believer there are softening tints. There are lines in the picture which take out the blackness. The very shades help to make the Believer’s glory brighter, the grim passage of Death makes Heaven shine with a superior luster. He thinks of the lands beyond the flood, of the beatific vision, of the face of the exalted Redeemer, of a seat at His right hand, of crowns of glory and of harps of immortal bliss. But to you who are ungodly and unconverted, Death has only this black side. It is the leaving of all you have and of all you love. It is an entering upon eternal poverty, everlasting shame and infinite woe. Oh that you were wise, you careless sinners—oh that you were wise, that you understood this and would consider your latter end!

5. I have thus, you see, pushed into another head which I meant to have dwelt upon for a moment, viz., the results of death. For, verily, its results and terrors to the wicked are the same. Oh that you were wise to consider them. Let me, however, remind the Christian, in order that there may be a flash of light in the thick darkness of this sermon, that Death to him should never be a subject upon which he should loathe to meditate. To die!—to shake off my weakness and to be girded with omnipotence. To die!—to leave my pangs and palms and fears and woe, my feeble heart, my unbelief, my trembling and my griefs and leap into the Divine bosom. To die!

What have I to lose by Death? The tumult of the people and the strife of tongues. A joyous loss indeed! To the Believer, Death is gain, unalloyed gain. Do we leave our friends by Death? We shall see better friends and more numerous up yonder, in the general assembly and Church of the first-born, whose names are written in Heaven. Do we leave our house and comforts? “There is a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” Do we lose our life? Ah no, we gain a better by far. For remember that we live to die, we die to live and then we live to die no more.

Without any fraction of loss, death to the Believer is a glorious gain. It is greatly wise, then, for a Christian to talk with his last hours, because those last hours are the beginning of his glory. He leaves off sin and begins to be perfect. He ceases to suffer and begins to be happy. He renounces all his poverty and shame and begins to be rich and honored. Comfort then, comfort then, you sorrowing and suffering Christians. “Comfort you, comfort you my people,” says your God. Say unto them your warfare is accomplished, your sin is pardoned and you shall see your Lord’s face without a veil between.

II. I shall now turn to the second head of my discourse. Brethren, fellow immortals. I desire you now to CONSIDER THE WARNINGS WHICH DEATH HAS ALREADY GIVEN TO EACH ONE OF US. We are so prone to turn away from this subject, that you must excuse me if I continue to bring you back again, again and again to it, alluring the brief time that can be allotted to the discourse of this morning. Death has been very near to many of us. He has crossed the ecliptic of our life many and many a time. That baleful planet has often been in close conjunction with us.

Let us just observe how frequently he has been in our house. Call you then to mind, first of all, how many warnings you have had in the loss of relatives. There is not a person here, I imagine, who has not had to make a pilgrimage to the tomb, to weep over the ashes of your friends. During the few years that I have been the pastor of this Church, how many times have I journeyed to the tomb? One after another of the valiant men in our Israel have been taken away. Many who were my spiritual sons and daughters, whom I buried first in the tomb of Baptism, have I had to bury afterwards in the tomb of death.

The scene is always changing. As I stand in my pulpit, I remark many an old familiar face. But I have to observe also, how many places there are which would have been empty, if it were not that God has sent other Davids to occupy David’s seat. And, my dear Friends, it cannot be long with some of you before it shall be my mournful task, unless I die myself, to go creeping over your bodies to the tomb. That funeral oration may soon be pronounced over some of you. And you have good reason to expect it when you think how one after another of those who were the friends of your youth have gone.

Where is the wife with whom you lived joyously in the early days of your life? Or where is the husband whose fair young face so often looked on you with eyes of love? Where are those children who sprung up like flowers, but withered as they bloomed? Where are those brothers and those sisters, the elder born, that have crossed the flood before us? Where are those younger ones, whom we lived to see born, who shone with us for an hour, but whose sun even before it had reached its zenith, had set in eternal night? Brothers and Sisters, Death has made sad inroads into some of our families.

There be some of you who stand today like a man upon the shore when the tide is swelling towards his feet. There came one wave and it took away the grandmother. Another came and a mother was swept away. Another came and the wife was taken. And now it dashes at your feet. How long shall it be before it breaks over you—and you, too, are carried away by the yawning wave into the bosom of the deep of Death? The Lord has given many of you serious and solemn warnings. I do entreat you, listen to them. Hearken now, to the cry which comes up from the grave of

those who being dead yet speak to you. Hear them now, those lately buried ones, as they cry, “Children, husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, prepare to meet your God, lest you should fail in the last dread day.”

Think, again, what solemn and repeated warnings we have had of late, not in our families, but in the wide, wide world. It is a singular fact, that afflictions and accidents never come alone. A few weeks ago, we were all shocked with the news that one who sailed across the treacherous sea full many a time—and who at last had risen so high in his profession as to become captain of the largest vessel that was ever launched upon the deep—that he had suddenly perished in calm craters and his spirit had appeared before his God. It seemed to us to be a sad thing, that one who had endured the tempest and the storm, perhaps a thousand times, should sink as a ship that founders in mid-ocean, when not a wave rocks her keel. He is at home—he has just left his family—his foot slips and he finds a watery grave.

Quick upon that, as one messenger follows another, came the news across the sea of the falling of a mill, in which so many hundreds were at once overwhelmed by the ruins and sent hurriedly into the Presence of God. We can little tell what a thrill of horror went through the towns which are adjacent to that mill in America. Even ourselves, across leagues of the sea, felt stunned by the blow, when so large a number of our fellow creatures were hurried from this state of being into another.

Immediately after that there came another calamity, which is just fresh in our memory. A train is whirling along and suddenly the iron horse leaps from his road and men who are talking together, as fully at ease as we are, are amid the breaking of bones, the crashing of timber, whirlwinds of dust and steam and are snatched from time into eternity. And, now, this last week, how many tokens have we had that man is mortal? A judge who has long presided over the trials of his criminal countrymen, delivers his charge before a grand jury. He delivers it with his usual wisdom, calmness and deliberation. He has finished. He pauses. He lifts the smelling bottle to his nose to refresh himself. He falls back. He is carried from the court to receive his own charge, to go from the judgment seat on which he sat to the judgment seat before which he must himself stand.

Then, in the same week, a good man who has served his day and generation in a sister Church of this city is suddenly snatched away from before us. He who aided every good cause and served his day and generation—perhaps you may know that I allude to Mr. Corderoy—is suddenly taken away and leaves a whole denomination mourning over him. No, nearer than that has the stroke of death come to some of us. It was but last Wednesday that I sat in the house of that mighty servant of God, that great defender of the faith, the Luther of his age, Dr. Campbell.

We were talking then about these sudden deaths, little thinking that the like calamity would invade his very family. But, alas, we observed in the next day’s paper, that his second son had been swept overboard in returning from one of his voyages to America. A bold brave youth has found a liquid grave. So that here, there, everywhere, O Death, I see your doings! At home, abroad, on the sea and across the sea, you are doing marvels. O you mower! How long before your scythe shall be quiet? O you destroyer of men, will you never rest, will you never be still? O Death! Must your Juggernaut-car go crashing on forever and must the skulls and blood of human beings mark your track?

Yes, it must be so till He comes who is the King of life and immortality. Then the saints shall die no more, but be as the angels of God. So then, Death has spoken very loudly to us as a nation, as a people and has spoken to many of us, very loudly, in our own family circles.

Now, man, I will come closer home to you, still. Death has given home strokes to all of us. Put your finger in your own mouth, for you have Death’s mark there. What mean those decaying teeth, those twitching pains of the gum?—an agony despised by those alone who feel it not. Why do some parts of the house tremble and hurry to decay? Because the rottenness that is in the teeth is in the whole body. You talk of a decayed tooth—remember, it is but part of a decayed man. You are yourself rotting, but a little less rapidly. But, to some of you, what warnings Death has given! He has laid his cold hand upon your head and frozen your hair. And there it lies in snowy flakes upon your temples. Or, perhaps, he has put that hand yet more heavily upon it and now your bare head is exposed to the rays of the sun and, remember, this is but a type of the exposure of your bare soul to the stroke of Death.

What signs have we all had in our bodies, especially the aged, the infirm, the consumptive and the maimed? What mean those lungs that are so soon exhausted of their breathing if you travel up a flight of stairs to your bed? Why is it you need your optic glasses to your eyes, but that they that look out of the windows are darkened? Why that affected hearing? Why that failure of the voice, that weakness of the entire body, that accumulation of the flesh, or that prominence of the bones and leanness of the body? What are all these but stabs from the hand of Death? They are, if I may say so, his warrants which he presents to you, summons you in a little time to meet him in another place, to do your last work and take your last farewell.

Oh, if we would but look at ourselves, we bear Death’s signs and tokens about us in every part of our body. But some of us have had yet more solemn warnings than these. If these suffice not, Death gives us a more

thundering sermon. It is but a little while ago with me since Death with his axe seemed to be felling my tree. How the chips flew about me and covered the ground! It is a marvel to myself that I am here. Brought to Death’s door, till the mind became distracted and the body weakened, so that one could scarce stand upright and yet again recovered—

*“Tell it unto sinners—tell,  
I am, I am, out of Hell.”*

Still spared and yet alive. You have had fever, cholera it may be. You have been stretched on your bed time after time. And each time the branch has creaked and bent almost double, till we have said, “Surely, it must snap.” As a bowing wall have we been and as a tottering fence. Down it must come, so we thought. For a rough hand was shaking it and moving us to and fro. There was not a pillar that stood firm. There was not a beam or rafter that did not quiver. We said, in the bitterness of our soul, “My days are cut off and I shall go down to my tomb before my time.”

Well, man, and yet you are living in sin, as careless and unconcerned as you were before. Remember, if you will not hear Death’s tongue you shall feel his dart. If you will not think of God when He gives you a warning from a distance, you shall be made to feel God, for “He shall tear you in pieces and none shall deliver.” Methinks I see this morning Death fitting his arrow to the bow. He is drawing it, pulling it tighter and tighter still. And the marvel is that he can hold the arrow in his hand so long. “Shall it fly?” says Death. “Shall I let fly at yon wretch’s heart? He will not repent. Let me cut him off and send him to his destruction.” But the Lord says, “Spare him yet a little longer.”

But, wait, Death’s fingers are itching. He says, “My Lord, let me take aim. I have bent my bow and made it ready. So sharp is it that it would cut through bars of brass, or triple steel, to reach a human heart. My throat is thirsting after his blood. Oh, let me slay him. Let him die.” “No,” cries the longsuffering voice of God. “Spare him, spare him, spare him yet a little longer.” But the time will soon arrive. Perhaps, before that clock shall reach the half hour, it may be said in Heaven, “Time is! Time was!” And then shall Death let fly—his arrow shall reach your heart. And you, fading down on earth, shall appear before the awful Judge of the quick and the dead and receive your final sentence. And, good God, if you are unprepared to die! O careless sinner, what then will become of you?

I have thus tried to make you think of Death’s warnings in the loss of friends and the deaths of many abroad—moreover in the failing of our bodies and in the diseases which have begun to prey upon us.

III. And now to conclude, will you in the last place, PICTURE YOURSELF AS DYING NOW. Antedate for a very little while your last day. Suppose it to have come. The sun has risen. “Throw up that window! Let me see that sun for the last time!—This is my last day!” The physicians whisper with one another. You catch some syllables and you learn the sad news that the case is hopeless. Much has been done for you, but skill has its limit. “He may survive,” says the physician, “perhaps another twelve hours, but I hardly expect it will be so long as that. You had better gather his friends together to see him. Telegraph for the daughter. Let her come up and see her father’s face for the last time in the world.”

Yes, and now I begin to feel that the hour is coming. They are gathering round my bed. “Farewell! To you all, a last farewell! A father bids you follow him upwards to the skies. ‘I know that my Redeemer lives.’ My hope stands fast and firm in Christ Jesus! Farewell! Farewell! I commend you to Him who is the Father of the fatherless and the husband of the widow.” But the hour draws nearer still. And now the lips refuse to speak. We have something to communicate—a last word to a wife. We mutter through our closed teeth, but no audible sounds are heard, no words that can be interpreted. We breathe heavily. They stay us up in the bed with pillows. And now we begin to understand that expression of the hymn, “The cracking of the eye strings.” Now, we cannot see.

Strange to say, we have eyes still, but we cannot see. If we want anything we must feel about us for it. But, no, we cannot lift our hands. They begin to hang down. We can still hear and we hear the whisper, the question, “Is he dead?” One of them says, “ I think there is still a little breath.” They come very near and try to hear us breathing. That can hardly be heard. What must our sensations be in that solemn moment! There is a hush now in the room. The watch alone is heard ticking, as the last sands drop from the hour glass. And now, the last moment is come.

My soul is severed from my body. And where am I now—a naked, disembodied spirit? My Soul, if your hope is sound and real, you are now where you have longed to be. You are in the presence of your Savior and your God. You are now brother to the angels. You stand in the mid-blaze of the splendor of Divinity. You see Him, whom having not seen, you have loved, whom believing you have rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Ah, but there is another picture, the reverse of this. I cannot attempt to draw it, I will give you but the rough outline of it—a crayon sketch without the filling up. Yes, you are dying. And bad as you have been, you have some that love you and they gather round you. You cannot speak to them. Alas, you tell them more than if you could speak, for they see in your face that clammy sweat, those staring eyes. They see tokens that you have a vision of a something which would not bear to be revealed. You try to be composed. You quiet yourself. The doctor assists you to be damned easily—he drugs you, helps to send you to sleep. And now you feel that

you are expiring. Your soul is filled with terror. Black horrors and thick darkness gather round you. Your eye strings break. Your flesh and your heart fail. But there is no kind angel to whisper, “Peace, be still.” No convoy of cherubim to bear your soul away straight to yonder worlds of joy.

You feel that the dart of death is a poisoned dart, that it has injected Hell into your veins. That you have begun to feel the wrath of God before you enter upon the state where you shall feel it to the full. Ah, I will not describe what has happened. As your minister it may be I shall have to come up and see you in your last extremity and I shall have to say to the mother, to the children, to your brothers and to your sisters, “Well, well, we must leave this in the hands of a Covenant God.” I must speak as gently as I can, but I shall go away with the reflection—“O that he had been wise, that he had understood this, that he had considered his latter end.” My Heart, as I go down the stairs, shall ask me this question, “Was I faithful to this man? Did I tell him honestly the way to Heaven? If he is lost, will his blood be required at my hands?”

I know that with regard to some of you the answer of my conscience will be, “I have preached as well as I possibly could the Word of God, not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but with a desire to be simple and to come home to the heart. I must leave the matter there. If they are lost, oh, horror of horrors! But I am clear of their blood.” Ah, my Hearers, I hope it will not be so with you, but that each one of you, dying, may have a hope. And rising again may possess immortality and ascend to the Throne of my Father and of your Father, to my God and to your God.

And, now, if there is any impression upon your minds, any serious thought, let me send you away with this one sentence. The way of salvation is plain—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damped.” Believe—that is, trust—trust the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved. My God the Holy Spirit enable you to trust Him now, for with some of you—and mark this last sentence—with some of you it is NOW or NEVER.

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THE GREAT SUPREME  
NO. 367

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, SEPTEMBER 28, 1856, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

**“Ascribe greatness to our God.”  
Deuteronomy 32:3.**

OUR God is one God. He is none other than the infinite Jehovah who of old spoke unto His people and revealed Himself by that marvelous incommunicable name—the name Jehovah! And yet though He is one God, we are taught in Scripture that he is one God in three most glorious Persons. While we rightly believe in the unity of the Godhead and are so far Unitarians, we believe there are three Persons in one God and thus we are Trinitarian Unitarians.

We believe that the Father is God and we ascribe unto Him greatness for we believe that He made the world and settled the pillars thereof. We believe that He fashioned the universe and that He moves the starry orbs through space. We look up to the wondrous depths of a shoreless night and we see the starry fleet sailing alone and we believe that God is their Captain. We look further still and as by the aid of science we discover the void illimitable, we believe that God dwells there and is the infinite Creator and Preserver of all things that exist and subsist. We ascribe greatness unto Him, the Creator and the Protector of the world.

We equally believe that Jesus Christ who is God incarnate in the flesh, is very God of very God. We conceive the work of our redemption to be as Divine a work as that of creation. We consider that the miracles He did partly furnish us with the abundant proofs that He must have been none other than God. We behold Him rising by His own might from the tomb. We see Him standing at the right hand of God making intercession for us. We expect with joy His second coming. We look forward to the Day of Judgment, wherein He shall hold the great Assize of nations. And for these reasons, believing Him to be God, we ascribe greatness unto Jesus Christ, the Surety of the better Covenant.

And as for the Holy Spirit, believing that the work of conversion is as great as even that of redemption, or creation, we believe Him to be the everlasting God. We see Him so described in Scripture that we dare not speak of Him as an influence, as a new emanation from the Deity. But we conceive Him to be a Person as very God of very God, as is the Father, so is the Son. We solemnly subscribe to the creed of St. Athanasius, that though there are not three Gods, but one God, yet there are three Persons in the glorious Trinity in unity of the everlasting Jehovah, unto whom belong the shouts of the universe, the songs of angels and the ascription of our united praise,

Our God, then, is to be understood as Father, Son, Holy Spirit! One God whom we adore—and the words of Moses apply to the God of Christians as well as to the God of Jews—“Ascribe greatness to our God.”

I shall use the text, first, as a caution. Secondly, as a command. I shall be but brief upon each particular, for my strength I feel may speedily fail me, but I trust in God to make some impressions on our hearts.

1. First, then, I shall use it as A CAUTION.

Inasmuch as Moses has said, “Ascribe you greatness unto our God,” we believe that he intended thereby to hint to us that we ought to ascribe greatness to none else. If greatness is to be ascribed to God then none of God’s creatures may in the least share the honor of that mighty attribute of greatness. Now as there are many who violate this Truth and need this caution, they must allow me, if any of them are here, to caution them.

First, then, the man who trusts his salvation in the least degree to priests or pope, or any dignitary of any Church, violates this great command—“Ascribe greatness to our God.” If I bow my knee before a saint, if I worship a created being, if I seek the intercession of any save the one Person who is ordained to be the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, I do in that degree derogate from the greatness of God. Some think not. They suppose that by using some influence with the Virgin Mary, or with the saints, these may be induced also to plead with God.

No, they consider it to be honorable to employ some ambassador, seeing they conceive themselves to be unworthy to go to God with their own suit and do not think Christ to be an all-sufficient Mediator to go for them. We reply that however humble they may think it on their part, however they may really and honestly suppose that they are magnifying God Himself, it becomes them to know this—that they are not doing homage to His greatness in supposing that a saint is more merciful than God. In imagining that a saint shall have more influence with God than His own Son, I suppose that His heart is not tender enough to be open to my cry without the use of influence—which is to say the very least of it— throwing some slur on the infinity of His mercy and detracting in no small degree from the benignity of His grace.

God has one Mediator because man needed it. He has no more mediators because neither God nor man requires any. Christ is all-sufficient. You do need a mediator between yourselves and God, but you need none between yourselves and Christ. You may go to Christ just as you are, with all your filthiness, with all your sins, for He came to save you from what you now are and to make you a people for Himself who should show forth His praise.

Detract not, then, from the glory of His grace by bowing down before others and asking them to intercede for you. I remember a singular anecdote which sets out very clearly the absurdity of the intercession of the saints. Some of you may have heard it before, but as many of you may not, I will say it again—A good English farmer had a landlord who resided in Ireland. On a sudden the bailiff raised his rent so tremendously that the poor farmer could by no means pay his way and was getting entirely ruined. He therefore applied to the bailiff to have the rent taken down to a fair average. After applying scores of times he got no answer and he was very near destruction.

He applied to other persons whom he supposed to have influence with his landlord. But he made no way at all and was as ill-treated as before. So doing what he had quite a right to do, he just goes over to Ireland and calls to see his lordship of whom he had taken the farm. He was shown in to him and explained that he had taken the farm at a rent which he held to be fair to himself and to his landlord and that then he had made a living. But that on a sudden the bailiff unaccountably raised the rent, so that he was nearly ruined. “My good friend,” said the landlord, “why did you not come before? I don’t wish that any man should be ruined through me. Let the rent be taken down to anything you think fair.”

“But,” said the man, “I spoke to your bailiff. I did not dare to come to speak to a gentleman like you.” “Oh,” said he, “farmer, you are very welcome.” But before the farmer left, he took him to see a chapel where there were all sorts of pictures. The farmer was rather startled and asked to know what they meant. “Why,” said the landlord “these are the priests and these are the saints. I put up my prayers to them and then they intercede with Jesus Christ in my behalf.”

The farmer laughed. The landlord asked him why and he said, “I was thinking it could be a pretty bit of business. It would be doing very much the same as I did. I went round to your bailiff and to your friends and I never got any redress till I came to yourself, Sir. So you may go round to all these very fine ladies and gentlemen you call saints and I believe you will never get much from them, till you go to the Lord Himself and present your petition direct to Him. And if you do, I believe you will have a very good chance of success.”

This is a singular British-like mode of illustration but it is sufficient, I think, to put aside the idea of going to saints in order to intercede with God. The fact of worshipping saints, of trusting my salvation in the hands of men and thinking that any persons can forgive my sins, is to my soul abhorrent beyond abhorrence and hideous beyond horror. We should “ascribe greatness to our God”—to Him and Him alone.

Very possibly, however, what I have said of that matter will be agreed to by all of you and the arrow will fly into other breasts than yours. Allow me, therefore, to make the remark that in Protestant countries there is a very strong tendency to priest-craft still. Though we do not bow down and worship images and do not professedly put our souls into the hands of priests, yet, I am sorry to say it, there is scarce a congregation that is free from that error of ascribing greatness to their minister.

If souls are converted how very prone we are to think there is something marvelous in the man! And if saints are fed and satisfied with marrow and fatness how prone we are to suppose that the preacher has something about him by which these wondrous things are done! And if a revival takes place in any part of the vineyard, it matters not in what denomination, there is an aptness in the human mind to ascribe some part of the glory and the praise to the mere human agency. Oh, Beloved, I am sure every right-minded minister will scorn the thought.

We are but your servants for Christ’s sake. We speak to you, by God’s grace, what we believe to be God’s Truth—but ascribe not to us any honor or any glory. If by anything a soul is saved, God from first to last has done it. If your souls are fed, thank the Master. Be respectful and grateful to the servant as you can be, but most of all thank Him who puts the Word into the mouths of His servants and who applies it to your heart. “Oh, down with priest-craft!” Even I myself must down with it. Down with it!” If I myself like Samson fall beneath its roof let me fall myself and be crushed, well content in having pulled down or contributed to remove one solitary brick in that colossal house of Satan. Take care, Friends, that you put no honor upon any man that you ought to have ascribed unto your God. “Ascribe greatness to our God.”

There is, too, in our land of freedom somewhat of a tendency to ascribe greatness to kings and mighty men. We are most of us professedly democrats. We generally talk democratically when we get together. But there is not an Englishman that is much of a democrat after all. When we get by a noble lord, how we do look up to him, as if he were some angel come down from on high! How we defer to the man who bears a title and whatever he might state we should have scarcely the honesty to tell him the truth, because he added, “Duke,” or “Lord,” to his name. Why, my Friends, in this world we seldom judge men as to character. We judge them as to rank.

The poor and honest man shall go through the streets—will you crowd to see him? A man shall wear a crown who is a perjurer—and will you not rush out and clap your hands at him? You judge according to rank and not according to character. Would God we all knew how to judge men not according to the sight of our eyes, or the hearing of our ears, but according to the rightness of their characters. Oh, honor the Queen. God has said so in his Word. Pay deference unto authorities as you should do. But if in anything they swerve, remember your knee must bow to God and to God alone. If in anything there is anything wrong, though it should have a sovereign’s name attached to it, remember, only one is your Master, one is your King, “King of kings and Lord of lords.” Ascribe not greatness unto emperors and monarchs—“Ascribe you greatness unto our God” and unto our God alone.

In the case of those who are in the employ of masters it is but just and right that they should render unto their masters that which is their due. But when the master commands that which is wrong, allow me solemnly to caution you against giving to him anything which you are not bound to do. Your master tells you you must break the Sabbath. You do it because he is your master. You have violated this command, for it is said, “Ascribe you greatness unto God.”

You are tempted in your employment to commit a fault. You are commanded to do it. You are irresolute. You waver for a moment. You say, shall I obey God or man? At last, you say, “My master said so, I must obey him, or I shall lose my employment.” Remember you have not ascribed greatness unto God when you say that. Rather say this—“In all things that are right, I am the servant of all men, but in things that are wrong, I will not yield. I will stand up steadfast for God’s right and for God’s commands. Men may be my masters when they tell me to do the thing that is honest and the thing that is just, but if in anything they swerve from that, I will not break my heavenly Master’s command. He is more my Master than they—I will stand firm and fast by Him.”

How many young men are tempted from the path they ought to pursue by those who exercise influence upon them? How many a young woman has been turned aside from rectitude by some command which has been given her by a person who had influence over her? Take care that you allow no man to get dominion over your conscience. Remember you will have no excuse at the Day of Judgment. It will be no palliation of your guilt to say that you were commanded by man to do wrong. For God will reply to you—“I told you to ascribe greatness to Me and to Me only and inasmuch as you obeyed man rather than God, you have violated My command.” “Ascribe greatness to our God.” Take that caution—believe it—and receive it in your daily life and in your dealing with great and small.

This text has a bearing upon certain philosophic creeds which I will just hint at here. Some men, instead of ascribing greatness to God ascribe greatness to the laws of nature and to certain powers and forces which they believe govern the universe. They look up on high. Their eyes sees the marvelous orbs walking in their mystery along the sky. They take the telescope and peer into the distance and they see yet more marvelous orbs, some of them of fire and others of a structure they cannot understand. And they say, “What stupendous laws are those which govern the universe!”

And you will see in their writings that they ascribe everything to law and nothing to God. Now, all this is wrong. Law without God is nothing. God puts force into law and if God acts by laws in the government of the material universe, it is still the force of God which moves the worlds along and keeps them in their places. Law without God is nullity. Reject every philosophy that does not ascribe greatness to God for there is a worm at the root of it. There is some cancer at its heart and it yet shall be destroyed. That and that alone shall stand which ascribes “greatness unto our God.”

2. So far by way of caution. Now by way of COMMAND. “Ascribe greatness to our God.”  
This command comes to the sinner when he first begins seriously to consider his position before God. My Friend, you have never thought of Heaven or of Hell until this moment, except it is a casual thought which is offensive to you. You are now in God’s house and perhaps you are inclined to think of your own position. You remember that you are standing upon a narrow neck of land between two unbounded seas— *“A point of time, a moment’s space  
May land you in yon heavenly place.  
Or shut you up in Hell.”*  
I hope you are asking yourself, “How can I be saved?” I beseech you in the very outset of that question take this for your guide—“Ascribe greatness to our God.” By this I mean when you look at your sins, ascribe greatness to God’s justice. Do not do as some who say, “It is true, I have rebelled against God, but then very likely He will not punish me.” Be not as some who suppose that God’s justice is such a thing of willow that it can easily bend to justify without satisfaction and pardon without atonement.  
Remember this as undoubted Truth—our God is very great in justice. Solemnly I assure you from God’s holy Word that He is just, that He will by no means clear the guilty unless they are cleared by Jesus Christ. If you have sinned but one sin, God will punish you for it. It you have sinned but one hour, that one hour will damn your soul despite all your repentance and all your good works—unless the blood of Jesus Christ shall take the sins away. Remember God cannot pass by sin without expressing His displeasure and either on your shoulders, or else on those of Christ the lash must fall—for fall somewhere it must. God must punish every sin. He must punish every crime.  
And unless you have confidence that Christ suffered for you— remember He is very great—the whole of His wrath, every drop of the shower of His anger must fall on your poor helpless head and every word of His awful curse must sink deep into your inmost heart. He is a very great God. He is not like the little kings of earth who sometimes pass by sin without punishment. But He is severely just and strict towards all offenders. He says, “I will punish you for your sin.” “The soul that sins it shall die.” Start with that then when you begin to think of being saved.  
Next to this, addressing the sinner who is already convicted of this sad and solemn thought, let me say, “Ascribe greatness unto our God”—that is, to His mercy. My Friend, you are sensible that you are guilty. Conscience has had its work with your soul. You are certain that if God is just He must punish you. You are well aware He cannot pass by your iniquities without exhibiting His wrath concerning them. Maybe under a sense of guilt you will cry, “My sins are too great to be pardoned.” Stop! Stop! Put Jesus Christ’s blood upon them and my life for yours, my soul for yours, they are not too great.  
Instead of ascribing greatness to your sin, ascribe greatness to our God. Remember, if in coming to God as a penitent you think that His mercy is little, you dishonor Him. If you suppose that the blood of Christ is not capable of washing out your blackest crime you dishonor the glorious atonement of Christ. Whenever you doubt you defraud God of His honor for remember He has said it, “Him that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out.”  
Come, poor Sinner and ascribe greatness to God’s mercy. Believe that His arms are wide—believe that His love is deep. Believe that His grace is broad—believe that He is all-powerful to take away your vilest sin and wash you of your crimson guilt. “Ascribe greatness to our God.” Be convinced of His great mercy, you seeking souls who want Christ and know not where to find Him. Further let me appeal to the Christian. “Ascribe greatness to our God.”  
And you who are in trouble. Dear fellow-laborers, you are wearied with the hardness of your journey. Your poverty has got hold of you. Your troubles are multiplied and increased. It is a dark night with you just now. You see not your sins. You have no sweet promise to light upon—no cheering Word to reassure your poor desponding heart. Come, here is a text for you—“Ascribe greatness to our God.” Great as your troubles are, remember He is greater. If the darkness is very thick, remember the mountain stands as firm at night as in the day. And when clouds girdle His Throne, yet they never shake its basement—  
*“Firm as the earth His promise stands,  
And He can well secure  
What you commit into His hands,  
Till the decisive hour.”*  
Never think your trials are too huge for Him. Take them to Him. Cast them on the Lord. Trust Him with them all. His everlasting shoulders, that, like Atlas, bear the world, did never totter yet, nor shall they. Cast the whole roll of your troubles at His door—He will relieve you. Take the whole bundle of your sorrows, cast them at His feet, He can take them all away. And when the devil tempts you to believe that God cannot help you, tell him that you think better of Him than that. You ascribe greatness to the Almighty and you believe He is great enough to deliver you from all your sorrows.  
Perhaps just now you are engaged in prayer. You have been for weeks and months agonizing at the Throne. You have had but little success there. Well, as you go to the mercy seat, take this with you “Ascribe greatness to our God.” We often get but little from God because we think Him a little God. We ask very little of God at times and therefore we get little. He who in prayer believes God to be great and asks of God as if He were great shall be certain to get many mercies from Him. Little faith gets little answers but great faith believes God’s greatness and says— *“I am coming to a King,  
Large petitions I will bring;  
For His grace and power are such,  
None can ever ask too much.”*  
Thus in prayer ascribe greatness unto God. Do you ask a hundred? Ask a thousand. Have you asked a thousand? Ask ten thousand. Oh, I beseech you never stint for faith nor stint for desire. God has said, “Open your mouth wide and I will fill it.” Remember the king of Israel. The Prophet came to him and gave him the bow and arrows. Said he, “Shoot with the bow and arrows.” And he shot once or twice and then he stayed his hand.  
And the Prophet said, “You should have shot again and again and then you would have smitten all the Assyrias until you had destroyed them.” Even so does God. When He gives us faith He puts the bow and arrows into our hands. Oh, do not smite once or twice! Smite many times and you shall smite your sins until you have destroyed them. Draw the long bow of prayer—shoot your arrow as far as ever you can. Ask nothing small. In small petitions you suppose Him to be a small giver. Ask greatly and He will give greatly. “Ascribe greatness to our God.”  
But I hope you are today engaged in duty. You have the duty thrust upon you by Providence which you do not flee from. Like Jonah you are half a mind to go to Tarshish instead of going to Nineveh, for you are afraid your strength will never bear you up in so huge a labor as that which has fallen to your share. Stop! Pay not your fare to Tarshish, else winds shall pursue you. Believe this—  
*“Weak as you are,  
Yet through His might,  
All things you can perform.”*  
And believing go forward. Go forward and stop at nothing. If God should call me to break the Alps in sunder, let it please Him to give me faith. I believe He would give me strength to do it. If God were to call you, as He did Joshua, to stop the sun in its course and seize His golden bridle and bid His coursers stay their hasty race, you would have strength enough to do it. “Ascribe greatness to our God.”  
If like Luther had to brave the Vatican and breast the storm, if God intended you for the work, He would give you grace to stand in it. And if your trial should be one of persecution, if you are called to the stake, you need not fear to march boldly to it and embrace it—for He who called you to die will give you dying grace, will give you burning grace—so that you shall endure in the midst of hideous torments and terrific pains. “Ascribe greatness to our God.” Yes, greatness made more great in the midst of creature weakness.  
And now, to close, there is one point I wish to urge upon your attention tonight. Wherever I go it is the almost universal complaint that the former times were better than now. Everywhere it is the solemn conviction of Christians that the Church is in a very wrong position. Go where you please you will hear one confession, one doleful, lamentable groan, that the Church is cold and lifeless. Not dead, but Laodicean—and I believe that Laodicea is the most correct picture of the Church at the present moment. We are neither hot nor cold and Christ is angry with us. Where is the zeal—the zeal of Whitfield? Ah, where are the men that weep for perishing sinners? Where are the ministers that weep for souls as if they were full of life or death?  
Where are the Baxters now, whose knees shake when they climb their pulpit stairs because they feel how solemn is their position and whose cheeks are glittered with tears because they know the doom of perishing sinners and long to snatch them from the fire? Where are your Rowland Hills now who descend to common language to reach the common people? Yes, and where are your praying men and praying women?  
There are many of them—but where are those who pray with all their hearts as if they meant it? Ah, Heaven knows, the Church is just now where it ought not to be. But, oh, Christians, sit not down in despair. Think not that God has given us over. “Ascribe greatness to our God.” In the very worst of times God can bring us out again. In the times of Arius, when the world was gone aside to disbelieve the divinity of Christ, God provided an Athanasius who in bold stern language put to flight the Arians and stood up for God.  
When the world had gone aside to Pelagianism He found an Augustine who uttered the words of grace and delivered the world from that mesh of errors. When the Church had gone into foul delusions, there was the monk found who shook the world—the Luther to proclaim the Truth. And when the doctrines needed purity, there was the Calvin to cast salt into the troubled craters and make them calm and limpid, so that to the very bottom man could see.  
And when in later times the Church of England and the Church in England had sunken very low, all men said God had given up His church. But there were found six young men in the college of Oxford. God only knows how they came there and how they were converted. Those six—Wesley and Whitfield being of the number—waked the world again from its dark and long slumber. And when we had relapsed again, God found the successors of Whitfield—the Romains, the Topladys, the John Newtons, the Rowland Hills—men like Christmas Evans, like John Berridge.  
These came to bear the standard of the Lord and to support His Truth. And mark you now, God has got the man somewhere. Yes, the MEN somewhere and they will come out yet. There will be a shaking one of these days. The men shall come yet to move the Church once more. We shall not forever sleep. We shall not forever lie still. There will be a revival throughout this land, I do believe, such as our fathers never saw. The times shall come when the heavens shall give one and shall hear the call and shall send down rain, when the earth shall blossom with righteousness and the heavens shall drop with dew. For that time we all heartily pray, for the time we earnestly wait. “Ascribe greatness to our God.”  
To my own Church and people, only one word and then farewell. My Friends, we also are about to engage in an enterprise for which I fear we are not quite competent. But remember God will provide for us. Often on my bed do I toss restlessly by night to know what is to become of all these people. Where is my Church to be housed and where my congregation to be gathered? And but last night in unbelief I thought it never could be that such a place could be built. But ah, always “ascribe you greatness to God.” Let us attempt great things. And we shall do great things. Let us try at them and God being with us, we shall do them yet. If I had cared to preach in fine and gaudy language I might perhaps have done it. But I have cared only to speak just as common people do.  
I often tell tales that shock propriety—I shall do it again. I often do things that others condemn me for—I shall do worse still, God helping me. If I can but win souls by them, I am not to be daunted by any opinion whatever. If heirs of Heaven are snatched from Hell I shall rejoice to have done it by any means in the world. Well, then, if I am ever to have the poor around me then will I trust in God, in His poor and in His church that they will yet raise a tabernacle where His name is to be honored. Lay it to your hearts and if you think it is God’s work, go about it with faith and with vigor. “Ascribe you greatness to our God.”  
Oh, you that hate my God. You that despise Him. The day is coming— perhaps tomorrow shall be the day when you shall ascribe greatness to my God! For you shall feel His great foot upon your loins and His great sword shall cut you in sunder. His great wrath shall utterly devour you and His great Hell shall be your doleful home forever.  
May God grant it may not be so and may He save us all for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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MAN’S EXTREMITY, GOD’S OPPORTUNITY  
NO. 2717

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MARCH 10, 1901.

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

**“For the LORD shall judge His people, and repent Himself for**

**His servants, when He sees that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left.”  
Deuteronomy 32:36**

THE same event may happen alike to all, yet it may have a very different meaning to different individuals. Ungodly men are brought low by affliction or poverty, for sinners have no immunity from suffering. Saints, also, are led into trying circumstances, for the utmost holiness will not preserve any man from trial. But what a difference there is between the downfall of the prosperous sinner and of the man whom God loves! The wicked man who continues in his wickedness, falls forever. But the righteous man, though he may fall seven times, rises up again, for he shall not fall finally. How dreadful is the language of Jehovah when speaking of the ungodly! “To Me belongs vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.”

The wicked man who prospers in this world carries his head very high. He is proud and conceited, and he treads the poor under his feet. His career seems to be one of uninterrupted prosperity—higher, and higher, and higher, and yet higher he mounts—he becomes more wealthy and famous and, meanwhile, he also becomes more boastful and more arrogant towards God. He asks, “Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?” He breathes defiance again at the Most High. His heart grows harder and harder, like the heart of Pharaoh. Do you see where he is now? He has climbed to the very mountain’s brow. He is rejoicing that he has reached the topmost pinnacle of fame. Who can ever pull him down from that height? Who can even disturb his peace? Wait a while. Tarry but a brief season. High places are full of danger and the terrible prophecy shall yet be fulfilled in his experience—and in that of many others who are like he—“Their feet shall slide in due time”—and when men in such a position begin to slip and slide, their fall is irrevocable! Down, down they go, falling from precipice to precipice, until they are utterly broken in pieces.

Am I addressing any man who thinks that he is beyond the reach of the arrows of the Almighty? Before another week has passed over your head, Sir, you may lie gazing into eternity—and the joints of your loins shall be loosed as you begin to realize that you must so soon stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ! Vain, then, will be all your wealth and all your wit! You may now deride the godly who seek mercy at the hands of God, but then you will cry out worse than they have ever done! You have often, in your pride, mocked them in the hour of their distress. But, in the day of your calamity, it may be that before you shall have even time to present one prayer to God, your foot shall slide, you will find yourself lost, and forever have to wring your hands in anguish at your own folly in having despised eternal love and rejected the mercy of God in Christ Jesus!

I would not change places with the greatest man who is living without the Savior! If I could have the whole world given to me. If I could be the possessor of a thousand worlds and yet live for a single moment without having my sin forgiven, and without the love of God shed abroad in my heart, it would be a living death to me! I think it would be so with each one of you and it would be if you carefully thought the matter over. I invite you to do so and I earnestly ask you to imagine how dreadful must be the doom of an ungodly man. When he dies, he sinks into the abyss of Hell! When his light goes out, there is no means of lighting it again! The tenfold midnight, thick as Egypt’s darkness, shall never be broken by the gleaming of a solitary star of hope. I want you to think all the more of this solemn Truth of God because I am going to speak of others who do fall very low, and suffer very much, yet, after all, their descent is followed by an ascent—their declining leads to a revival, for, according to our text, “the Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when He sees that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left.”

I. I shall apply the text, first of all, to THE LORD’S OWN CHURCH. It may relate to any sorely-tried church. I may be addressing some Brothers and Sisters, up from the country, who are members of churches that are sadly declining. If that is the case, let me remind you, dear Friends, that God may have a true church which is very severely tried. The track of the ship of the church has lain full often over very boisterous waters. Sometimes the sea has seethed and the billows have boiled through the fury of persecution—the prow of the vessel has been crimsoned with blood, but onward has she moved! Still has the Divine wind speeded her on her way and, despite the kings of the earth, and all the infernal tortures that Rome’s inquisitors could invent, the sturdy ship has gone straight on towards her desired haven! The days of persecution have not yet ceased, but when any churches are brought very low through the attacks of cruel enemies, there is still hope for them in this promise of the living God.  
What is even far worse for a church than persecution, it may be diminished and brought low through the folly of its own members. My eyes could weep day and night over some churches that I know, which seem to me to be determined to commit spiritual suicide. They fall to quarrelling, when they are weak enough, already, and need what little strength they have for fighting against the common foe. Often they divide into parties about nothing at all and where there should be unbroken brotherhood, there is an absence of anything like Christian love and, therefore, the Spirit of God departs from them.  
Many churches are, alas, brought low through a faulty ministry. A ministry that does not ring out in tones as clear as a clarion, “Salvation by Grace, through faith in the precious blood of Jesus Christ,” is an impoverishing ministry. If there is no nourishing food for the soul, how can it be in spiritual health? Where will the gathering of the people be if the Shiloh is not present? If Christ is absent from the assembly, is not everything lacking that can build up a true Christian Church? In many and many a place that I know of, the members of the church have become few and feeble because the ministry has not fed their souls. And, sometimes, a church may get down so very low that it appears as if it would become altogether extinct. One is afraid that the doors of the chapel will have to be closed, that the altar-fire will go out and that the testimony for God will cease in that particular hamlet, or village, or township.  
Now, Brothers and Sisters, if any of you are members of such a church as that, what you have to make sure of is that it is a Church of Christ and that you are God’s people and God’s servants, for our text speaks of God’s favor to, “His people” and, “His servants.” This passage does not apply to every nomina1 church, nor to every conglomeration of merely moral men who call themselves Christians—but it does concern every real Church of God, however low it may have been brought. When you are in such a state as this, what you have to do is to lay the condition of the church to heart and to cry unto God to raise it up again. Use every possible and right means to bring a revival, but if your way is blocked and there seems to be no possibility of success attending your efforts, then fall back upon this text and plead it with God in prayer—“For the Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when He sees that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left.”  
For, next, if you pray in faith, God will return to you. I believe that halfa-dozen persons with vital religion in their souls, and really in earnest, may pray a church right out of any ditch into which it may have fallen, or bring it even from the sepulcher where it has been buried—and make it live again in fullness of life! Only there must be an intense determination that it shall be so and real anguish and travail of soul until the desired end is attained. The fact that the church has come to her extremity of weakness should cheer you, rather than drive you to despair, for when a thing is so low that it cannot get any lower, there is some consolation in that fact. Now is the time to hope that the tide will turn! If it has ebbed out to the very uttermost, now let us trust that it will soon begin to flow again! I do not know whether the common saying is true, that the darkest hour of the night is that which precedes the dawn of day, but let us hope that it is so with your church and that, when it has got very, very, very low, it has reached its limit of weakness—and that God will raise it up again.  
There are some friends, whom I meet every now and then, who tell me that there are very dreadful times coming upon the world. I am not sure that they are right in all their forecasts, but one thing I do know, and that is, if ever the Church of God should get into a worse state than she has ever yet been in, if I am alive at such a time, I will still call together the last, half-dozen faithful ones if I am one of them, and I will get them to read with me this verse, “For the Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when He sees that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left.”  
You remember that when John Huss was being burned to death, he said, “Within a hundred years, there will come a man whom the persecutors will not be able to burn.” The word Huss used was, goose, and he said, “there will come a swan that you will never be able to roast”—that was Martin Luther, who was many times in great peril, and yet was not killed by the persecutors. When he was converted, the world was as spiritually dark as it well could be, yet God then found, even in the monastery, a monk whose preaching of the Gospel shook the world! Never be afraid of the ultimate issue of the great battle! God will beat the devil yet. Never admit into your mind, thoughts that shall lead you to despond concerning the end of the conflict. The battle is the Lord’s and He will yet give the victory to His Gospel. If some of the young people here should live to see all those who now preach the Gospel laid in the silent grave. If any of you should live to see this place of worship empty. If ever this pulpit should cease to resound with the Gospel of Christ, do not give up hope, my Brothers and Sisters! Still stick together, even if there are only a few of you left, and cry mightily unto God, pleading the promise of our text, for He will remember you, and will, “repent Himself for His servants,” and His cause shall yet again revive!  
II. Now, in the second place, I want to show you that our text is applicable to THE TRIED BELIEVER. I may be addressing someone to whom these words of Moses shall drop as the rain and distil as the dew.  
Beloved Brothers and Sisters, God may bring His people, in the order of His Providence, into such a state that “their power is gone.” Apparently they are in such a condition that they are quite unable to help themselves. They have struggled against many difficulties, but, at last, the difficulties have proved more than a match for them. All earthly help has quite failed them. To quote the words of the text, “their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left.” No garrison left in the city, no soldier left in the field, no helper anywhere. You may be like Job who had no friends left, except the miserable comforters who spoke more like enemies than friends. You are not the first of God’s servants whose power is gone and whose friends are gone!  
The worst about your trial may be that it may seem to you, and seem truly, that some of your suffering is the result of sin. You may not have been walking with God as you ought to have done. Your heart may have grown cold so that which has come upon you may be a chastisement for your wandering. It may be a rod in the hand of your loving Father, smiting you because of your folly. But I beseech you, now that all human power is gone, do not run away from God, but fly to Him! Do not give up your hope in Him! However deplorable your circumstances may be, let them drive you to God—not from Him. Your only hope now lies in the compassion of your God. Let me read this text to you again, and I pray that your faith may enable you to grasp it—“For the Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when He sees that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left.” There is a gracious purpose behind your present trial, even though you do not yet perceive it.  
It is possible that it was absolutely necessary that you should be brought as low as you are in order to cure you of your sin. You have come to your last shilling, have you? I have known a doctor to keep his patients almost without food, and bring the man down every low in order to starve out the complaint from which he was suffering. And in a surgical case, the knife has had to go in very deeply so as to get at the roots of the cancer. In like manner, it may be that it was necessary that your affliction should not be stopped midway, but should be allowed to proceed to the bitter end in order that it might be the means of curing you of the evils which were rankling in your spirit.  
Possibly, too, the affliction was permitted to develop to the uttermost in order that you might be induced to return to your God. It may be that in your prosperity you had grown so careless and so fond of the world—and you had so little delight in God—that it was necessary for you to have your gourds withered and your flowers all made to decay in order that you might, in your abject distress, turn again to your God.  
Or it may be that God intends that you should forever bear a testimony to His faithfulness such as no ordinary man can bear. Those people who only sail in a little boat on a lake have no stories to tell of adventures at sea. But he who is to write a book describing long voyages must travel far out of sight of land and behold the sea in the time of storm, as well as in a calm. You are to become, perhaps, an experienced Christian—you are to bring great honor to God by being the means of comforting others who will be tried in a similar way to yours. You are to be trained into a hero, and that cannot be done except by great and bitter griefs coming upon you. I believe that there are some of us whom God cannot trust with much joy. If we carry much sail, His wisdom and His love compel Him to give us also much ballast, or else we shall be blown over. There must be many a man who knows within himself that he cannot be trusted with success. His head would turn dizzy if he were set upon a high pinnacle and he would get proud, and self-sufficient, and so be ruined. God will not kill His children with sweets any more than He will destroy them with bitters. They shall have a tonic when they need it, but when that tonic is so bitter that they seem as if they could not drink it and live, their Lord will either take the tonic away, or give them some delicious sweetness to remove all the bitter taste.  
I will read the text to you again. I cannot preach from it as I should like to do, but the text itself is full of comfort to the Lord’s own chosen ones who are in sore straits. “For the Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when He sees that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left.” Tried child of God, I wish I could grasp your hand in tender sympathy and whisper in your ear, “In your lowest moments, do not despair. ‘Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies? No, verily, for the Lord will not cast off forever. But though He causes grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies.’ ‘Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.’ The Lord Himself says to you, ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you.’ ‘When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you: when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon you.’ ‘He shall deliver you in six troubles: yes, in seven there shall no evil touch you.’ ‘Therefore, if you walk in darkness, and see no light, trust in the Lord, and stay yourself upon your God, for He will have compassion upon you; He will take away His wrath and smile again upon your soul, and turn your lamentation into singing, and your mourning into dancing.’”  
III. This must suffice for the tried child of God, for I want to show that the text also applies to THE CONVICTED SINNER.  
Are there any of you who cannot say that you are the children of God, but who wish that you were? I said to one, the other day, “Are you a Christian?” and he replied, “No, Sir, but oh, how I wish that I were!” When I heard with what emphasis he spoke, I thought that he must not be far from the Kingdom of God, for is not he who wishes to be a Christian, almost one already? Is there not the beginning of a work of Grace in his heart which the Holy Spirit will carry on to completion? So I will read the text now to you who wish to be saved, but fear that you shall not be, for you have had a dreadful sense of sin—‘For the Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when He sees that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left.”  
Do these words describe your present condition? First, is your selfrighteousness all gone? A few months ago you were a fine fellow according to your own estimate. You thought that there were few as good as you. But tonight you came slinking in as if you felt afraid even to sit down with the people of God! You remember that line of the hymn—

*“Then look, Sinner—look unto Him, and be saved”—*

and you feel that you would like to look to the Crucified One. You can go as far as that but you cannot yet say that you have looked unto Him and that you are saved, for you have such an awful sense of your guilt in the sight of God. I know you, my Friend. I “know the heart of a stranger,” for such was my heart in the time of my conviction on account of sin. Oh, the heaviness of a guilty conscience! Oh, the long, dark, dreary winter of the soul, when sin blots out the sun, turns even mercy into misery, and sorrow makes the day into night! Ah, I know you, my Brother, my Sister—your self-righteousness is all gone and I am glad of it! I rejoice that the Lord has broken the iron sinew of your neck and that your fine feathers and ornaments have all been stripped off you, and that you have put on sackcloth in place of your former comely array. The Lord help you to keep it on till Jesus Christ takes it off, for it is fit livery for a sinner to wear!

Then, next, you say that your power is all gone. Not many months ago you thought that you could believe in the Lord Jesus Christ whenever you liked—that it was the easiest thing in all the world to become a Christian—and that you would trust the Savior some fine day or other, whenever you pleased. Yet, at this moment, you are sighing, “I would, but can’t believe. Lord, relieve my load of guilt! All my help must come from You.” You are the gentleman who was going to conquer his evil temper and give up his bad habits—and be a saint and do it all yourself! Oh, yes, yes! Then you thought you could do anything and everything! But now you have come to realize that, apart from Christ, you can do nothing! Only the other morning, when you got up, you prayed to God and you thought that you would lead a very good life throughout that whole day, yet you were out of temper before breakfast was over! You went to your business and you were going to be quite an example there— and a pretty example you were! You felt that as you went home at night, all your attempts to be better and to do right had failed. I am glad you have learned your weakness and I hope that your consciousness of weakness will become deeper and more painful, for, until every bone in your body is broken, I am afraid that you will not turn to God! You are, I fear, one of the men who, as long as they can lift a little finger to help themselves, will still put all their trust in their little finger and will not turn to the Strong for strength! To cure them of that evil, you must grind them to powder! You must do with them what Solomon says concerning the fool, bray them “in a mortar among wheat with a pestle,” before you can get this folly of supposed self-strength out of them! Even then, sometimes every atom of their ground and pounded being still seems to say, “I am somebody, after all.” So it is a blessed thing when God makes us to know that all our power is gone.

Is my text true concerning any of you? “Their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left.” Are you brought to such a pass that you have not anything in the whole world that you dare to rely upon? You look back upon all your Church attendance and your Chapel attendance, but you dare not rely upon them, for you feel that you have been a hypocrite in the House of God, and that your heart has not been right towards Him. You look back upon your attempts to pray—for you have been trying to pray lately—but you feel as if you could not pray aright. The words stuck in your throat, and the very desires were dead within your spirit. Have you come to such a pass that when you read the Bible, it condemns you? And when you hear the Gospel, the preacher seems as if he excluded you from its provisions? Is it so? Is there no ray of hope for you anywhere? You used to have some kind of hope in reserve, some secret, mysterious confidence that still buoyed you up—is that all gone? Do you realize that you are lost? Do you know that the sentence of death has been pronounced against you? Do you even begin to wonder why it has not been executed? Do you seem to feel in your heart the working of the Spirit, as if even now He would take you away and cast you into Hell?

Blessed be the Lord if you have come to such a pass as that! Your extremity is God’s opportunity! The difficulty all along has been to get to the end of you, for when a man gets to the end of himself, he has reached the beginning of God’s working! When you are cleaned right out and have not anything at all left, then all the mercy of the Covenant of Grace is yours! I may have doubts about whether God’s Grace will be exercised in certain cases, but I cannot raise any question about the freeness of Divine Grace to a soul that is empty, to a soul that is ready to perish, to a soul that is enquiring after God, to a soul that is hungering and thirsting after righteousness! If you, poor Sinner, are covered with leprosy from head to foot. If, though the priest should thoroughly examine you, he would have to declare that there is not one sound speck in you even of the size of a pin’s head, let me tell you what the Law of God itself says— you are clean! Therefore go your way. When once your soul is so conscious of your sin that every hope of salvation by your own works is entirely abandoned and you feel that you are utterly condemned, then is Jesus Christ yours, for He came not to call the righteous, but sinners. So, accept Him as yours! Take Him, receive Him now! He is made of God, fullness to our emptiness, righteousness to our unrighteousness, life to our death, salvation to our condemnation, all in all to our poverty, our wretchedness, our sin!

Now let me read the text to you yet once more and see if God the Holy Spirit does not press it home upon your conscience and heart. “For the Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when He sees that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left.” There is no hope for you except in the pity of God, no hope except in His mercy, and no hope of mercy except in the freeness of His mercy. And no hope, even, of the freeness of mercy except in the Sovereignty of God who has mercy on those upon whom He will have mercy, and who gives His Grace to the most unworthy, that it may be proved to be all the greater Grace because it saves the very chief of sinners! If there is one of you who says, “I am the most unlikely man in all the world ever to be saved. I have the least claim upon God of any man that lives. The only claim I have is the right to be damned, for I have so grievously transgressed against God. I feel myself to be so guilty that my only claim upon justice is the demand to be tried, condemned, and executed.” If you really mean what you say, then you are the man to whom the Gospel of the Grace of God is specially sent, for it is written, “when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet perhaps, for a good (a benevolent) man some would even dare to die. But God commends His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

He gave Himself for our sins, not for our righteousness! And He, Himself, said, “They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Trust Christ, you who dare not trust yourself! Fling yourself, all broken to pieces, at the feet of the broken-hearted Savior and He will turn again, and have compassion upon you. Yes, look unto Him and live, for—

*“There is life for a look at the Crucified One!*

*There is life at this moment for you!”*  
Give but one believing glance at that dear dying Son of God and you shall hear Him say to you, “Go your way; your sins, which are many, are all forgiven you.” The LORD grant it, for His name’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **DEUTERONOMY 32:1-43.**

Verse 1. Give ear, O you heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. Because men are so slow of hearing, Moses calls on the heavens and the earth to bear witness against them. And because of the sublimity of his subject, he calls upon the heavens and the earth to pay attention to it.

2. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass. It is good preaching, and good hearing, too, when the Gospel comes like a gentle shower which saturates and soaks into the soil and refreshes and makes it fruitful. May God the Holy Spirit make it to be so whenever we gather together for worship! The Word of the Lord may be as a driving hail, breaking everything upon which it falls, and so becoming the savor of death unto death. But may God make it to us as the dew and the small rain from Heaven, that it may be a savor of life unto life!

3-5. Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe you greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He. They have corrupted themselves. What a contrast there is between the incorruptible and immutable God and corruptible man! “They have corrupted themselves.”

5. Their spot is not the spot of His children: they are a perverse and crooked generation. God’s children have spots—the spot caused by sin which are recognized, mourned over, and struggled against by them. The ungodly have the same sort of spots but they have no repentance concerning the sin which causes them.

6. Do you thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? Is not He your Father that has bought you? Has He not made you, and established you? Sin is the basest form of ingratitude. We owe everything to God, and we ought, therefore, to treat Him as our Creator and Father should be treated. On the contrary, how often have we requited Him evil for good, and acted as if we regarded Him as our enemy rather than as our best Friend?

7, 8. Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask your father, and he will show you; your elders, and they will tell you. When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. His first thought was concerning His own people. He provided Canaan for them. It was just the very land for them, with space enough, and yet with not too much room, so that they might cultivate it all and prove it to be a land flowing with milk and honey. Yet these special thoughts of God with regard to His own chosen people did not exclude kind thoughts towards the rest of mankind, for “He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people,” that is, the people belonging to other nations. But, still, His deepest and His highest thoughts were concerning the children of Israel.

9, 10. For the LORD’S portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. And is not this also a true description of God’s love and kindness to you and to me, Beloved in the Lord? Did He not find us in the wilderness? Has He not led us about, and by our experience instructed us, and has He not guarded us with as much watchful care as a man bestows upon the apple of his eye? Oh, blessed be His holy name, we owe everything to Him! He gives us everything that we have.

11-14. As an eagle stirs up her nest, flutters over her young, spreads abroad her wings, takes them, bears them on her wings: so the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock, butter of cows, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys, of wheat; and you did drink the pure blood of the grape. God fed His ancient people with the best of the best, and gave it to them with no stinted hand. And, oh, when I think of the spiritual food which God has prepared for His people, surely “butter of cows, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs,” and all such carnal things are but poor in comparison with the provisions of His Grace! In a spiritual sense, the Lord has indeed given to us “a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.” But now look again at the contrast between the Lord and His ancient people. God’s great goodness makes man’s sin appear all the blacker—

15. But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: you are waxen fat, you are grown thick, you are covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. Many can endure the trials of adversity who cannot escape the perils of prosperity. Solomon truly said, “As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise.” And many a man has failed in that time of testing. When you come to be wealthy, to be admired, to receive honor among men, then is the time of your severest trial.

16, 17. They provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they Him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not. Moses multiples expressions to show the folly of Israel’s idolatry. Only think of “new gods that came newly up,” as if that which is new could be a god! The same thing may be said of the “new truth” of which we hear so much about nowadays. That which is new cannot be true. Certainly, there is nothing new in theology but that which is utterly false. The idols which the Israelites worshipped were not only new gods, but they were strange gods, which their fathers feared not. Worse than that, they were demons—“they sacrificed unto devils, not to God.” How low had even the chosen people sunk!

18-27. Of the Rock that begat you, you are unmindful, and have forgotten God that formed you. And when the LORD saw it, He abhorred them, because of the provoking of His sons, and of His daughters. And He said, I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very stubborn generation, children in whom is no faith. They have moved Me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked Me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. For a fire is kindled in My anger, and shall burn unto the lowest Hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. I will heap mischiefs upon them, I will spend My arrows upon them. They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust. The sword without and terror within shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of gray hairs. I said, I would scatter them into corners. I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men: were it not—Here is a sweet Word of Grace amid the just judgments of Jehovah. “Were it not”—

27. That I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say, Our hand is high, and the LORD has not done all this. So He spared them for His own name’s sake and, to this day, when God can find no other reason for showing mercy to the guilty, He does it for His name’s sake. And this is a blessed plea to be urged by a man who can see no reason why God should have mercy upon him! He may say, “Lord, do it for Your name’s sake, to make Your Grace and Your mercy illustrious in the salvation of such a poor, hopeless wretch as I am.”

28-32. For they are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them. O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end! How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up? For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges. For their vine—That is, the vine of God’s enemies—

32-34. Is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter: their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps. Is not this laid up in store with Me, and sealed up among My treasures? What a striking and startling question that is, as though God laid up the memory of man’s sin, sealed it up, and kept it in a secret place against the day when He shall call sinners to account, and visit them for their iniquities! What an awful thing it is to have the sins of one’s youth laid up, sealed up, and put away in God’s treasury—and the sins of middle life, and perhaps the sins of old age, too, to be brought out, by-and-by, and laid to our charge! Who shall be able to stand in that great day? Only those who are washed in the blood and robed in the righteousness of Christ Jesus our Lord!

35-38. To Me belongs vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. For the LORD shall judge His people and repent Himself for His servants, when He sees that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left. And He shall say, Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted, which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink offerings? Let them rise up and help you, and be your protection. To you who trust in anything except God, the day will come when you will hear such terrible words as these— ”Now let your riches save you, let your pleasures and your vices cheer you. Go you now in your own wicked ways and see if you can find any comfort in them!” What holy sarcasm there is in these words, which will cut to the quick the conscience when it is once fairly awakened!

39-43. See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me: I kill, and make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand. For I lift up My hand to Heaven, and say, I live forever. If I whet My glittering sword, and My hand takes hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to My enemies, and will reward them that hate Me. I will make My arrows drunk with blood, and My sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. Rejoice, O you nations, with His people: for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance to His adversaries and will be merciful unto His land, and to His people. It is only in mercy, you see, that the Lord deals with His people. They cannot stand before Him on the ground of justice, but in His mercy is their place of refuge! May we all find that mercy by fleeing for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us in Christ Jesus and His glorious Gospel! Amen.

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THE ROYAL PREROGATIVE

NO. 1465B  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON, AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“See now that I, even I, am He,and there is no god with Me: I kill, and I makealive; I wound, andI heal.”  
Deuteronomy 32:39.**

THERE is but one God—Jehovah is His name—the “I AM.” That one God will not endure a rival. Why should He? He made all things and sustains all things. Should a creature that His own hands have made be set up in rivalry with Him? If it is a great man like Nebuchadnezzar, if he says, “Behold this great Babylon which I have built,” God will send him to eat grass among the bulls and make him to know that no man is great in the sight of God! What a provocation it must be to God to see men bowing down before idols fashioned by their own hands! What a degradation to man that he should worship gold, or silver, or wood, or stone—and what a grievous dishonor to the great God of all! And it seems to me to be the worst of all dishonors when God sees the image of His own dear Son made into an idol and men prostrate themselves to worship the representation of the Cross on which redemption was lifted on high!

This must touch His sacred soul and vex Him to the uttermost, for God is God, alone, and beside Him there is no other. He will not give His Glory to another, neither His praise to graven images. In the text before us the great Ego is seen. The Lord says, “I, even I.” That Ego is so great that it fills all places and, therefore, there can be no room for another. “I, even I, am God, and there is no god with Me.” “Besides Me,” He says in another place, “there is none else.” Oh, to have such lofty thoughts of God that we can have no consideration for anything that would rob Him of the Glory which is so exclusively His own! Gladly would we burn with a holy jealousy which abhors the idea of a rival god and casts the name of Baal out of its mouth with utter loathing!

In the text the Lord claims the sovereign prerogative of life and death. He says, “I kill, and I make alive.” It is He from whom we first of all receive our being. His hand kindles the torch of life and from Him comes the quenching of the flame. No angel’s arm could save us from the grave, nor could a myriad of angels confine us there when once again He shall bid us rise. God kills and God makes alive. Royal personages have usually been very jealous of the prerogative of life and death, but our great God has it without bound or limit. He reigns supreme. “I kill,” He says, “and I make alive.” From the connection in which the text stands, it is clear that the Lord alludes to the making of nations, or to the destroying of nations.

It was God that made Israel to be a people. It was God that cast out the Canaanites, Hivites and Jebusites from being nations before Him. It was God that raised up Chaldea and Babylon and then strengthened Persia to break Babylon in pieces and Greece to destroy Persia—and Rome with iron feet to break down Greece—and when the time had come it was He who spoke to the city of the seven hills and she, too, lost her royal power. Kingdoms and thrones belong to the Lord and the shields of the mighty are lifted on high or laid in the dust as He wills. Though they regard it not, there is a King of kings and Lord of lords—and when the long page of history shall be unrolled and men shall be able to see the end from the beginning with enlightened eyes—they shall know that all through the ages the disregarded and neglected God, the unseen and even unthought of God, was still reigning evermore! Across the pages of earth’s long record shall be written in right royal hand, “I kill, and I make alive.” In Providence God is absolute, the blessed and only Potentate whose sovereign will knows no dispute.

At this time, however, I purpose to carry this great Truth of God away from the realm of Providence into the kingdom of Grace. We shall confine ourselves to that second sentence—“I wound, and I heal.” On this Word we shall make three observations, the first being that none but the Lord can wound or heal. Secondly, that the Lord can wound and heal. And, thirdly, that the Lord does wound and heal—three thoughts which are closely connected and yet are marked by instructive shades of difference.

I. First, NONE BUT THE LORD CAN WOUND OR HEAL. To begin at the beginning—the Lord alone can spiritually wound. When we have to deal with human hearts, our first effort has to be to wound them. Naturally, man thinks himself whole-hearted and in sound health, but he is not so. The great object of the Gospel ministry, at first, is to convince men of sin, to humble them before God—in fact, to wound them, to cut them to the heart. But no man can wound without the Lord. I speak without any measure to my utterance—no preacher can truly wound the human heart. He may speak very honestly and plainly. He may speak with deep pathos and true affection. He may wield, at times, the thunders of God and at other times the soft and gentle bands of love may be in his hands, but in no way can the preacher get at the heart of men unless his Master is with him.

Charm you ever so wisely, O wise man, the adder is deaf and it is in vain that you use your enchantments. As well convince the wild winds, or convert the wayward waves, as hope to touch the human heart till God makes bare His arm! It is the Holy Spirit’s work to convince of sin and until He puts forth His power, the preacher may preach himself dumb with weariness and blind with weeping, but no result can possibly follow. And what is true of preachers is true of all the teachers in the Sunday school, of all the earnest folk that go about to speak personally to men, yes, and of the most tender mother and the most earnest father! There is no wounding the child’s heart—there is no breaking it down into contrition by the most tender arguments or the wisest counsels! You will come back and say as we have done many times, “Who has believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?”

Yes, dear Friends, and the most solemn Truths of God which, in themselves have a natural tendency to wound the heart, nevertheless cannot do it apart from the work of God Himself. There is the Sword and, in itself, it is sharp and cutting, but no man can handle it! The eternal arm must be revealed, or the hide of behemoth will not feel the weapon! A sword will cut through a coat of mail if a Coeur-de-Lion has the wielding of it—but not in a child’s hand will it wound to killing. God must take the Scripture in His hands and use it to the dividing of joints and marrow, or sinners will escape its power. Terrible Truths there are in the Bible which ought to make men shake, but they hear them and deny them—they even laugh at them and continue in sin!

Sweet truths there are which ought to make a rock shed tears, but you may tell of Gethsemane’s bloody sweat and the five dear wounds of Him who was found guilty of excessive love and yet men will hear it and go their way, each man to his farm and to his merchandise and forget it all. I grant you the Truths of God are powerful, but not until the mighty God applies them to the heart and conscience! And in addition to the Truth of God, Providence itself may come and work upon the heart of men, but cause no wounding of the right sort. I have seen the ungodly brought to destitution and poverty by their extravagances and brought to sickness and death’s door by their lusts—and yet they have not been wounded.

They have seen the result of sin; they have even felt it in the marrow of their bones and yet the dogs have gone back to their vomit. They have still clung to their idols and held to their abominations! The burnt child dreads the fire, but the burnt sinner thrusts his hand into the flames again. We have seen men so sick that they have trembled at the thought of death and it has been supposed from what they said, that they were really impressed—and if they were restored to health would lead another life—but, alas, we have seen them restored to health and sinning worse than before! The wicked breaks his bands asunder. They cast their cords from them. All the terrors of Providence—bereavements, losses, sicknesses—all have failed with the unregenerate. Their stone heart has turned the edge of the plow which sought to break it up. Men have wearied all the agencies of Grace and Providence, but yet they have not been wounded! Their heart is stout as that of leviathan, “yes, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone.” None can effectually wound the heart but God, alone.

Now, the same thing is true about the healing— none but the Lord can heal. Of course there is no need with regard to those who were never wounded. Nobody can heal such persons. I have known some preachers try to do that, though it has always seemed to me to be poor work to try to heal men who have never been wounded; to preach mercy to persons who think that they have no sin; to preach Grace to men who dream that they have merits of their own. Christ did not do so! He said, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. The whole have no need of a physician, but those that are sick.” There is no healing, then, for those who are not wounded—and equally there is no healing those who are wounded unless God lays His hands to their sore.

Have you ever met with spiritually wounded persons? If you have, if you are a Believer, your whole heart has gone out towards them and, drawing examples from your own experience and promises from the Word of God and sweet encouragements from Gospel doctrine, you have labored to pour a healing balm into their bleeding wounds. But have you not often failed? No, apart from the Spirit of the living God, have you not always failed and must you not fail? Ah, dear Friends, it is one thing to talk of a wounded spirit, but it is quite another thing to feel a wounded spirit! And you may talk about healing, too, but it is quite another thing to receive the healing and quite another thing to apply it.

Let God cut a man with His great Sword as once He smote me, and I guarantee you that no ordinances will heal him! “No,” says a friend, “come and hear a sermon.” He hears it, but the preaching makes him worse and he feels more sad than ever. I have known persons foolish enough to persuade such seekers to come to the Communion Table! They have only eaten and drunk condemnation to themselves! While they have been at the Table they have known themselves to be intruders and their hearts have bled more than ever. You can easily pacify a man whose sense of sin is a mere pretense, just as you may soon heal the imitation wound—but it is not so with one who has the arrows of the Lord rankling within him—he needs Divine surgery!

As for the hypocritical penitent, give him outward sacraments and he believes that he is all right. But if God has wounded him, all the sacraments under Heaven will never minister consolation to him. He must go to God for that, for only in Christ Jesus can it be found. All the preachers, yes, and all the doctrines of the Bible, sound and true as the preachers may be, and inspired as the doctrines certainly are, will fail to comfort a bleeding soul until the eternal Lord shall bow Himself from His Throne in Heaven and bind up the broken in heart! I know it is so! Gospel Truth is sufficient, in itself, to comfort all that mourn, but it will comfort nobody so long as the natural unbelief of the heart remains.

Get a hold of a lacerated spirit, torn with unbelief and try what you can do. Say, “Trust in the Lord, my Friend,” and he replies, “I cannot trust.” Tell him Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and he says he knows that, but he cannot get hold of it. Go on to tell him how the Lord receives the very chief of sinners. Do your duty with him, for whether you can heal him or not, you are bound to set the Gospel before him—but you shall find that you have worked in vain if you have gone in your own strength and forgotten the prayerful spirit and the humble reliance which are so necessary to success. God can use you to heal a broken heart, but you cannot do it yourself!

Unconverted Hearer, look not to us as though we could do anything for you, but look only to Jesus! Ah, Friend, if I could wound you and if I could heal you, it would do you no good! If I could convert every sinner here, of what use would the human conversion be? Have you never heard of Mr. Rowland Hill being met, one evening, by a drunken man who staggered up to him and said, “Hallo, Mr. Hill, I am one of your converts!” “Ah,” said Mr. Rowland Hill, “very likely, but you are none of God’s converts, or else you would not be drunk.”

Now, our converts, if they are our converts, will be very poor productions. If one man can convert you, another man can unconvert you! That which is worked by the flesh can be undone by the flesh! “You must be born again. Except a man is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Unless there is a work of Grace in the soul which the will of man, the will of the flesh, blood, birth, education, teaching can never work—unless, I say, there is a supernatural power exercised upon us, we shall never see the face of God at the last with acceptance! So there is the first Truth of God—God alone can wound and God alone can heal.

II. And now, secondly, THE LORD CAN WOUND AND HE CAN HEAL. What a mercy this is and how comfortably it encourages the Christian to go about his work! The Lord can wound. He can pierce the most unlikely heart. Look at Saul of Tarsus. You would never have thought, when he was hurrying to Damascus to drag the saints to prison, that he would ever be humbled and made to cry out, “What will You have me do?” The Lord knew His man and just when he was on the brow of the hill and could see Damascus in the plain, and was ready to devour the saints, the Lord let fly an arrow! Down went one Saul of Tarsus, so wounded that it took three days to extract the arrow!

This was amazing, for Saul was like leviathan, of whom we read, “The sword of him that lays at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon”—yet the arrow of the Lord laid him low! The Lord can wound men in very unlikely places. I have known the arrow of conviction come home to a man who had not entered a place of worship for years. Such is the infinite Sovereignty of God that He calls them a people that were not a people, and even those who sought Him not He seeks out. Yes, even in the haunts of sin, a man is not safe from the arrows of God—I mean the arrows of God’s infinite Love! God can still touch the conscience. Leviathan, you know, is wrapped about with scales, “shut up together as with a close seal,” yet there is a weak point even in leviathan!

The cunning hunter knows how to find it out and though there are some men so skeptical, so atheistic, so obstinate, so profane, so abominable that nobody dares to come near them, yet have we known it—attribute it to the praise of Sovereign Grace—the Lord has smitten even these with His great and strong Sword and afterwards He has healed them by His mighty Grace. Never despair of anybody! If salvation were man’s work you might despair, but since it is God’s work, despair of none! The wretch who is the nearest approach to an incarnate devil may yet become as an angel of God! Such is the Grace of God that though men make a league with Death and a covenant with Hell, He can break their leagues and disannul their covenants, take the prey from between the jaws of the dragon and get to Himself renown! The Lord can wound, then.

He can wound some that have been sitting under the Gospel for years and have defied its power. My arrows have rattled against your harness and I have said, “It is all in vain,” but I pray my Master, one of these days when I am drawing a bow at a venture, may be pleased to direct it between that joint of the harness which I feared did not exist— that little joint where the shoulder piece does not fit close to the breastplate. I have feared that you were encased as in the scales of leviathan, of which we read, “One is so near to another that no air can come between them: they are joined one to another.” Yet the Lord can send in His arrow and make the proud heart feel the power of His glorious Truth! The most thoughtless, the most careless, the most abandoned are still within range of the Lord’s bow!

What a very sweet side of the Truth is the second part of it—namely, that He can heal. There are some awful cases of bleeding wounds! I wonder whether I have in this audience any souls desperately wounded? I have known the heart bleed as though it would bleed to death beneath the sword of conviction. Some are driven to despair and have been ready to lay violent hands upon themselves in the bitterness of their souls. Let it ring out like a trumpet that these poor despairing ones may hear it—the Lord can heal! There is no case so desperate but what Jehovah-Jesus can recover it! Despair, you must let your captives go! Despondency, you must open your prison when Jesus comes! Has He not come forth from the Father on purpose that He may loose the captives and say to the shackled ones, “Go free”?

The wounds which God gives are apt to fester. You remember how the Psalmist said, “My wounds stink and are corrupt”? When there is bad blood, we have known men’s wounds to become horrible and some souls who have had their conscience awakened have become a terror to themselves. “I cannot be saved,” they say. “I cannot pray. How should such a wretch as I am ever pray? I cannot hope for mercy. It would be an astonishment to Heaven and Hell, too, if ever I found mercy.” Listen to me and let your heart believe it—you may certainly recover! God, who does all things and to whom nothing is impossible, can heal your wounds though they reek with corruption! If you lie at Hell’s gate; if you seem to be half in Topher already, His arm is strong enough to help you!

If you will look to Christ lifted up on the Cross, there is pardon, life, acceptance, joy and Heaven for you, even for you! He that wounded you will heal you! He that has broken you will bind you up! He that has killed you will make you alive! Let your ears take in the gladsome message which I am bid to deliver you—“I wound, and I heal.” Yet let me charge you not to look for a cure anywhere but to God in Christ Jesus! Shun the thought of being healed except the Lord shall heal you! I dread lest a wounded soul should go to a minister or to a priest, or to the most religious person in the world and think to get healing from man! Your wounds are meant to drive you to your God. Seek Him and no one else!

To your knees, now, in your private chamber, or if you have not one, get alone even in the street, for you can be alone in a crowd—but go to God with your bleeding heart! Tell Him, “I am a sinner. Lord, I am all but a damned sinner! I have been such an offender that I scarcely dare to hope, but I hear that You can heal me and give me comfort. Oh, for Jesus’ sake be merciful to me! I thank you that you have wounded me—it were better for me to be wounded than to be as indifferent and careless as I used to be. But now, Lord, do not altogether break me to pieces and treat me as an enemy! My spirit fails unless You comfort me. Oh, look upon me!” If you cannot say as much as that, yet let your tears drop and look up, saying, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Do but cry to Him and you shall find healing, for God can heal you and none else.

Away with those who dream that outward religiousness can do you good! Away, away with the deceivers who would tell you that they can give you pardon! No man living can absolve his fellow sinners—the pretense is the superlative of blasphemy! God is in Christ Jesus reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. And He has committed to us the Word of reconciliation and we are glad to proclaim that Word and point you to the Lord Jesus who is exalted on high to give repentance and remission of sins!

III. Now I come to my third and last point, and that is—THE LORD DOES WOUND AND DOES HEAL. I have two things, here, tonight. I will only show them to you and have done. First, I have a bundle of arrows which I have seen shot at different times from the bow of God so as to wound men. I cannot shoot them at you just now, but I will show them to you. I have known Him shoot this arrow at a man—the arrow of continual gentleness. He has been very good to the sinner and continued His kindness to him for years.

Augustine tells of one to whom God was so wonderfully kind and the man was so wonderfully bad, that at last he grew astonished at God’s goodness! And since the Lord continued to load him with benefits, he turned round and cried, “Most benignant God, I am ashamed of being Your enemy any longer. I confess my sin and repent of it.” How I wish that that arrow would pierce your hearts! It is one which readily penetrates a noble mind. The more gross and animal natures do not feel it, but where God has left some little spark of nobility, a man more readily feels, “I cannot go on and sin against a God so good.” It is a very sharp arrow, but it is dipped in love and it wounds most sweetly.

Here is another—God is angry with the wicked every day. Oh, if that Truth of God would go home to some of you, “God is angry with me, for I have broken His holy Law.” Surely it would cut you to the quick! I do not like anybody to be angry with me, but oh, to have the Lord angry with me! How could I endure it? Dear Hearer, I hope you will feel the smart of this warning. It is very easy for you to hear it and for me to speak it, but if you once feel it, it will tear your heart and fill your loins with agony!

Another arrow—“He that believes not is condemned already.” You are not to be condemned at the last in the future—you are condemned NOW! You are not in a state of probation—you have already been proven and you have failed—and you are walking this earth at this moment as a condemned criminal! Ah, if that barbed iron were to enter your soul, it would wound you, indeed. Here is another arrow—“The wicked shall be turned into Hell, with all the nations that forget God.” “These shall go away into everlasting punishment.” Many have been playing with that arrow lately—it is a very sharp tool and he had best beware who toys with it! Let the Lord send it home and it will kill a man’s proud hopes and vain presumptions as quickly as any arrow in the quiver of the Almighty!

Here is another—“You have destroyed yourself.” Your present state of ruin and danger is your own fault! You have brought it upon yourself and you have nobody to blame but yourself that you are a lost man. Ah, that will rankle and pain the soul as though a sword were in the bones! And here is another—“You are dead in sin. You have destroyed yourself, but you cannot save yourself.” I have seen a man get that into his flesh a little way and he has been livid with anger. He has bit his lips and said, “I will never hear that preacher again. Why, he made out my case to be hopeless!” The man is sure to come again. He is like a great fish in a stream with a hook in his jaws. He will draw out a good deal of line and we will let him have it, but he must come to a stop before long with that solemn Truth of God to hold Him! He struggles hard but that sharp text is not soon dislodged from the heart—“O Israel, you have destroyed yourself.”

Thus I might continue to show you a sample of the weapons with which God wounds men. He has His two-edged sword, His spear, His arrows, His battle axe and weapons of war. You say, “I do not feel them.” No, and I cannot make you feel them. I have told you before that it is not my arm that can wield them! But when God is pleased to use any of these, the people fall under Him. “Well,” says one, “I do not think that I shall be wounded.” No, but I am glad you are in the battle, because when the arrows are flying they may strike you as well as anybody else! I have had to deal with wounded ones that I never reckoned upon seeing in such a condition.

Oh, what gashes have I seen in men that had been given to all sorts of fashionable sins and who had sneered at religion! They have come here, at first, from the most miserable motives, but they have had to come again and weep and cry before the Lord with broken hearts! You never know where bullets may find their mark! You who are the servants of Satan are on dangerous ground when you come near a faithful ministry. No, I will alter it—you are on blessed ground—where the slain of the Lord have been many and where the people of God are earnestly praying for you! I know at this moment they are putting up the prayer, “Lord, send the arrows home! Send the arrows home.” Their prayers will prevail with God and He will bare His arm. There is no mistake about this matter—He “will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion.” When He puts His arm to the work, who shall stand against Him? He will do all His pleasure. Glory be to His blessed name, He can wound and He does wound according to His eternal purpose!

Now I will hold up before you the bottle of balm. When a soul is wounded, the Lord applies His sacred surgery to the heart. He has healed some of us. The particular bottle of balm which He used in healing me is one which I know well and shall never forget. This was the label, “Look unto Me and be you saved, all you ends of the earth, for I am God, and beside Me there is none else.” Why, do you know I was afraid of God until I heard that God was in Christ and that I was to look to God in Christ and that the very God whom I dreaded would save me? That Revelation came home with Divine power to my soul! The preacher said, “Look. This is all that is needed.” “There,” he said, “a fool can look! A little child can look! A half idiot can look! A dying man can look!” “Look,” he said, “and it is done.”

Did I really understand him—that I was only to look to Christ dying on the Cross for me and see God making an Atonement for my sins in the Person of His Son—that I was only to look and I should live at once? It was even so and I did look! My burden passed away and from that hour I can say what Cowper has so sweetly said in the hymn—

*“Ever since by faith I saw the stream  
Your flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme,  
And shall be tillI die.”*

Oh, what a bottle of balm that is—redeeming love! How sweetly it drops into the soul! The Lord shows the wounded man that though he is full of sin, He can put that sin away without any violation of Justice when the soul believes in Jesus! Now let the balm drop a minute. “All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned everyone to his own way”— that fact gives us wounds. But now, “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all”—no balm of Gilead was ever so potent as that!

Poor guilty Sinner, if you will now trust Christ, your sin is yours no longer! It was laid 1,800years ago upon the back of Christ, your great Surety! He was punished for it and He has cast it into the depths of the sea. You are forgiven, go in peace! Here is another drop of balm—When a man is wounded he feels that he cannot help himself—but then there comes in this precious Truth—the Spirit of God can do it! God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son and that Spirit helps our infirmities so that, though we know not what we should pray for as we ought, that Spirit is waiting to help us to pray!

O you wounded ones, may the great Spirit show you at this time the Person of the dear Son of God—God and Man! May He show you that Person wounded, covered with a bloody sweat and put to death! And may He sweetly whisper in your ear tonight, “He was your Substitute—He bore that you might never bear the wrath of God.” Then you will say as you go out of this house, “He can heal, for He has healed me. He has made me leave my despair and even my doubts behind me. Now will I sing unto my Beloved a song—

‘*Jesus has become atlength  
My salvation and my strength.’”*

So have I preached to you nothing but God in Christ Jesus and I am glad to have Him to preach to you. Suppose that there is a bad young man here at this time who has left his home and run away from his father? He has done wrong, very wrong, and, instead of going to a tender loving father and saying, “Father, forgive me,” he is afraid of punishment and, therefore, he has run away. There is an advertisement for him in the paper, inviting him to come home. Now, what has he to do to be right with his father? This poor, wandering, wayward, lost boy has got among the very scum of London and he is being ruined and starved to death. What must he do?

Boy, you must go home to your father! Go home to your father! He loves you; he is pining for you; he is grieved at heart about you! Oh, if he saw you tonight, it would break his heart to see you in your rags! He wants you to come home! Do you not see that it would be very foolish for that lad to say, “I shall get into an institution,” or, “I shall try to earn money.” Your father is rich, good, wise and kind—the best thing you can do is to go home to your father! Going home to your father, all will be right.

Now, take up the parable. All of us have left our Father and have journeyed into a far country. We shall never get right, again, except by going back to Him from whom we have gone astray. And Jesus—God in Christ Jesus—is waiting to welcome us! He is grieving over us right now! We have only to go to Him, for He says that He will never cast out one that comes to Him. “I do not know how He can receive me,” says one. Well, go anyway and try Him! “I cannot pray.” You can pray, dear Friend. “But not properly.” Do not try to pray properly. Pray your heart out, as you can, and ask to be helped.

I know that some poor souls are in such a state that they would be glad if we would write them out a prayer. I was talking only a little while ago to one in distress and he said to me, “Oh, Mr. Spurgeon, you do not know how ignorant we are and when we are under a sense of sin, you do not know how foolish we are. If you would sometimes put the very words into our mouths it would do us good.” And I thought he was right, because I find the Lord saying in Scripture, “Take with you words and say”—and He tells them what to say. Come now, poor Soul, if you want to find God, let us pray a minute:

“O God, save us, for You alone can do it. Of Your great mercy heal our wounds, or else we must bleed to death. We cast ourselves upon Your promise in Christ Jesus Your Son—grant us now Your salvation, we beseech You, for His sake! Amen.”

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Deuteronomy 32:1-39.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—187, 233, 235.  
LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:

DEAR FRIENDS—I had intended to be home to preach on April 6, but as dear friends at home press me to make the rest longer, I have so far yielded as to wait here another week. And I now propose to be home on the 13th of April. My knees are still feeble, but in all other respects I feel fit to return. Moreover, I long to be preaching in my own pulpit among my own people and I must come home, though I somewhat dread the cold weather. Please pray for me, that I may have an active mind in a body which will allow of its full exercise and that the blessing of God may rest on my future labors far more than on those of past years. I find that funds are coming in very slowly for the College and the Colportage has a pressing need. Earnest fellow workers will only need to know this. Yours to serve in love for Jesus’ sake,

*C. H. SPURGEON,*Mentone, March 20, 1879  
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #2575 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A SERMON OF PERSONAL TESTIMONY NO. 2575

**A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, JUNE 19, 1898.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 11, 1883.

(**One of the nights when the regular hearers left their seats to be occupied by strangers).  
“For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life.” Deuteronomy 32:47.**

THESE are among the last words of Moses before his death. He addressed the people in a most tender and affectionate manner before he went from them. “The old man eloquent” seemed as if he would never leave off—he kept on reminding the children of Israel of the goodness of God to them and telling them what they might expect at His hands if they would but serve Him. He pleaded with all earnestness again and again and, at last, used this master argument why he would have them keep the ways of God, “For,” he said, “it is not a vain thing for you”—it is a most essential thing—“because it is your life.”

It is very clear, from this passage, that there were some people in the days of Moses who thought that it was a vain thing to serve the Lord. Yet those were very amazing times, for, if men rebelled against God, they were smitten with terrible sicknesses and, sometimes, with sudden death. God was then so manifestly in the midst of the camp that great miracles were often worked and men were compelled to stand still and say, “This is the finger of God.” Besides, whenever men in those days kept God’s ways, they prospered. That was the dispensation of temporal rewards and immediate punishments, yet, though it was so—though the very bush in the desert glowed with the Glory of the Godhead, though the mountains smoked and trembled beneath the touch of Deity, though the uplifted rod of Moses had caused the Red Sea to be divided and had fetched water out of the flinty rock—yet even when Jehovah was so conspicuously with His people, there were some among them who said, “It is a vain thing to serve the Lord.” This proves that miracles will not convince men if the Gospel of Jesus Christ does not! And it also proves that if God were to make His religion a thing of eyes and hands, to be looked upon and to be handled, it would still be rejected by ungodly men, for their hearts are set against it and they are determined not to have God or Christ to rule over them!

Seeing that men thought it a vain thing to serve God in those olden times, I do not wonder that men should think the same now, for, in these days there are not such manifest judgments upon wicked men, neither are there always such apparent rewards for the godly as there were under the Mosaic dispensation. Nowadays the righteous man is often sorely tried and troubled. Sometimes he has more tribulation than his ungodly neighbors have and his trials come even as the result of his serving God! On the other hand, does not the wicked man often prosper? Have we not seen him “spreading himself like a green bay tree,” and covering the earth with his branches? This is the age of faith, in which God does not show Himself as He did in the olden time. It is the dispensation of spiritual things, wherein only spiritual men are cognizant of God’s Presence and working. And, therefore, it is no marvel that many turn upon their heels and say, “There is nothing in religion! It is a vain thing to serve the Lord.”

Now, dear Friends, I am not going to argue with you about this question, but I am going to bear my testimony concerning it. In a court of law, argument goes for much, but testimony is the thing which carries weight with the jury. They hear the evidence and if they believe that the witnesses are honest and truthful, they accept their testimony and give a verdict accordingly. If they have reason to think that the witnesses are only acting a part and speaking falsehood, they attach no importance to their evidence. I am going to give my testimony concerning the reality and blessedness of the religion of Jesus Christ, our Lord, in the hope that it will convince some of you of the truth of my text, “It is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life.”

I begin by admitting that there is a great deal of so-called religion that is a vain thing and that is nobody’s life. The religion of ceremonies is a vain thing. If any man shall tell me that by any act of his, he can convey Divine Grace to me, I will not believe him! If he says that by the application of water, he creates within an infant, membership with Christ and makes that child to be an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven, I will not believe him! I shall attach no more importance to what he does, if he pretends to convey Grace by it, than I should to the hocus-pocus of a gypsy, or the abracadabra of a magician. God does not convey His Grace in that fashion, but by the working of His Spirit upon the mind, will and heart. True religion is not a thing that can be conveyed by water, or by bread and wine, apart from the state of mind and heart of the person receiving it. If my religion consists in putting on a certain dress and showing myself as a mere performer, or thinking that some good thing can come to the people by the sweetness of music, or the beauty of architecture, my religion is vain! It was not so with Christ and His Apostles—they went everywhere preaching the Word and proclaiming that “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”

Then again, a religion that consists in merely subscribing to a certain creed is a vain thing. Even if that creed were perfect, yet if your religion depended in simply believing it as a creed, it would not affect you to any real purpose. Religion is a life grounded upon belief, but salvation comes not to a man simply because he is orthodox. If his orthodoxy is merely a matter of the head—and all the while the heart remains unaffected, and the actions are unchanged—such a religion is a vain thing!

I have to also admit, with very great pain, that there is no doubt that a large portion of the religion of the present day—the religion that consists in a mere profession—is vain. If any man comes to this place and subscribes to the creed that I teach. If he is baptized with the Baptism of Scripture, itself, and if he is a most diligent man in all his devotions. Yet, if he does not truly trust in Christ—if his heart is not renewed by the Spirit of God, if his life is not a life of temperance, chastity, holiness and godliness—his religion is vain. It matters not that you are called Christians—the name to live is nothing—you must be spiritually alive! As our Lord told Nicodemus, “You must be born again.” A man must be godly through and through—and when he is so, his religion is not vain.

It is to that religion I now want to bear my testimony as faithfully as I can. “For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life.” I wish to give evidence in support of these four assertions. First, it is no fiction. Secondly, it is no trifle. Thirdly, it is no folly. Fourthly, it is no speculation. May the Holy Spirit help me to speak and you to hear!

I. First, then, concerning the religion that is our life, we declare that IT IS NO FICTION.  
I speak on behalf of many who are present and of an almost innumerable company who are not present, and who could not be present, when I bear witness that having tried and tested the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have not found it to be a fiction! We were told that there was God the Father and we were bid to address Him in prayer as our Father. And we have found that, “like as a father pities his children,” so the Lord has pitied us, loved us and cared for us. We must always speak as we find and we testify that since the day we sought His face, all the love of the best earthly father has been eclipsed by the love of God which He has manifested towards us. God the Father a fiction? Why, in the lives of some of us, He is the greatest and most potent of all factors! We could do without anyone or anything else except our Father who is in Heaven! We have often spoken with Him in prayer and in His Word He has spoken back to us. In the time of trouble, it is our joy to run to Him and cry, “Father!” And in our hours of need, He has supplied all our needs “according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.”  
It is no use for any man to say that there is no such being as God, if he has never tried Him. There is no power in that kind of negative evidence! The Irish prisoner said to the judge, “There are three men who swear that they saw me kill the man, but I can bring 50 men to swear that they did not see me kill him.” The judge soon exposed that fallacy, for there was no argument in it. If you say, “I do not know God, for I have never sought Him,” we believe you, Friend, and we believe you with the deepest grief! And we wish that you thought us as honest as you are, yourself, when we reply that we have sought God’s face and we are conscious, not by the sight of the eyes, or by the hearing of the ears, but by a new inward sense which God has given us, that in Him we live, move and have our being—and it is our joy to know that it is so!  
Again, in the blessed Godhead there is a second Person namely, Jesus Christ. Have we ever found Him to be real? It seems to be a current notion, even in the Christian Church, that Jesus Christ is dead. But some of us believe in a living Christ and well we may, for we went to Him all burdened with a sense of sin and, at the sight of Him on the Cross, our burden disappeared! And many another time have we gone to Him whenever that sense of sin has returned—and He has comforted us exceedingly with the abundance of His mercy. No Christ Jesus? Why, we have in secret had such fellowship with Him as a man has with his dearest friend! We could doubt our own existence sooner than we could doubt the supernatural Presence of Christ with true Believers! It matters not if others say that it is not so with them—their sad experience does not prove how it is with us—and we bear our witness that of all friends, the most real is Jesus of Nazareth, of all helpers and comforters, the truest and best we have ever found is Jesus Christ our Lord!  
There yet remains another adorable Person in the Sacred Trinity—the Holy Spirit. Is there such a Person? Does He work upon the hearts of men? I speak now, not for dozens or hundreds, but for thousands, and for tens and hundreds of thousands, when I say that He has new-made us! He has illuminated us! He has comforted us. He has strengthened us. He has guided us. He has sanctified us. He is with us and we are conscious of His Presence and His Power. There are times when we are carried clean out of ourselves. We speak, you say, like men in a frenzy, though we are no more frenzied than you are! There are many of us who are no more fools than you are and who could prove to you, in any matter of business or of science, that we are your equals in intellect. And we aver most certainly that there is a Power beyond ourselves which has caused us to sing in the depths of sorrow, which has enabled us to rejoice when we have been racked with pain, which has made us sublimely calm when we have seemed to stand between the open jaws of death— and has carried us out of ourselves so that we have freely forgiven those who did us wrong, loved them all the better for their wrong-doing and sought their good the more—inasmuch as they have sought our hurt. Such action as this proves the Presence and Power of the Holy Spirit! He is no fiction to us—and to know the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit— is to some of us the most real thing that ever was upon the face of the earth!  
I could wish that some, who speak of godliness being all an action, had known what I once knew when I felt conviction of sin. I think that I am usually as cheerful as most men, but there was a time when no poor wretch on earth was more sunken in despair than I was. I knew that though but young, I had broken God’s righteous Law and had grievously sinned against Him. And, under a sense of my guilt, I went about burdened day after day. If I slept, I dreamt of an angry God and thought that He would cast me forever into Hell. When I attended to my daily calling, the dreadful thought of my sin haunted and followed me wherever I went. If anyone had said to me, then, “Sin is a fiction,” I could not have laughed him to scorn, for I was in no laughing humor, but I could have sat down and wept to think that anyone should fancy that this grim reality was, after all, but a matter of foolish fear or cowardly dread!  
Conviction of sin was real enough to me! And so was the joy of pardon, for, one day, I heard it said, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth,” and it was explained to me that Christ, the Son of God, did take my sin and suffer for it, and that if I trusted Him, I might know that He had made a full atonement for me—and that I was clear of all guilt! I believed that message. It seemed to come to me straight from Heaven. I looked to Jesus and in a moment I leaped from the depths of despair to the heights of joyous confidence! I wanted to tell the assembled congregation that the witness of that humble preacher was true— that there was life in a look at the Crucified One—and life at that moment for all who looked to Him! If anyone had said to me, then, “That deliverance of yours is not real,” I would have answered, “Let those who knew me only a week or two ago bear witness to the change it has worked in me.” As the sorrow was real, so was the joy real, too! And the alteration worked in me was so great that I hope it helped to make others see its reality by my life and conduct in endeavoring to serve God.  
And since then—I am still bearing my own personal testimony—what reality there has been in all spiritual things by way of consoling, comforting, strengthening, guiding and delivering! Religion not real? Well, some of us would willingly let everything else go as long as we may keep our faith. You may ridicule all we know, if you please, but you can never laugh us out of what we believe! If you had been in prison for six months, no one would ever convince you that imprisonment was not a real thing. And if, all of a sudden you had been set at liberty, no one would make you believe that there was no difference between liberty and captivity, and that neither of those conditions existed! And, in like manner, we believe and are sure that there is such a thing as conviction of sin and pardon for sin, for both these things are, to us, matters of fact!  
Mark, yet further, that religion is, to us, no fiction, for, since our conversion, we have received certain privileges which formerly we did not possess. I will mention only one, that is, the privilege of speaking with God in prayer, with the assurance that He will answer us. Does God answer prayer? He who has never tried it is not able to tell, and it is most unphilosophical for any man to say that such a thing cannot be when he has never tested it himself! But they who have tried and proved it are the ones who know. I have sometimes wished that certain people could have seen some of the answers to prayer which I have received. I am sure they would have been surprised. Not long ago a woman came to see me about joining the Church. She was in great trouble, for her husband had gone away, under rather sad circumstances, to Australia, or somewhere in that part of the globe, and she could not hear any news of him. I said to her, “Well, let us pray for him.” When I had prayed for his conversion, I prayed that he might come back to his wife and I said to her, “Your husband will come back to you. I am persuaded that God has heard my prayer. So, when he returns, bring him to see me in this room.” As she went out, she said to the friend who had come with her, “How very positively Mr. Spurgeon speaks about the Lord answering his prayer! He says that my husband will certainly come back to me.”  
In a little over 12 months that woman was in my vestry with her husband. I had forgotten the circumstances till she recalled them to me. About the time of our prayer, God had met with him on the sea, while he was reading one of my sermons, as a penitent sinner. He was brought to the feet of Jesus and he came back and joined this Church. And he is with us at this day in answer to that prayer. “Oh!” says someone, “that is merely a coincidence.” Well, that woman did not think so, nor did her husband and nor did I at the time—and I do not think so now! You may call it a coincidence if you like, but I call it an answer to prayer, and as long as I get such coincidences, I shall be perfectly satisfied to go on praying! “A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.” I do not believe I should have had such coincidences if I had not asked for them and, as I get them daily, I shall stand to it, nor shall anything stop me from this glorying—that there is a God that hears prayer! And I challenge all men to try for themselves whether it is not so. If they come humbly to God, by Christ Jesus, and seek His face, they shall not seek in vain and, by-and-by, if they continue to wait upon Him in prayer, He will gird them with power so that they shall ask and receive both for themselves and for others.  
I would like to mention another thing that makes us feel that the religion of Christ is no fiction, and that is, the many cases of conversion that are constantly witnessed among us. If this were the time and place—and I do not think that it is, for I do not care about such an exhibition of trophies of God’s Grace, or bringing men out, one by one, in such a fashion—I could tell, not only of the drunk made sober, but of the man, passionate and violent in temper, becoming as meek and gentle as a child. I could fetch one out from the congregation if you wanted to see him, and I could point you to the swearer, who at one time found it impossible to speak without an oath, but who, from the moment of his conversion, was never again tried by that temptation. I could bring the thief who now knows what is his own and what is his neighbor’s—and who is honest as the day. And the unchaste, who were given up as if they could never be saved, who are now our Sisters in Christ and serving Him with modest, pure, simple hearts. Show us something else that makes such changes as these, if you can! Show us something else, if you can, that will meet the needs of the hardened and abandoned people in the back slums! We do not know where to find it—but we do know that wherever Christ is faithfully preached, such conversions are continually seen—and that morality and social order and everything that is pure and lovely are sustained and promoted by the Gospel of Jesus Christ wherever it is believed! These things are matters of fact—let those who care to do so, resist the natural inference.  
One of the strongest things which are no fiction is, the joy of Believers when they die. We have lately lost some of our dearest and best friends from the Tabernacle. Some of our most earnest helpers have passed away, but, oh, they have died gloriously! It has been a pleasure and a privilege to see them rejoicing while everybody else was weeping—to hear them triumphant when all around them were sorrowful—to behold them casting gleams of sunlight from their eyes even when those eyes were being glazed in death! Give me a religion by which I can live, for that is the religion on which I can die! Give me that faith which will change me into the image of Christ, for then I need not be afraid to bear the image of death! God grant that you and I, dear Friends, may know, as a matter of personal experience, that there is a solid truth in our religion, that it is, indeed, our life!  
I know that there are some people who profess to disbelieve in religion altogether, yet, every now and then, they show that they do not doubt as much as they say they do. There was a traveler, in the backwoods of America, who put up one night at a log cabin. The man who lived in the house was a very rough-looking customer and the traveler felt rather afraid of him. The traveler had some money on him and he was halfinclined to go walking on instead of stopping there. The master bade him come in and eat with him. He did so and after he had eaten, the man said, “Stranger, it is my custom to always read a chapter in the Bible, and to pray before I turn in.” The traveler said that, in a moment, he felt perfectly safe! He professed to be an infidel, but he showed that his infidelity was not very deep, for he believed in the man who worshipped his God—and was not afraid to sleep under his roof. William Hone, who wrote the Every Day Book, was an unbeliever once. But he was traveling through Wales and he saw a little Welsh girl at the door reading her Bible. He said to her, “Ah, my Lassie, you are getting your task, I see!” “What did you say, Sir?” she asked. “I said that you are learning your task.” “What do you mean, Sir? I am reading my Bible. You don’t call that a task, do you?” Well, he did think it was a task—it would have been one to him. She said, “Why, it is this reading my Bible that makes me happy all the day long! I am trying to learn some of it by heart, but that is no task to me, it is one of my greatest pleasures.”  
And William Hone afterwards confessed his own faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom he had been guided by the joy that he saw in that girl’s face! He could not help believing that there must be something real in religion, after all—it was life to her, and very soon it became life to him!  
II. I have taken so much time for the first part of my subject that I must be very brief with the rest. My second remark about true religion is that IT IS NO TRIFLE. “It is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life.”  
Godliness is no trifle, dear Friends, because it concerns the soul. If a thing only concerns the body, I do not call it a trifle—cleanliness, temperance, obedience to the laws of health—these are very proper things to be urged upon men. I wish that people in general were more careful of their bodies, but the soul is immortal—it will live when the body shall have molded into dust and ashes! Therefore, trifle

not with your souls. If you must play the fool, let it be with your moneybags. If you must speculate, let it be with your gold. But, I pray you, venture not upon any risk with your immortal spirit—make sure work for eternity, “for what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”  
True religion also concerns God and, therefore, it is not a trifling matter. If you must trifle with someone, trifle with your equal, even with your monarch, if you will—but never trifle with your God! He that made the heavens and the earth and that holds all things in the hollow of His hand is to be worshipped and reverenced, but never to be trifled with! Beware, you that thus insult God, for trifling with Him will bring nothing but woe to you.  
True religion also concerns Heaven and Hell—and these are not to be trifled with. True godliness is such a thing as no saint ever dares to trifle with. He strives to enter in at the strait gate. He throws his whole energy into the running of the Christian race. No true minister ever trifles with the Truth of God he proclaims. I have preached the Gospel, now, these 30 years and more, and some of you will scarcely believe it, but in my vestry behind that door, before I come to address the congregation in this Tabernacle, I tremble like an aspen leaf. And often, in coming down to this pulpit, have I felt my knees knock together—not that I am afraid of any one of my hearers—but I am thinking of that account which I must render to God, whether I speak His Word faithfully or not. On this service may hang the eternal destinies of many. O God, grant that we may all realize that this is a matter of the most solemn concern! May we all come to God by Christ Jesus, that everything may be right with us, now, and right for eternity! God grant that it may be!  
These are things which must not be trifled with, because their weight is incalculable if we do trifle with them. There will be such damage as can never be remedied. A man who once becomes a bankrupt, may start in business, again, and yet grow rich. The commander who loses a battle may gather together his troops, again, and yet lead them on to victory. But if the battle of this life is lost, woe the day! It is lost forever—there is no hope of any change to all eternity! It is not, therefore, a matter to be trifled with, but a thing to be attended to with all our might. I love to see Christians in downright earnest. The other day we lost a merchant from the City of London—a man of wealth and standing and, at the same time, a deacon of a Baptist church. Just a night or two before he died, he was at a Church meeting. He was unwell, and they could have done without him but, as he was a deacon, he felt that he ought to be there. When his pastor said to him, “My dear Sir, I think you should not be out,” he answered, “If I had not been out, today, in Gresham Street, about my own business, I would not have been out, tonight, about my Master’s business. If I am well enough to look after my own affairs, I am surely well enough to attend to His.”  
Let there always be with you, dear Christian people, this thought, that the Master’s business must never be pushed behind your own, but that it must always be first and foremost with you. “It is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life.” The highest point, the crown, the flower, the glory of your life is your religion.  
III. Now notice the next point. “It is not a vain thing.” That is to say, IT IS NO FOLLY.  
First, it is no folly to serve God. Suppose, my Brothers and Sisters, it should turn out, after all, that there is no God? Suppose that we should all die like dogs? Then there would be nobody left to laugh at me for having served my God. That is quite clear. I am of the same mind as Cicero, when he spoke about the soul being immortal, and someone said to him, “Philosophers will laugh at you for saying that.” He replied, “They may laugh while I live. I am used to that kind of treatment. And if I am dead and they also are dead, it is quite clear that no dead philosopher will be able to laugh at me.” We who believe in Christ have two strings to our bow. If we live again in another world, all will be well with us. If we do not, we shall be as well off as you will be. We are as happy as you are, anyway! Actually, we feel that we are far happier—so we are quite content to go on as we are. If it is folly to serve God, I am willing to be guilty of such folly as that! As I am His creature, I would serve my Creator. And as I am His child, I would serve my Father. I think it is the chief end of my being to glorify Him here and then to enjoy Him forever in Glory!  
Further, is it folly to be reconciled to God? Is it folly to believe that there is eternal justice and that if there is eternal justice, there will be a judgment? And if there is a judgment, there will be punishment for sin? Is that folly? And is it folly to believe that Jesus Christ came and bore the punishment for those who trust Him? And that if He bore that punishment, then those for whom He bore it may go free? And that if He bore it for those that believe in Him, then I, believing in Him, am clearly saved? Is that folly? It seems to me to be the most rational form of reasoning that I have ever come across yet, and to it will I stand! “God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”  
Next, is it folly to be prepared to do your duty? I venture to say that a man who is a true Christian is the most ready of any men that live to do his duty. I do not know whether it is ever a Christian’s duty to kill people, but if a man is a soldier, it is amazing how often religion makes him a good soldier. Read a bit of veritable history. An officer wanted to call out some troops in India for a certain duty, and he said, “At this time of night it is no use, for all the men are drunk, unless you send for Havelock’s saints—they will be all right.” And so they were. Some time after, it was rumored that one of the “saints” was drunk, and Havelock straightway made enquiry and found that it was not one of his men, but another who bore the same name. The general said, “I do not know what Baptists are, but if Havelock’s men are Baptists, I wish the whole army were Baptists, for there are no other soldiers like them.” There was a commander who found his army better fitted for conflict because they feared the Lord and lifted up their hearts in prayer to Him. They never turned aside to drunkenness and other evil ways. God grant that you, dear Friends, may have a religion that will make you ready to do your duty, whatever it may be!  
Besides, is it not true wisdom to be prepared for your eternal destiny? It is wise, some say, to look to present things. So it is, to a certain extent, but it is wise to look at present things in the light of the future. A man was dying—dying without hope and without much concern, either. His lawyer was called in to make his will. He was willing away all his property. His wife and his little girl stood by his bed and heard him giving his instructions. He said, “As to the home, you know, Dear, I leave that to you.” So the lawyer put it down. His little girl said, “Then, Pa, you haven’t got a home of your own where you are going.” That sentence touched him—he had forgotten that matter—but, by God’s Grace, he was led to seek and to find the eternal Home. It must be a wise thing not to only have a home of your own, here, but to have another and a better Home to go to when you die!  
A person said, one day, “I know an infidel who lately died in perfect happiness and peace.” “But,” asked a workman who stood by, “was he in his senses?” “Yes,” replied the speaker, “and he died in perfect peace.” “Then,” said the workman, “he must have had a very miserable time while he was alive.” The other asked, “What do you mean?” He answered, “I will tell you what I mean. I have a very good, kind wife—the best woman that ever lived. And I have some dear children, too, and they are my comfort and joy. And if I had to leave them, and go away, I did not know where, and did not know whether I should live, again, or not, I should feel it the most awful thing in all the world to die! And I am sure that my wife would break her heart over it. But,” he said, “now I can die in perfect peace because I feel that I am going Home to my Father and to my Savior—and my wife can part with me in peace because she knows that I am going where I shall receive even greater love than she can give me. But I think that infidel must have had a scolding wife and that was why he was glad to die. I cannot understand it on any other ground.”  
Nor can I. It looks to me to be a most unreasonable kind of composure for a man to lie down to die and say, “I do not know where I am going. I expect I shall be annihilated.” I shudder at the thought! I could not die like that! But when I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him, then I can, with reason, as well as with faith, surrender myself into my Heavenly Father’s hands.  
IV. Now, lastly, let me say to you, concerning true religion, that IT IS NO SPECULATION.  
There are a great many speculations nowadays. If any of you want to lose your money, or are particularly anxious never to see it again, or want to have a very limited view of it, I advise you to put it into a company. It will soon disappear—depend upon that! There are many speculations and there are many people who become speculators. But there are some things that are certainties, and here is one. If any man will trust himself with Jesus Christ, he shall be saved. He may, for some time, be in darkness, but if he will fully trust himself with Christ, unless God can lie, and unless Christ can be defeated, such a man must and shall be saved! And he shall know it, too. There is not in Hell a single man who can say that he trusted Chris, and yet that Christ did not save him. And I hardly think that there is anywhere on earth a man so base as to say that. At any rate, if he did say it, I should take leave not to believe what he said.  
The process of salvation is very different in different cases. About a fortnight ago, there stood in Cheapside a young man reading one of my sermons which had attracted his attention. As he was reading it, he came across this passage—“If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are saved now. But I want you to project your faith further and to believe in Jesus Christ for the whole of your life, for if you do so, you shall not only be saved, now, but you shall infallibly be saved forever.” Then followed the text, “I give unto them eternal life,” and this comment upon it—“Now, eternal life cannot come to an end. ‘He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.’ Everlasting life cannot come to an end. It is a thing that lasts forever. Believe for everlasting life and you have it, you are saved forever.”  
The young man said, “Standing there, I did believe just as I was told. I trusted Christ and I believed, then, that in Him I had everlasting life. The next minute, I felt, ‘Oh, what a glorious thing this is! How I love Christ who has done this great thing for me! What is there that I can do to serve Him? What sin is there that I would not give up?’ Then,” he said, “I said to myself, as I walked on, ‘Why, I am saved! I am sure I am, because now I love Christ! Now I want to give up sin and now I want to serve Him.’” And was not that a sure proof of his being saved, because he saw the greatness of Divine Love to him and this made him grateful—and that gratitude turned him right round and made a new man of him? This is how Christ can save you, also! Suppose you have been addicted to drunkenness and that you are convinced of the evil of it. You go to Christ and He forgives you. Then you say, “Now I am forgiven, oh, how I love my Savior! I will never go back to my cups again! I have done with my old companions! I will go and seek out other people that love Christ and I will join with them if they will have me. And I will see what Christ expects me to do, and I will do it, for I will do everything for Him who has done so much for me.”  
That is salvation—a change of character—a deliverance from that which held you in bondage, an entrance into the blessed liberty of loving God and wanting to be holy. Oh, that we might, each one of us, know that blessedness! It is no speculation—you do not believe in Christ on a chance. If you believe in Christ, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but his Word shall never pass away—you are saved, as surely as God is God! He that believes in Christ shall be saved, now, and in the hour of death, and at the day of judgment, and forever and ever.  
Now, dear Friends, in closing, I should like to say that this salvation is suitable for all whom I am addressing. Many of you know this and you have been praying that others may know it, too. This salvation is suitable for poor men. If you are very poor, is it not time that you were rich unto God? And if you have the hard side of the hill in this world, why should you not have eternal life, and joy and bliss in the world to come? It is also equally suitable for the rich man, for if you have not where to go when you die, I pity you. To leave your parks and gardens and mansions and estates, to go from Dives’ table to Dives’ Hell will be a horrible thing for you, my lord, and for your ladyship, if that should happen to be your case! You need a Savior, most certainly, rich as well as poor!  
This salvation exactly suits you, my aged Friend over yonder. “Oh!” you say, “I am too fixed in my habits. I am afraid I shall never be saved. I am getting quite gray and very old.” Well, then, this is the very thing to make you young! “You must be born again.” “Can a man be born again when he is old?” That is what Nicodemus asked and Christ told him that he could be. He can put new life into you, so that you shall be a child even if you are a 100 years old! And you shall joy and rejoice in God that, in your latter days, you have come to Him as a child and received a Father’s love. “Ah! but it won’t suit me,” says a young man. “I need to see a little life.” That is exactly what I want you to see—but you will never see life till you see Christ! “Oh, but I want to be happy!” I know you do, and so do I! And I should like you to be happy. “I never believe in cats being cats before they are kittens. I like to see young people full of joy and full of merriment.” I agree with you, but I tell you that there is more joy experienced by a Christian in five minutes than by a worldling in 500 years. When a saint lives near to God—  
*“His joys divinely grow,  
Unspeakable like those above,  
And Heaven begins below.”*  
Talk of life and happiness—we have it who sought the Savior in our youth—and have never turned aside from Him since!  
This salvation suits everybody. It suits you even if you are a most moral person. You are like a statue of marble, now, very beautiful and fair to look upon, but you have no warm life of love to God within you! Oh, if we could only make that marble live!—

*“Oh, that those lips had language!”*  
But the Grace of God can put life into your dead morality!

Perhaps I am speaking to some who are immoral. If that is your case, this salvation is just the thing for you! The religion of Jesus suits publicans and harlots—it is just the thing for the felon and the depraved. Someone here, perhaps, is half-ashamed to be in this congregation. You are the very one I am sent after tonight—the lost sheep! It is you the Shepherd is seeking! He can afford to leave the 99 that went not astray. But you lost sheep—you lost woman, lost man—you are the very one that Jesus loves, for, “the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Come and cast yourself into His arms by simple trust, for that is faith! Trust Jesus! Just as I lean my whole weight upon this rail, lean on Him your whole weight! Fall flat down on His promise of pardon! Lie right down on the Rock—trust in nothing of your own—but trust Christ for everything—and you are saved!

God grant that this may be the happy lot of us all, for Jesus Christ’s 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 #780 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE SECRET SPOT

NO. 780

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 10, 1867, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Their spot is not the spot of His children.”  
Deuteronomy 32:5.**

THERE are frequently great difficulties in identifying the persons of men even when they have been distinctly seen. Our police courts have given us, during the last few weeks, most serious evidence that men may be utterly deceived as to the identity of individuals. They may be prepared, and honestly, I believe, to take an oath that such-and-such a person is the man whom they saw discharging firearms or throwing stones, and yet that person may have been many miles away. A slight change of dress, another color in the necktie or a different shape of the hat—or some trifling alteration of the hair may throw a witness entirely off his guard.

It was said to be almost dangerous for persons of a certain height, and of a certain color of hair, to be passing the police courts lest they should be arrested, and marched in with others to be identified by witnesses who were extremely anxious to identify somebody or other. This fact seems very clearly established—that the judgment of men, even with regard to the identity of their fellow creatures—is very far from being infallible.

Turning to the moral universe, identity there is far more difficult to be made out, for both the moral and religious world swarm with pretenders. You cannot know for certain who among your acquaintances is a Christian and who is not. This is known to God and may be revealed to each man for himself. But deception is so easy and is nowadays practiced in so masterly a manner that I know it is difficult to know a son of God from a son of Belial. You may sit down and commune with an Apostle and find he is a Judas! You may walk side by side with one who seemed to be a Simon Peter and prove him to be a Simon Magus. Yes, what is worse, you may be deceived about yourself, and whereas you may have thought your body to be a temple of the Holy Spirit, you may suddenly discover it to have been made a den of thieves.

Yet this is a very important matter, for if men are not right and cannot clear their consciences that they are right, they live in a state of perpetual unrest—never at any moment possessing safety. We ought to know—we should never be at peace till we do know—whether we are the children of God or not. And since the outward aspect so often deceives, and visible signs are not to be relied upon, it becomes imperative upon us that we should search deep, and look for signs that will not deceive us—prying into the very core and marrow of our being—till we have resolved the weighty question, whether we are the children of God or the heirs of wrath.

You see the text talks about certain secret spots. These are tokens in which men cannot so readily deceive as to their identity. The mother will be able to tell whether this is her child or not by the spot which is known to none but herself. The pretender may be very like her child—the voice may be the voice of Jacob, and the hands may not be dissimilar and he may be able to relate many things concerning his youth which it would seem that none but the real child could know—but the mother remembers that there was a secret spot. And if that is not there she turns the pretender aside. But if she discovers that private token, she knows the claimant to be her child.

I want, this morning, for us to remember that there are secret marks upon every Christian, and if we have not the spot of God’s child, too, it will little avail us how fairly in our outward garb and manner we may conform ourselves to the members of the heavenly family. We have before us a whole host of persons who profess to be the children of the Most High. They are exceedingly confident because they come before us in the garments of God’s people. But their robes do not deceive us. Immediately we tell them that we cannot judge by the outward appearance, for a religious profession is very easily procured. The very brightest colors may be flaunted and a man’s garments may be outwardly spotless and fair to the eye, and yet for all that he may be the basest of pretenders.

None wash their hands more often than the Pharisees, and yet they are sepulchers full of rottenness. None say longer prayers than the Scribes, and yet none more ready to devour widows’ houses. The outward garb of religion is no criterion by which to judge a man in an age so full of deception as the present—which has been fitly called the era of shams. If a devout exterior will not satisfy us, these professors address us in the language of piety. They use the holy speech which is thought decorous among the people of God. But we straightway tell them that albeit if we lived with them, we have no doubt their speech would betray them when the old brogue of Babylon would come out unawares, yet still their outward public speech can be no rule of judgment to us, for those often talk loudest who know least.

The bell rings men to Church but says no prayers itself. There may be the sign of the angel hanging over the inn door but the devil may be the landlord within. That sepulcher which is most whitewashed may be most full of dead men’s bones. Should both garb and language fail to convince us, those who would make a fair show in the flesh point us to their actions, and, “In this” they say, “surely we cannot deceive, for ‘by their fruits you shall know them.’” We confess that it is even so—we can only judge men by their fruits and we are not allowed by God’s Word to judge any further.

But men must judge themselves other than by merely outward acts— they must examine their motives and the design and scope by which those acts were dictated and directed. Otherwise they may only possess that superficial morality which is deceptive because it springs not from the depths of the heart, but is a mere stagnant pool and not the clear crystal living water welling up from the inmost soul of the man. Men may be externally washed, but not internally quickened. They may be covered with the flowers of righteousness, but those flowers may have no root, and byand-by may wither away because the heart is not right in the sight of God.

Sirs, we will not be content, this morning, with examining your clothes, nor listening to your speech, nor even with touching your hands—for all these signs may deceive you, if they do not deceive us. We ask you to come with us into the stripping room and let us search for the spots, the secret spots, without which you cannot know to a certainty that you are the true children of the living God. This morning, as we may be helped by God the Holy Spirit, in solemn downright earnest we mean if we can, first of all, to take you to the examination of the secret spots. Secondly, to make a declaration from God’s Word of what the true spot is. Thirdly, to discriminate among men as to those public and defiling spots which, alas, are to be found in all of us. And, then, fourthly, an exhortation upon the whole subject.

I. First, then, at the mention of private spots which are to be the insignia of the regenerate, there are thousands who say, “We do not shirk that examination. Truly the signs of saints are in us! Are others Israelites? So are we. We bear in our bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus—we challenge an investigation.”

Be it so, then! LET US COMMENCE A MINUTE EXAMINATION. I am not now to deal with anything that is public. We are not speaking, now, about actions or words, but concerning those secret things which men have judged to be infallible marks of their being saved. Here is a friend before us, and as he lays bare his heart he indicates to us the spot which he thinks proclaims him to be a child of God. I will describe it. This man has embraced sound doctrine. He has managed by some means to become thoroughly Calvinistic.

He holds the doctrine of Election in all its length and breadth. He would fight to the last moment of life for any one of the five points of the Calvinistic confession. You cannot find a man more determinedly orthodox. He abhors all teaching which he judges to be uncertain in its soundness. And within his heart he believes that he is therefore saved. “Surely,” whispers his vain heart, “surely a man with such a sound creed cannot be cast into Hell!” He delights to hear the preacher deal a heavy blow at Arminians, or Ritualists, or any other people who differ from him because he feels, then, that the privilege which he has monopolized in his own conceit is thus defended and preserved from all intruders. “Ah,” he says, “I am saved. I have received the Truth of God and hold it with all my might.”

Everywhere he goes his whole talk is of his favorite Shibboleth, “The Truth of God! The Truth! The Truth!” Not that the aforesaid Truth has ever renewed his nature! Not that it has ever changed his moral character! Not that it has at all made him a better husband or a kinder father! Not that it influences him in trade! Not that you could perceive any sanctifying effect proceeding from his creed if you lived with him! But still, this is it— orthodoxy, thorough orthodoxy, holding the Truth of God and holding it firmly, too, and denouncing all others—this is his balm of Gilead to heal all disease! This is his crown of rejoicing in life and his passport to the skies!

Now, Sir, we do not hesitate to say concerning you that, although you will not be pleased with us for it, that your spot is not the spot of the children of God! It is a good thing to be sound in the faith, but that virtue may belong to the vilest sinner out of Hell. There have been some men who have been orthodox to the core and yet they have been detestable hypocrites, and not one atom better, as their outward life has shown. No form of doctrine, however Scriptural, can ever save the soul if it is only received by the head and does not work in its mighty energy upon the heart. “You must be born again,” are the Savior’s words. And unless you are born again your carnal nature may hold the Truth of God in the letter without discerning its spirit. And while the Truth shall be dishonored by being so held, you yourself shall not be benefited thereby.

But here is another waiting to be searched. He also believes that he has discovered in himself the spot of God’s child. It is this—not so common a spot, I believe, in this congregation as in some—a knowledge of inward corruption. “Ah,” says one, “I know that I am an heir of Heaven because I am aware of the sinfulness of my nature. I know my heart to be horridly depraved. I believe my nature to be detestable and vile, and sometimes I am the subject of frightful blasphemous thoughts and have inclinations towards the most horrible iniquities. Surely I am a quickened child of God or I should not have so vivid a conviction of indwelling sin! I should not feel that I was so bad as I am if I had not been first of all quickened and awakened!”

Now, believe me, there are thousands who are under the delusion that this spot is the spot of God’s children! But let me assure them very affectionately that it is no such thing. God’s children do have a sense of sin. They groan because of the body of this death. They daily lament the plague of their own heart—but a full persuasion of their own sinfulness may be found in thousands who are not God’s children! It is a preposterous assumption that for a man to know himself to be a sinner proves him to be a saint! Let me ask the physician whether a sense of sickness proves a man to be cured. Let me ask a drowning man whether a sense of sinking proves that he is rescued! Let me ask a bankrupt debtor whether a sense of being penniless proves that he is rich.

You know better! Common sense teaches you better! It is not a discovery of your sin that will save you, but hearty faith in the Savior! And if you have not gone further than a mere conviction of sin—which may be nothing but a legal conviction and a natural alarm at the awful punishment of sin—if you have not gone further than mere alarm or remorse you have not the spot which marks you out to be a child of God. You may be a Judas crying, “I have sinned,” and you may even hang yourself through terror of conscience, and be none the less, but rather all the more, a son of perdition! A cutting Truth is this, but it must be told, lest any be misled.

I see before me at the door of the stripping room a third class of persons who say, “Surely we have this spot, for we are full of confidence that we are saved! We believe that we are saved—firmly believe it. We are not among those sinful people who indulge in doubts and fears. We know that we are saved. We have known it for years and we have never had a doubt about it. If ever a question is raised, ‘Do I love the Lord or not? Am I His or am I not?’ we throw the question out—we believe it to come from Satan to mar our peace and spoil our comfort. Self-examination we have long ago given up as an unnecessary disturbing of the peace of our spirits. We have made up our minds that we are saved and it gives us great peace to believe that we are.”

Yes, but, my Hearers, such a spot is not the spot of God’s children, for after this fashion the foolish cry, “Peace, peace, where there is no peace.” Remember how easy it is to daub with untempered mortar—how readily you may build upon a sandy foundation and how the superstructure may be run up with marvelous speed if you build with wood, hay, and stubble—much more a fair show may you make with perishable materials than if you waited till you had gold and silver, and precious stones, slowly to build the edifice. But remember that for you to believe that you are saved does not prove that you are saved! The poor lunatic in Bedlam believes himself to be a king, but no man owns his sovereignty!

Your undisturbed conscience may be no evidence of Divine Grace, but rather a token of reprobation, for there are some who have received a strong delusion to believe a lie that they maybe damned. They are fooled by Satan into the delusion that they are the people of God, whereas they are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity. Hope is our anchor, but what is the use of an anchor if it has nothing to lay hold upon? “I hope,” said one, when he heard of his neighbor’s death, “I hope he is all right.” And yet he knew that he died drunk!

Now, if that man had said, “I wish that there may have been found a way by which it is possible for him to be saved,” I could understand it. But to say “I hope,” where there was no ground and foundation for hope, was to speak as the foolish speak! You and I ought not to have a hope which will not bear the test. Oh, instead of shirking self-examination, practice it daily! Ask for the strong wind from the wilderness to come and smite the four corners of your house, for if it is built upon a rock it will not fall. But, oh, if it is but a sand-built house, it will be far better that it should come down now than that you should dwell in it for awhile with groundless comfort and find it fall about your ears to all eternity! No, the self-confident assumption that you are saved is not the spot of God’s children.

Frequently I meet with others who will say, “We certainly have the private mark of gracious souls, for we are so happy! We have such happy feelings when we are worshipping God. We feel so delighted with going up to the assemblies of God’s people. Sometimes at the Prayer Meeting we get so happy and excited we hardly know what to do! And when we sing those delightful revival tunes we feel so exceedingly blessed.” Now this may or may not be from the Spirit of God. God’s children are made glad in the House of Prayer, but remember, others are made glad beside God’s children—for doubtless there have been thousands who have received the Word with joy, as our Savior tells us—who are like the seed sown on stony ground which sprang up rapidly because it had no depth of earth, but afterwards when the sun had risen, it withered away.

Beware of being stony-ground hearers, and above all, let me say to you, beware of placing the slightest dependence upon your attitude and feelings. The most desponding feelings do not prove that your soul is in peril, for some of those who before God were surest of Heaven have been the least assured of it in their own feelings. The highest and most rapturous feelings of delight do not prove us to be the children of God. Some have had no fear in their death, and their strength has been firm. They have not been in trouble as other men, neither have they been plagued like other men and yet for all that their end has been destruction! Moab was settled upon his lees and was not emptied from vessel to vessel, but how terrible was his end! Never, therefore, put any dependence upon your attitude and feelings—let them be what they may. Go deeper than the froth of feeling—search in the depths of principle for the priceless pearl of infallible evidence. This spot is not the spot of God’s children.

There are others, and many, too, who will say, “But at least we can bring a mark which is not to be counterfeited, a sure and certain mark of conversion! There was a happy day when we experienced most extraordinary things.” As soon as some people of an excitable temperament begin to narrate their treasured story of marvels you may anticipate that they are going to tell you that they heard a voice, or saw a vision, or were impressed with this, or saw that—all which may be true or may be imagination according to the truthfulness and common sense of the speaker. And all this may have a connection with their being saved, for there is no doubt that many have been impressed in dreams and I will even venture to say by visions and voices.

Many men’s first religious thoughts have been awakened in them by strange impressions, and, therefore, these things are not to be laughed at. Whether they are freaks of the imagination or not I care not, so long as men’s minds are aroused the mode matters but little. But if anybody shall say that the experience of singular impressions or remarkable emotions proves men to be Believers I must most gravely and solemnly disagree! Alas, there have been thousands who profess to have seen angels who are now with devils! And I do not doubt there are tens of thousands who have fought with devils who are now with angels of light! It is not what you see with these eyes, nor hear with these ears, nor feel with flesh and blood— our religion is spiritual, and is spiritually discerned—not a thing of rhapsody, excitement, and imagination but a matter of sober thought and meditation. And if you have not something more than a mere day or night of singularities to look back upon, your evidences of Divine Grace are worthless.

I do delight to look back upon the day when I was converted to God. Many of you do and I hope you always will look back upon that happy hour with pleasure when you first turned to the Lord. But I have known what it is to feel that if I had no reason to believe that I was saved except the remembrance what I felt that day, I should have no solid ground at all. The fact is, Brothers and Sisters, the spot of God’s children is not a thing of yesterday, but an abiding and continual token. The true spot is far more than any memory of the past, as I shall show you. And if you have not that, you may have all that you can imagine or invent, but God will repudiate you at the last, saying, “I know you not from where you are. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.”

II. We now come to the second head. WHAT IS THE TRUE SECRET SPOT WHICH INFALLIBLY IDENTIFIES THE CHILD OF GOD? Beloved, it were vain presumption and blasphemous arrogance for me to set myself up as able to tell you this of my own judgment. But God’s Word reveals it to us and therefore we may tread surely where we have Revelation to be our guide.

Now, we are told in the Gospel according to John, concerning our Lord—“As many as received Him, to them gave He power [or privilege] to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” Here it is, then! If I have received Christ Jesus into my heart, then I am a child of God! That reception is described in the second clause as a believing on the name of Jesus Christ. If, then, I believe on Jesus Christ’s name—that is, simply from my heart trust myself with the crucified, but now exalted, Redeemer, I am a member of the family of the Most High! Whatever else I may not have, if I have this I have the privilege to become a child of God. But if I have not this, I may have all the other spots I have been speaking of this morning—which may seem to some to be very great beauty spots— but they are not the spots of the children of God.

To strengthen the text we have already given you, let us remind you of another: “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.” That is, whoever takes Jesus to be to him his anointed Priest, anointed to offer sacrifice of atonement for him, such a soul is born of God. He who takes this man or that to be his priest, or sets up to offer sacrifice for himself is no child of God, be he what he may. But he who takes the Most High Lord, once slain, but now ever living, to be an anointed Priest unto him may conclude at once that he has the spot of God’s child upon him. Our Lord Jesus puts it in another way. “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” Here is the matter in a nutshell!

Christ appears as a Shepherd to His own sheep, not to others. As soon as He appears, His own sheep perceive Him. They trust Him. They are prepared to follow Him. He knows them and they know Him—there is a mutual knowledge. He guides them, and they follow Him—there is a constant connection between them. If to put this Truth of God positively is not enough, let me remind you how our Savior puts it negatively. When the Jews were rioting around Him, instead of listening to His earnest voice, He turned to them and said, “You believe not, because you are not of My sheep, as I said unto you.” As much as to say, it is because I have not chosen you, and My Divine Grace has never looked upon you. It is because the Divine life has never throbbed in your bosoms that you do not believe on Me. If you had the life of God, and were God’s children, you would accept Me at once. This is the one mark, the sure mark, the only infallible mark—a hearty faith in the appointed Redeemer!

My dear Friends, I doubt not many will say, “That is very simple.” My reply is, “Glory be to God. It is simple!” The more simple the plan of salvation the more evidently it is of God. Are we not told that Babylon, the mother of harlots, has written upon her brow, “Mystery”?—mystery is the mark of the Roman Catholic faith—and the sure symbol of Antichrist. That Gospel which is so plain that he who runs may read it—that the wayfaring man, though a fool—need not err therein! This Gospel which is preached unto the poor. This Gospel which may be understood even by a child—this is the Gospel, the glorious Gospel of the blessed God which is committed to our trust! What says the Apostle? “Seeing then,” he says, “that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech.”

Here is the root of the matter and if you trust Jesus Christ with all your heart—if you rely upon Him to save you, and if your reliance is such that it touches your heart and makes you love the Man who shed great drops of blood for you. If your faith is such that it operates upon your moral character, constraining you no longer to be an enemy to your good and generous God—then you are saved, for you have the spot of God’s child! But “without faith it is impossible to please God.” I tell you solemnly that all your generosity, your almsgiving, your Sabbath keeping, your repentance, your prayers, your tears—all are nothing without faith in Christ! Go heap them up till they make a pyramid as great as that which casts its mighty shadow far down the Libyan desert—but they are as nothing, things of nothing!

All human excellencies, without faith, will fly as chaff before the wind when the hour of trial shall come. If trusted in, they are as smoke in the nostrils of the Most High because they rival the Cross of Christ. Go humbly to the Cross! Look up to Him who suffered there. Rely on Him and you shall live! But gad you about as you may to this shrine and to that, and scourge yourselves and deny yourselves this and that, and practice all the austerities you please—you shall be further, still, from God than at the first, if you despise the salvation of Jesus Christ.

Going about to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness which is of God by faith and therefore their spot is not the spot of God’s children. But coming simply to Jesus and resting alone in Him they have glorified God, and they are themselves proved to be the children of the Most High.

III. I shall now, in the third place, turn to another view of the subject which concerns THE DISCRIMINATION OF DEFILING SPOTS. The term “spot,” as used in the text, will not be read usually as we have read it this morning. It will, no doubt, to most readers suggest the idea of sin, and very properly so—then the text would run thus: the sin of the people mentioned here is not the sin of God’s people.

There is a difference between their guilt and the offenses of the Lord’s chosen. This brings me to the point—there is a discrimination to be made, even as to sinful spots. When God’s children are mired and bespattered with filth, still there is a difference between them and others. An unhappy thing it is—we cannot mourn too much over it—that evil remains even in the hearts of the regenerate, and that the much fine gold sometimes becomes dim and the glory departs. God’s people are a holy people, but they are not a perfect people.

They aspire after perfection, but they have not yet attained it. Sometimes, alas, they fall. We believe they never fall finally nor totally—but they often fall sorrowfully and foully. But yet the ungodly may not take comfort from the sins of God’s people for their spots are not the spots of God’s children. Let us very briefly—we cannot enter into the subject in full this morning—show that there is a difference between the sin of God’s people and the sin of others. God forbid that you should imagine that I wish to excuse the sins of Believers!

In some views, when a Believer sins, his sin is worse than that of other men because he offends against greater light and knowledge. He revolts against greater love and mercy. He flies in the teeth of his profession. He does despite, in a measure, to the Cross of Christ, and he brings grievous dishonor upon the name of Jesus whom he professes to serve! Believers cannot sin cheaply. The very least speck on a Christian is more plainly seen than the foulest blot on the ungodly, just as a white dress shows the dirt the clearer. The more clean the paper, the sooner is the mark perceived—but if the paper is black, there may be many marks and stains and yet they may not be perceptible.

God forbid that we should palliate, excuse, or extenuate the faults of God’s people! Sin is a horrible thing and it is above all things detestable when it lurks in a child of God! Yet the sins of God’s people do differ from the sins of other men in many important respects. They do not sin with deliberation and with cool determination—meaning to sin—and sinning for its own sake. The ungodly man knows a thing to be wrong and therefore does it. He plans it upon his bed. He takes counsel with himself when he shall enjoy this pleasure or indulge that lust—knowing at the same time that the pleasure is evil, and the lust is iniquity.

The Believer possibly falls into the same sin as the unbeliever, yet not through evil aforethought, but through force of a strong and violent temptation. Had he paused awhile he would have despised the evil and turned from it with hatred. But there came upon him a sudden a rush of diabolical power, and he seemed borne away by it to his own intense grief—a grief which makes him go with broken bones for many a year afterwards. We do not sin willfully nor deliberately. We do not love the way of transgression—blessed be God, we could not run in it with all our heart— for if we saw the evil distinctly before us as such, our spirit, in calm consideration, would recoil from the mere shadow of it.

The child of God does not sin with the pleasure and gusto of other men. When the sheep stumbles, as it may do, into the mire, it is up again and on. But if the swine should fall there, it rolls over and wallows as in its element. A sinner in his sins is a bird in the air, but the Believer in sin is like the fish that leaps for awhile into the air but must be back again or die. Sin cannot be satisfactory to an immortal spirit regenerated by the Holy Spirit—it is poison to it and very soon that poison must be thrown out of the system—for the living child of God cannot endure sin to fester within him. If you sin, you “have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” But if you sin and love sin, then you are the servant of sin, and not the child of God.

Again, the child of God cannot look back upon sin with any kind of complacency. The ungodly man has this spot that after the sin he even boasts of it! He will tell others that he enjoyed himself greatly in his wicked sport and he will gloat over its sweetness, turning the morsel over and over, and rolling it under his tongue like an epicure delighting in a dainty dish. “Ah,” he says, “how sweet it is!” As for its being contrary to God it makes it all the sweeter to him, or else, “God is not in all his thoughts.”

But no man of God ever sins without smarting. Very soon conscience wakes, and, as the Word of God puts it, “David’s heart smote him.” It is a horrible knock that the heart gives when it begins to smite! All the men in the world may say what they please so long as my heart does not speak against me. But when conscience says, “It is true. You did it and you have played the fool exceedingly,” then a man hangs his head and retires into the shades to hide himself awhile, for he is ashamed. If you can sin and not weep over it, you are an heir of Hell! If you can go into sin and afterwards feel satisfied to have done so, you are on the road to destruction! If there are no pricks of conscience, no inward torments, no bleeding wounds—if you have no throbs and heaves of a bosom that cannot rest—if your soul never feels filled with wormwood and gall when you know you have done evil—you are no child of God!

But if your sins plague you and your soul abhors them, and takes them with weeping to the Cross of Jesus, then the sins which you hate shall never destroy you. That which you loathe shall not be brought against you to condemn you. This shall be set down to the account of your Surety and not to you, seeing that He was delivered for your offenses and is raised again for your justification. The child of God also has this difference in his spots from others—when he knows the spot, and is led to repent of it—it makes him more careful in the future, especially in that respect in which he has erred.

Have you not seen him afraid to put one foot before another for fear he should do wrong? He had a fall the other day and he goes very tenderly, very softly. He is almost afraid to open his mouth now, because he spoke so unadvisedly the other day. His prayer is, “Lord, open my lips! I dare not open them.” He used to be very fast and confident, but notice him now— he has a broken spirit and speaks with bated breath. He does not hold his head up loftily as he used to do. He thanks God that he is forgiven, feels that he has peace, and he blesses God for it—but he is jealous of himself with holy jealousy. You will not find him mingling with that company which led him astray. He is a burnt child and dreads the fire.

You will see him much more precise with himself than he used to be. He used to be precise with other men and lax with himself—now it is different—he can make excuses for others, but he makes none for himself. His heart now pants to be eminent for that very Grace in which he failed and he gives particular attention to keep watch and ward over that part of the wall through which the invader found entrance. But I need not enlarge. You who are the children of God must have noticed a difference between your sins now and your sins as they once were. And you cannot but observe, day by day, if you look within, that Divine Grace has made a change even in those sins in which our evil nature exercises most dominion.

But, Beloved, the best thing we can do is to keep as far away from evil as possible! We have no right to say, “I may be a child of God and yet do so-and-so.” No! The heir of Heaven does not desire to approach the appearance of evil. I am much afraid for some of you who are asking, “Is this wrong, and that wrong?” Do nothing about which you have need to ask a question! Be quite sure about it or leave it alone. Know you not that inspired Word, “Whatever is not of faith is sin”? That is, whatever you cannot do with the confidence that you are doing right is sin to you! Though the deed may be right to other people, if you have any doubt about it yourself it is evil to you. God grant, dear Friends, that we may not be “conformed to the world,” but be “transformed by the renewing of our minds.”

If I knew that there was a leper colony anywhere in the country, I do not think I should want to build my house near it. I should not send for the physician and say, “Sir, how far do you think the effect of pestilence might spread? I should like to get as near as I could without actually catching the disease.” “No, no!” You say, “if there is a plot of land to be bought where there is no disease in the neighborhood, there let my tent be pitched. It is best to dwell far off from evil.” O may God separate us from evil in this world, as we hope to be separated from it in the world to come! There will be a great gulf fixed between it and us in the next world—may there be a wide demarcation now.

IV. My close is AN EXHORTATION, an exhortation to myself and to you to make sure work for eternity, and to make it clear to your own consciences that you are, indeed, the children of God. Ah, my dear Hearers, it is not possible for me to be earnest enough in this matter! I wish I had a tongue like the pen of a ready writer, that I might speak to you with power this morning. Yet, perhaps, feebleness of words may give but the greater power in spirit if God the Holy Spirit will press upon the conscience of you all the need and duty of an earnest heart-searching self-examination.

A famous case is now pending in which a person claims to be the son of a deceased baronet. Whether he is or not I suppose will, before long, be decided by the highest authorities. Meanwhile the case is pending—a very weighty case for him—for upon the decision will hang his possession or non-possession of vast estates and enormous property. Now, in your case, you, many of you, profess to be the children of God—and Heaven hangs upon the question of the truthfulness of your profession.

Heaven? No, there is a dread alternative—Heaven or Hell must hang upon the truth or the falsehood of your profession! Yes, moreover about those two things there is flung a golden chain of eternity, making each of them more weighty than they otherwise would be. A child of God? Then your portion is eternal life! An heir of wrath, even as others? Then your heritage will be eternal death!

For a moment conceive that you are passing into the next world. What will be the trepidation of your spirit if it is then a matter of question? With what alarm will you await the decisive ordeal? “Shall I ascend on wings of joy up to the realms where angels dwell? Or must I sink with devils as the companions of my woe, to dwell forever in Hell?” What horror to have that question still unanswered! Is it uncertain now, my Hearer? Is it uncertain now, whether you are a child of God or not? Is it uncertain whether your spot is the spot of God’s children? Then let not an hour pass over your head till you have said, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”

Trifle not here, I plead with you! If you must trifle anywhere, let it be about some secondary matter—your health, if you will—or the title deeds of your estates. But your souls! Your never-dying souls and their eternal destinies? I beseech you be in earnest here, for you will be in earnest soon—earnestly praising God in Heaven—or earnestly moaning out your never-ending dolor in the pit where hope can never come! God grant us wisdom, then, since so much hangs upon it, not to play the fool by taking things at second hand but to search to the very roots and foundations of the matter to know whether we are saved or not.

This duty is much more easy to explain than to enforce, and more easy to enforce than to practice. We all shun it. The preacher naturally says to himself, “Have you not preached to others? You may surely excuse yourself.” The old member of the Church who has long maintained an honorable outward profession whispers to himself, or Satan whispers to him, “You are an old experienced Christian, why need you go back to the beginning and do your first works?” The young professor in the heyday of his zeal says within himself, “I know that it is right with me.” But ah, I pray you remember, he who takes things too quickly as being what he desires them to be will be deceived in the end. “The heart is deceitful above all things,” says the Prophet, “and desperately wicked,” and will you not believe it?

Examine it and cross-examine it, for it is a lying witness! Believe it to be dishonest and try to prove it so! And if haply you should be unable, then what a comfort to you! But to believe your heart to be honest and sound—why this is to begin where the fool does—at the wrong end of the chapter! Suspect yourself and go to Christ this morning as a sinner. Doubt yourself, and go to Jesus. Never doubt Him. Confess yourself now to be undone and ruined if it is so, but go to Him who is still the Savior able to save to the uttermost.

Still guilty, still lost, still defiled—go, still to the “fountain filled with blood!” Go, still, to the open-handed Savior, and ask Him to press you to His bosom and to save you now! This is the quick way, the sure way, the blessed way of finding out the secret spot—to go at once to Christ! If I never came before, O bleeding Savior, now I come, and if I have often come and put my trust in You, I come again—accept a guilty sinner who casts himself alone on You, and save him for Your mercy’s sake. Amen.

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
Sermon #3540 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A REMARKABLE BENEDICTION  
NO. 3540

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1916.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, APRIL 21, 1872.

**“And for the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush.” Deuteronomy 33:16.**

MOSES died blessing the people. This showed his meekness, for they had been his plague all his life, and yet his last word with them is full of blessing. He has a blessing for all the tribes, though all the tribes had in turn grieved his spirit. It is a graceful thing to die scattering benedictions—for the old man to feel that life is just about over, and that before he dies he will distribute his legacies—legacies of benediction. It is the most graceful way of departing out of this life to another, leaving a blessing behind, while we, ourselves, are going into the fullness of the blessing to come. But the blessing of Moses was graceful at the close of his life because it was constant with all of his life that went before. Had he lived cursing, it would have been absurd, if not impious, to die blessing. I would not wish to have that man’s benediction in words on his deathbed who never gave a benediction in actions while he was in his life. But the whole course of Moses’ life was that of blessing the people. He had been a nursing father to them. He carried them in his bosom. Often he stood in the gap between them and an angry God. He had spared them by acting as a Mediator when the sword of vengeance was drawn against them. Countless blessings had been bestowed upon them through him. Was it not his rod that worked wonders in the field of Zoan? Was it not his hand which was stretched over the Red Sea, by which God made a way for his people? Did not his rod, when it smote the rock, bring forth the liquid stream? Was it not by his voice that God communicated to them that the manna should drop around their camps? He had blessed them from the very first moment that he had come into contact with them, for he came forth from the palace of Pharaoh, giving up all the riches that might have been his, that he might side with his brethren and began to fight their battles, smiting the Egyptian and hiding his body in the sand. It was from this cause that he was banished from the courts and when he returned, again, it was with the same resolute determination to abide with his people, and the same warm heart towards them. Brothers and Sisters, if you wish to give your children a blessing when you die, be a blessing to them while you live! If you would make your last words worth the hearing, let your whole life be worth the seeing. It is graceful to die blessing, but let it be always consistent with the blessedness of our former life.

The particular blessing which he gave to Joseph shall now have our attention and, first, we shall notice the blessing, itself, which he wished to Joseph. And, secondly, the peculiar form in which he worded it. And, when we have thought that over, it shall be in our heart to wish the same to all who are present here. First, then, let us look at—

I . THE GREAT BLESSING WHICH MOSES WISHED CONFERRED UPON JOSEPH.  
The good will of God—“the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush.” I would like any man’s good will. The better the man is, the more I would desire to have his good will. If it did not come to the benefacit or the good doing, I would like him to think benevolently towards me, to have his good will, if I never derived any particular good directly from him. One does not like to go to bed and feel you have an ill will from any man. Certainly, it is always well to feel that we have no ill will, ourselves, towards any, but that our good will reaches out to all! One would like to have the good will of wise men who could counsel us, and of great men who could help us. One would like to have the good will of angels, to know that they cheerfully obey the Divine Command to watch over us. But how much superior to all this is the good will of God—the good will of Him whose will is power, whose wish is fact, who has but to will it and the good that is willed becomes our good in very deed! Oh, ‘tis a high blessing to have the good will of God! Beloved, our heart wishes this to everyone here present, and every Christian wishes this for their children, wishes it for their household, wishes it for their neighbor, wishes it for their fellow countrymen. May the good will of God be with you!  
For, Beloved, in the first place, this is the fountain of every blessing. It is from the good will of God that every good thing which comes to us takes its rise. Election is according to the pleasure of His good will. He chose us because He would choose us—because He had a good will towards us. Redemption springs from that good will. What else but good will could give the Savior to such unworthy ones as we were? Our calling into the Divine Life is a work of His good will! Our preservation in that life, our growth in it and all the blessings with which God loads that life to make it blessed—all these are fruits of His good will! You cannot find a single blessing that comes to us by the way of merit. We may say of every blessing, it is according to His loving kindness and His tender mercies. He forgave us because He had a good will towards us. He restored us from our wanderings because of His good will. He daily cleanses us and He makes us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light—and all because of His good will. To what else can we ascribe the Covenant of Grace? To what else can all the blessings which are pledged to us by that Covenant be attributed? It is according to His good will. In wishing, therefore, to anyone that he may have the good will of God that dwelt in the bush, you are wishing to him the fountainhead of all mercies—you are wishing to him the infinity, the immensity, the Immutability of the goodness and love of God! It is a comprehensive blessing—and who is able to tell all its heights and depths?  
The good will of God is also the sweetener of all other blessings. It is the source of them! It is the sweetener of them. Everything that comes from God to us derives a double blessedness when we feel that they are the fruit of His good will. Take spiritual mercies—though they are, in themselves, so rich that none can estimate their value, yet is there a peculiar brightness put upon them when we know these come from God’s love! These are all tokens of His favor towards us, His people. And truly, Brothers and Sisters, the lower mercies of daily life become more blessed to us as we know they come from His good will! As you cut that loaf of bread, each slice of it is flavored with His good will. When you put on your garments tomorrow morning, though they are those in which you exercise your toilsome labors, yet are they tokens of God’s good will as much as those coats of skins which God gave to our first parents! Yes, Beloved, sitting here tonight, this air we breathe, the power to breathe it and the health which enabled us to come up to the House of Prayer, and this House, itself, and the ears with which we hear the words, and the good tidings which are given us to hear—all these are of His good will, and are the sweeter because we recognize the favor of God in them!  
Oh, to have temporal blessings with a curse—that is a dreadful thing! I hardly know a text more fearful to contemplate than that one, “I will curse your blessings.” Oh, if God makes any bitter, how bitter the wormwood and the gall must be! If He puts death in the pot in which the broth is made to sustain life, what death must there be when He shall deal out the poisoned cup of His eternal wrath to the ungodly! Sweet, indeed, are blessings when they are thus honeyed with His love, but would they be if, instead thereof, they were seasoned and salted with His wrath? Be thankful, Christian, for I will venture to say that this makes even our trials pleasant to us when we know that they also are the fruits of His good will! We cannot always make our hearts believe that the rod is a good thing. We cannot always persuade our unbelief that our dark, heavy, gloomy hours are really for our good—but they are so—and we shall believe this when we perceive that they are sent out of good will to us! Not out of anger, but out of love—love to us that He may love us right up out of our sins, love us away from our infirmities and love us into a higher state of Grace—attracting us by His Divine Love till we become like He! Note, then, the two things—it is a great blessing because it is the source of all blessings, and the sweetener of all blessings!  
But the next consideration about this is—and let us carefully notice it—that, nevertheless, it surpasses all other blessings. The good will of Him that dwelt in the bush is a greater blessing than all the blessings in the world—what if I say in Heaven, itself? Besides, Brothers and Sisters, all the blessings in the world without this are less than nothing! And if they were all gone, if that were conceivable, and yet we had this left to us, we need not regret the loss of all, since we should find all in God! You remember how the old Puritan put it? He had been rich and then was brought to poverty, and he said he didn’t find much difference, for, he said, when he was rich, he found God in all, and now that he was poor, he found all in God! Perhaps the latter is the higher state of the two. Without God, alas, my Soul, if you were in Paradise! But with God, oh, joy and bliss if you were in prison! All the things put together shall perish in the using—like leaves of the forest, they shall wither before long. But You, my God, are an unwithering Tree of Life, and under You I shall always have shade—I shall sit down beneath Your shadow with great delight, and shall always have food, for Your fruit is sweet unto my taste. I will rejoice in You, for Your good will is better than all things!  
I will tell you what it is—you who have not this good will. If you should lose everything else and you have to win it, you would make a good bargain. If you have not God’s good will and could not have it except by losing the sight of your eyes, and the hearing of your ears, and the renouncing of all your bodily and mental faculties—if you could not have the good will of God without losing house, home and friends, you might cheerfully, gladly, at once close in with the negotiation and say, “Let me have God’s good will and I will take whatever He pleases, or lose whatever He takes!” But let me remind you that you have not to lose these things to get His good will. If you have His good will, you may know it by this—will you accept the gift which He presents to you in His dear Son? Having nothing, will you take Christ to be yours? Being naked, and poor, and miserable, will you let Him be your raiment and your riches? If so, You have God’s will, you have God’s good will, for you have Christ, who is the good will of God towards us, Incarnated in the flesh. The Lord grant each one of us, then, this blessing—to have His good will. And now, secondly—  
II. THIS BLESSING IS PUT IN A VERY PECULIAR FORM.  
He says, “The good will of Him that dwelt in the bush.” And why did he put it so? Was it, first, because Moses looked back to the appearance of God in the bush with peculiar delight on account of its being the first manifestation of God to his soul? I have no doubt that Moses had fellowship with God, before, but we do not read that he ever had an appearance of the Divine Being to him until he was at the back side of the desert near to Horeb. And there he saw God in the burning bush. Beloved, we always set most store—at least I do—in our memory upon the first appearance of God to us. It brings the tears to my eyes when I recollect those words of the old hymn—  
*“Do mind the place, the spot of ground,  
Where you did meet Jesus!”*  
Ah, I do mind it, and always shall, while memory holds her seat! I may forget anything else, but I shall never forget that! And though I have had many, many manifestations to the comfort of my heart, yet that first one has peculiar charms. And I do not marvel that Moses called his God, The God Who Dwelt in the Bush. Now, have not some of you remembrances of the first days when the love of your espousals was warm in you, and when the manifestations of Jesus were bright to you? Well then, wish to others that the good will of God, who appeared to you behind the hedge, or out in the field, or down in the saw pit, or at your bedside in your chamber—the good will of Him that said to you, “I have blotted out your sins like a cloud”—wish that that good will may rest upon your kinsfolk and your friends!  
Is it not also very likely that Moses mentioned that peculiar circumstance in his blessing because God on that occasion pledged Himself to him? He gave that burning bush to be a token to Moses, and a sign. And that token had been redeemed—and that good old man, at the end of the last 40 years of his life, remembered how God had appeared to him when he was 80 years of age and given him that pledge! And now that he was 120 years old, God had redeemed it! He had been true to him for 40 years. Have not we some pledges and tokens? Have not you some place where the Lord appeared to you and said, “Certainly, I will be with you, and will bring you again unto this place”? Are there no remembrances in your soul in which a faithful God has pledged His promise to you, and has redeemed it? If so, each man will know his own case, and each man, if he speaks naturally, will wish a blessing for others, according to his own experience of the blessed God! I do not wonder that after Moses had seen God redeem the token of the burning bush, when he wished to convey the idea that the good will of a faithful Covenant-keeping God should rest upon His servant Joseph—the tribe thereof—should say, “The good will of Him that dwelt in the bush.”  
Moreover, at that time, in the bush God did show Himself as a Covenant God. He began thus, “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” He was a Covenant God. Brothers and Sisters, may you have the good will of a Covenant God! I often wonder what those do who do not know the Covenant of Grace. It seems to me to be the richest well of consolation that God has ever dug—the Covenant ordered in all things and sure. It was the stay of David on his deathbed. It is the comfort of many of God’s Davids in the battle of life. I wish tonight with all my heart, dear Friends, that you may not look for the good will of an absolute God out of Christ, but look for and enjoy the will of God who has pledged Himself to you in your Representative, Christ Jesus, in the Eternal Covenant of His Love. I think that is another reason why Moses put it in that form.  
And, perhaps Moses looked upon that bush as the place of His call to a more active life, and regarded God in a different light from that time forth from what he had ever regarded Him before. His own name was Moses. He was drawn out of the water and now he might have changed his name, for God had called him out of the fire! Now he saw the God of fire. Oh, there are some Believers that have never got to this. They, I hope, have renounced the world as Moses did when he counted the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt! They have also got into the wilderness where Moses was—they are separated, they love contemplation and they live near to God—but they have never been called into active service. That third 40 years of Moses’ life was the crowning part of all his career. The 40 years with Pharaoh, the 40 years in the desert, all prepared him for the 40 years in the wilderness with his people. But some Christians have not begun that last period of their lives! I wish they had, and I shall be glad and rejoice

if, tonight, the Lord should appear to any of His servants and call them, saying, “I have called you to bring sinners out of Egypt, and to set them free.” If He ever does, when you come in later times to pronounce a blessing upon others, you will put it thus, “The God that called me to preach the Gospel, the God that led me as His servant, be with you, each one of you!” And if that is the form in which you put the blessing, it will be a very rich one!  
But now I will come back to the words again. What did Moses mean? We see why he used the term, but what did he mean by saying, “The good will of Him that dwelt in the bush be with you”? Did not he mean, first, “May the blessings of condescension ennoble you”? What condescension for God to dwell in a bush! Had the Eternal dwelt in a cedar, it would have been a stoop, but for Him to dwell in the uncouth-shaped, worthless shrub—a bush—oh, this was matchless! Oh, Beloved, may everyone of us know what it is for God to condescend to dwell with us! We are as the bushes of the heath. There is nothing in us that fits us for God’s mercy. What are we, and what is our father’s house? Why should the Lord look upon us—perhaps as little in talent as we are in merit, low in our own esteem—but much more low in very deed and truth? Oh, may the Lord deal with each one of you in His condescending way! He is known to give His mercy condescendingly. “He has put down the mighty from their seat and He has exalted them of low degree. He has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich He has sent away empty.” After that fashion may He deal with you! And if He should do so, then how ennobled will you be, for that bush in Horeb had a greater Glory about it than the cedars of Lebanon! It was but a bush, but it was a bush in which God had dwelt! And you, too—you will have to say, “Your gentleness has made me great. He has lifted the poor from the dunghill and set him among princes, even the princes of His people.” A drop of Grace gives more honor than a world of fame. One spark of love of Christ is more ennobling to your heart into which it falls than though it were all ablaze with the stars and orders of all the knighthoods of the kingdom! The love of God makes poor men truly rich, little men supremely great, the despised to be honorable and the nothing to be lifted up among the mighty! I wish you, then, Beloved, God’s condescending love to ennoble you—“the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush.” Or, as we might read it, “the good will of the Shekinah of the bush,” for that is the very same Shekinah that shone between the cherub wings! The good will of Him that dwells upon the Throne in Heaven is the good will of Him that dwells in humble and contrite hearts today!  
But Moses, however, meant something more than that. Did not he mean that he wished to Joseph’s tribe indwelling and mysterious mercies—“the good will of Him that dwelt—dwelt in the bush”? It was a strange dwelling. Can anyone understand how God, who is everywhere, can be in one place in particular? And shall anyone tell us how He, who is greater than all space, should yet dwell in a bush—in a bush? He that sets the heavens on a blaze with lightning and kindles all the stars, comes down and sets a bush aglow with His Divine Presence! It is mysterious. Oh, may everyone of us know the mysterious good will of the indwelling Spirit of God! Do you know it? Do you know it? Oh, Beloved, as the fire was in the bush, is the Spirit in you? Do you know He is there? Search yourselves! If He is there, may He tell you—and if He is not there, oh, may some sparks of that Divine Fire fall into your nature now— enough, at least, to make you desire more and set you longing and praying for the wondrous blessing of an indwelling Spirit! Ignatius of old used to call himself, “Theophorus,” or, “the God-Bearer.” Truly, every Christian is such a God-Bearer. “I will dwell in them and walk in them.” “I will put My Spirit within you, and you shall walk in My way.” Surely Moses meant that—at least, the sense is in his words. May you enjoy the mysterious indwelling and the blessings that come from it!  
Further, did not the man of God mean that he desired that Joseph might possess enlightening blessings? “The good will of Him that dwelt in the bush” means this—He set the bush alight and it became a luminary. It had light. It gave forth light. It had light more abundantly. It was a dark bush—God came into it and it caught the attention of Moses, though it seems to have been daylight. He was watching his flock, but so bright was this that it outshone the sun! And Moses said, “I will turn aside and see this great sight.” A bush is not a great sight—it was God that made the bush so bright that it became a great sight! May you, Beloved, have the light of God’s Spirit to reveal to you God’s Truth! And may that light be in you so brightly that others may see it and learn God’s Truth through you! What is the Scripture to us, unless God shines on it? The Bible is only like a country signpost at the turning of a road in a dark night. Unless there is the Light of God to read it by, the signpost is of no service. We need the Spirit of God to shine on the Scriptures! O God, come into us and give us Your Light! We need You. Let this be a token of Your good will to us.  
But that is not all. Surely Moses meant, “May the Lord grant you the blessings of trial and the blessings of preservation.” For all through the various branches and twigs of that bush, there went a fire, a devouring fire, a fire that would have licked it up as the blaze licks up the stubble in a single moment! Yet that fire in its nature was preserving, as well as consuming and, through the goodness of God, the bush was as safe when it was ablaze as it had been before. Beloved, how I wish for you that whenever fiery trials may come, the consuming fire may spend itself upon your corruptions, but oh, may God grant that there may be nothing in it that shall touch your better nature! May it be a conserving as well as a consuming fire! We do, some of us, acknowledge to have been in the furnace when it has been heated very hot. Weary nights have been appointed to us and days of anguish of body and of sinking of spirit. We have lain cast out even from the Presence of God, sometimes in our apprehensions, in the very deeps of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and God—blessed be His name—He has sent the fire and come with it, and we have not been consumed, but can sing this day of judgment and of mercy! That mingled song is well set forth in the bush that burned, but was not burnt—burned, but was not consumed! I would not wish for any of you perfect immunity from trouble, lest you should miss the coming through tribulation into the inheritance of the Kingdom of God, but I do pray for you that when the trouble comes, the God that raised the trouble may come with it, so that you may be burned, but not consumed!  
I will not tarry longer over this explanation of the text, but now most earnestly and from my heart I wish to you, Beloved, this blessing. May “the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush” dwell with you! In your dwellings, may His good will dwell. Whatever your homes may be, may God be with you there. May His good will be with your husband, with your wife and your children, your servants, your business, your field, your estate. May He that dwelt in the bush condescend to dwell in that little chamber and that narrow room! If a bush can hold Him, so can your poor room! If a bush revealed Him, so can your bed—yes, and your sickbed, too. Believe in it—that God’s good will can perfume every chamber of your dwelling, can make your going out and your coming in to be blessed, and all your ways the same! I wish for you, Beloved, that “the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush” may dwell with you wherever you may be!  
Are you like Moses just now, alone and solitary in a wilderness? Have you come into this great city, and are you yet feeling as if you were a lone person, as in a desert? May “the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush” be with you and may God reveal Himself to you in your solitude, as He did to the Prophet at Horeb. Perhaps you will be called from this day forth to conflict, as Moses stood before Pharaoh, and had to face the wrath of the king. May you confound your adversaries and be very mighty for your God! Possibly God intends to give you success in your service—like Moses, you will bring out Israel from under bondage. May “the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush” keep you sober in success and humble in prosperity! Perhaps before you there shall soon be a difficulty as great as that which met the children of Israel before Pharaoh—you will come to the Red Sea—the rocks will be on either hand. Pursuers may be behind you. May the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush and was with Moses, be with you in the hour of stern trial. Through your Red Sea, may the Lord lead you, as He led the children of Israel like a flock!  
Perhaps you will be subject to many provocations, as Moses was from the people whom he loved. They spoke of stoning him. They murmured against the Lord and against His servant, Moses. May you be as meek as Moses, because the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush shall overshadow you! Possibly you may have a long life of Christian service before you. It may be for 40 years you will have to carry a people in your bosom, and nurture them for the Lord. My Brothers in the ministry, I wish the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush to be with you through all your toilsome tasks. Perhaps you are soon to die. Old age is creeping upon you. May you die like Moses, blessing the people with the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush with you to your last moment! And may your spirit climb her Pisgah and look from the top of Nebo, and have a view of the Glory to be revealed—the brooks that flow with milk and honey, and the goodly land! May you see it, even unto Lebanon, and in those last moments of yours, before your spirit melts into Glory, may “the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush” still be with you! Beloved, this is wished to you all! And I speak not my wish, but the benediction of the Lord upon all His servants, “The good will of Him that dwelt in the bush be with you.” But, alas, all here are not servants of God. Yet even to them will I—  
III. ANXIOUSLY DESIRE THAT THIS WISH MAY BE FULFILLED TO YOU ALL.  
Oh, Sinner, tonight may He that dwelt in the bush call you! Moses little thought of it. He was keeping sheep, but a burning bush was enough to attract him. These few simple, feeble, but affectionate words, may, perhaps, be like the bush to you. Or if not, perhaps, a trouble at home will come and be like a thorn bush to you. I pray it may, and may God be in the bush! I do desire that God would in some way speak to you careless ones and arrest you, for you must come to know Him, or you will everlastingly perish! And may you be humbled in the Presence of God, each one of you, as Moses was, for he took off his shoes, feeling that the place whereon he stood was holy ground, and he was unholy. May you feel the solemnity of your position—a dying man soon to meet his Maker—a guilty man soon to meet his Judge—a despiser of Christ soon to see Christ on His Throne! O Soul, may you put off your carelessness and have done with your neglect, and begin to pray! And as the Lord of the burning bush said to Moses that He knew the sorrows of his people, I do pray, oh Sinner, that when you stand humbly before the Presence of God, you may see that God has pity upon you! May you look to Jesus on the Cross and see where He was like a bush that was burned with the anger of God, though not consumed—and may you, as you look, hear Him say, “I know your sorrows, for I have borne your sins and carried your transgressions for you.” And oh, may you find peace tonight!  
Oh, it does not matter whether it is the back side of the desert, or the back gallery of the Tabernacle, or down below, beneath the galleries, or where it is—it will be a blessed spot to you if you find God tonight! Moses could never forget that spot near to Horeb, neither will you if the Lord should appear to you! It matters not who the preacher is, though he should be no more than a bush, yet shall he be an angel of God to you! The Lord grant that such an appearance may come to you by faith. May you look to Christ tonight, for, if not, you will have to see God, by-andby, as a consuming fire! And remember this word, “Beware, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you!” May you never know the meaning of that, but on the contrary, may “the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush” be with you! Amen and amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **EXODUS 3.**

Verse 1. Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. It must have been a great change for Moses, after 40 years in the court of Pharaoh, to be spending another 40 years in the wilderness. But it was not wasted time—it required the first two periods to make Moses fit for the grand life of the last forty. He must be a prince and he must be a shepherd, that he might be both a ruler and a shepherd to God’s people, Israel. He must be much alone. He must have many solitary conversations with his own heart. He must be led to feel his own weakness. And this will be no loss of time to him—he will do more in the last 40 years because of the 80 years thus spent in preparation! And it is not lost time that a man takes in putting on his harness before he goes to the battle, or that the reaper spends in sharpening his scythe before he cuts down the corn.

2. And the Angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, but the bush was not consumed. How near God seemed in those ages when He could be beheld in a bush or sitting under an oak! And is He not equally near us if we are but prepared for His Presence? Surely pure eyes are scarce, or sights of God would be more frequent, for “the pure in heart shall see God.”

3-5. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said. Here am I. And He said, Draw not near here: take off your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. God is not to be viewed by curiosity—He is not to be approached by presumption. A holy trembling well becomes the man who would commune with the Most Holy God. We are not fit for communion with God without some measure of preparation. There is something to be put off before we can behold the Lord.

6. Moreover He said, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. Partly because of the universal superstition that if God appeared to any man, he would surely die—but in Moses’ case, perhaps more because of an appreciation of the holiness of God and of his own unworthiness. There is not a man among us but who must do as Moses did if we are in a right state of mind. They who think they are perfect might presume to look, but they who are truly so, as Moses was, would, as he did, hide his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

7. And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows. Beautiful verse. God had seen and God had heard, as if their griefs had had two avenues to His heart. God sees not with eyes, and hears not with ears, as we do, but He speaks after the manner of men, and He says by two ways they had reached his very soul—“I have surely seen the affliction—I have heard their cries.” And then He adds, as if to show the perfection of His sympathy with them, “I know their sorrows.” Now it is quite true today concerning us and concerning our God—He has seen, He has heard and He knows—“I know their sorrows.” When the sorrow is known, then God begins to work. He is no passive spectator of the misery of His chosen, but His hands go with His heart.

8. And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good and a large land, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. “Now, therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto Me,” and when the cry of God’s children goes unto Him, depend upon it, there will be something moving before long! When a father hears the cries of his children, when a mother hears the cry of her baby, it is not long before there will be a movement of the heart and of the hands! I am sure, Brothers and Sisters, there have been crises in English history which have been entirely due to the prayers of God’s people. There have been singular occurrences which the mere reader of history cannot understand, but there is a number still alive who wait upon God in prayer, and they make history. There is more history made in the closet than in the cabinet of the ministry. There is a greater power at the back of the throne than the carnal eye can see, and that power is the cry of God’s children!

9-10. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come unto Me: and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send you unto Pharaoh, that you may bring forth My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt. I do not wonder that Moses opened his eyes when he knew what a poor creature he was for God to say, “Come now, therefore, and I will send you unto Pharaoh”—the very man whose life was sought by Pharaoh—“I will send you unto Pharaoh”—the man who had been rejected by his own people when he took their part—“You may bring forth My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” Oh, let us be ready for any commission! If God were to say that He would build up Heaven by the poorest and meanest among us, it would not be for us to draw back! Let Him do what He wills with us! Oh, for a faith to believe that in the midst of our weakness, God’s strength would appear.

—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 #2062 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

SHOES OF IRON AND STRENGTH SUFFICIENT—A NEW YEAR’S PROMISE  
NO. 2062

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, JANUARY 6, 1889.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON ON THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 29, 1888.

**“And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren and let him dip his foot in oil. Your shoes shall be iron and brass; and as your days, so shall your strength be.” Deuteronomy 33:24-25.**

I ONCE heard an old minister say that he thought the blessing of Asher was peculiarly the blessing of ministers. And his eyes twinkled as he added, “At any rate, they are usually blessed with children and it is a great blessing for them if they are acceptable to their Brethren and if they are so truly anointed that they even dip their foot in oil.” Well, well, I pray that all of us who preach the Gospel may enjoy this triplet of blessings in the highest sense. If our quiver is not full of children according to the flesh, yet may we have many born unto God through our ministry.

May we be blessed by being made spiritual fathers to very many who shall be brought by us to receive life, pardon, peace and holiness through our Lord Jesus. What is the use of our life if it is not so? To what end have we preached unless we see souls born into the family of Divine Grace? My inmost soul longs to see all my hearers born anew—this would be my greatest joy, my highest blessing.

Ask for me the blessing of Asher—“Let Asher be blessed with children.” And may the Lord make my spiritual offspring to be as the sands upon the seashore.

It is a great blessing from the Lord when our speech is sweet to the ears of saints—when we have something to bring forth which our Brethren in Christ can accept and which comes to them with a peculiar preciousness and power so that they can receive it and feel that it is thoroughly acceptable to them. We do not wish to be acceptable to the worldly wise, nor to the error-hunters of the day. But we are very anxious to be pleasant to the Lord’s own children—our Brothers and Sisters in Christ. They have a holy taste whereby they discern spiritual meats and we would bring forth for food that which they will account to be nourishing and savory. Every minister prays to be “acceptable to his Brethren.”

And what could we do without the third blessing, namely that of unction? “Let him dip his foot in oil.” Oh, for an anointing of the Holy Spirit, not only upon the head with which we think, but upon the foot with which we move! We would have our daily walk and conversation gracious and useful. We wish that wherever we go, we may leave behind us the print of

Divine Grace. I was asking concerning a preacher what kind of man he was, and the simple, humble cottager, answered me, “Well, Sir, he is this kind of man—if he comes to see you, you know that he has been.”

We must not only have oil in the lamps of our public ministry but oil in the vessels of our private study. We need the holy oil everywhere upon every garment, even down to our shoes. I know that there are mockers who scoff at the very mention of unction. But I pray that to myself and my Brethren the promise may be fulfilled, “He shall dip his foot in oil.” Such a man, anointed with fresh oil, holds an unquestioned office, enjoys an unfailing freshness and exercises an effectual influence. Wherever he goes you see his footprints, for his foot has been dipped in oil.

Well, now, if these three blessings are good for ministers, they are equally good for all sorts of workers. You in the school, you who visit tract districts, you who manage mothers’ meetings and you who in any shape or form endeavor to make Christ known, may you have the threefold blessing! The Lord give you many spiritual children—may you be blessed with them and never be without additions to their number! The Lord make you acceptable to those among whom you labor. And the Lord grant you always to go forth in His strength, anointed with His Spirit!

That is the first part of our text and I am not going to say any more about it, as the second part is that to which I shall call your especial attention. May the Holy Spirit make the promise exceeding sweet to you and grant you a full understanding of it. “Your shoes shall be iron and brass. And as your days, so shall your strength be.”

There are two things in the text—shoes and strength—we will talk about these two, hoping to possess them both.  
I. “YOUR SHOES SHALL BE IRON AND BRASS.” That is a very great promise and I fear that I shall not be able to bring out all its meaning in one discourse.  
I find that the passage has several translations. And, though I think that which we have now before us is by far the best, yet I cannot help mentioning the others for I think they are instructive. These interpretations may serve me as divisions in opening up the meaning. I take it as a rule that the Lord’s promises are true in every sense which they will fairly bear. A generous man will allow the widest interpretation of his words and so will the infinitely gracious God.  
This promise meant that Asher should have treasures under his feet— that there should, in fact, be mines of iron and copper within the boundaries of the tribe. Metals enrich nations and help their advancement in many ways. Tribes that possess minerals are thereby made rich, whatever metals those may be. But such useful metals as iron and copper would prove of the utmost service to the people of that time if they knew how to use them. Is there any spiritual promise at all in this? Asher is made rich and iron and copper lay beneath his feet. Are saints ever made rich with treasures under their feet? Undoubtedly they are.  
The Word of God has mines in it. Even the surface of it is rich and it brings forth food for us. But it is with Scripture, as Job says, it is with the earth—“As for the earth, out of it comes bread: and under it is turned up as it were fire. The stones of it are the place of sapphires: and it has dust of gold.” There are treasures upon the surface of the Word which we may pick up very readily—even the casual reader will find himself able to understand the simplicities and elements of the Gospel of God.  
But the Word of God yields most to the digger. He that can study hard and press into the inner meaning—he is the man that shall be enriched with riches current in heavenly places. Every Bible student here will know that God has put under his feet great treasures of precious teaching and he will by meditation sink shafts into the deep places of Revelation. I wish we gave more time to our Bibles. We waste too much time upon the pretentious, poverty-stricken literature of the age. And some, even Christian people, are more taken up with works of fiction than they are with this great Book of everlasting fact. We should prosper much more in heavenly farming if we would “dig deep while sluggards sleep.” Remember that God has given us treasures under our feet. But do not despise His gifts as to leave the mines of Revelation unexplored.  
You will find these treasures, not only in the Word of God, but everywhere in the Providence of God if you will consider the ways of the Lord and believe that God is everywhere at work. He that looks for a Providence will not be long without seeing one. All events are full of teaching to the man that has but Divine Grace and wit to interpret them. “Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.” There shall be treasures under your feet if your feet keep to the ways of the Truth of God. A rich land is the country along which Believers travel to their rest—its stones are iron and out of its heart you may dig brass.  
“Who is wise and he shall understand these things? Prudent and he shall know them? For the ways of the Lord are right.” The Revised Version has it, “Your bars shall be iron and brass.” And certainly the original text bears that meaning. “Your bars shall be iron and brass”—there shall be protection around him. The city gates shall be kept fast against the enemy, so as to preserve the citizens. The slaughtering foe shall not be able to intrude—instead of the common wooden bar, which might be sufficient in more peaceful times, there shall be given bars of metal, not easily cut in sunder or removed.  
Herein I see a spiritual blessing for us, also. What a mercy it is, when God strengthens our gates and secures the bars so that, when the enemy comes, he is not able to enter or to molest us! Peace from all assaults, safety under all alarms, shutting in from all attacks—this is a priceless gift. Happy are the people who have God for their Protector! Blessed are they who rest in the sure promises and faithfulness of God, for they may laugh their enemies to scorn. O Brethren, how safe are they whose trust is in the living God and in His Covenant and promise!  
Personally I know what this means. I have rested as calmly in the center of the battle as ever I have reposed in the deepest calm—with all against me I am as quiet in soul as when everyone called himself my friend. It is true—“Your bars shall be iron and brass.” Still, I like the old version best and the original certainly bears it, “Your shoes shall be iron and brass.” The Revised Version puts this in the margin—“he shall have protection for his feet.” The chief objection that has been raised to this is that it would be a very unusual thing for shoes to be made of iron and brass. Such a thing is not heard of anywhere else in Scripture, neither is it according to Oriental custom.  
For that reason I judge that the interpretation is the more likely to be correct, since the protection which God gives to His people is unusual. No other feet shall wear so singular a covering. But those who are made strong in the Lord shall be able to wear shoes of iron and the Lord shall give them sandals of brass. As Og, the King of Bashan, was of the race of the giants and “his bedstead was a bedstead of iron,” so shall the Lord’s champions wear shoes of iron. Theirs is no common equipment, for they are no common people.  
God’s people are a peculiar people and everything about them is peculiar. Even if the poetry of the passage would not bear to run upon all fours, there is no reason why it should, since it only relates to shoes. We may be quite content to take the notion of iron and brazen shoes with all its strangeness and even let the strangeness be a commendation of it. You have peculiar difficulties, you are a peculiar people, you traverse a peculiar road, you have a peculiar God to trust in and you may, therefore, find peculiar consolation in a peculiar promise—“Your shoes shall be iron and brass”—  
*“With shoes of iron and of brass,  
Over burning chemicals your feet shall pass, Tread dragons down, from fear set free;  
For as your day your strength shall be.*  
But what does this mean—“Your shoes shall be iron and brass”? Are there not several meanings? Does it not mean that our feet, tender and unprotected by nature, shall receive protection—protection from God? Our feebleness and necessity shall call upon God’s Grace and skill and He will provide for us and give to us exactly what we, by reason of our feebleness, so much need.  
We want to have shoes of iron and brass, first, to travel with. We are pilgrims. We journey along a road which has not been smoothed by a steamroller, but remains rough and rugged as the path to an Alpine summit. We push on through a wilderness where there is no way. Sometimes we traverse a dreary road, comparable to a burning sand. At other times sharp trials afflict us as if they cut our feet with flints. Our journey is a maze, a labyrinth—the Lord leads us up and down in the wilderness and sometimes we seem further from Canaan than ever.  
Seldom does our march take us through gardens—often it leads us through deserts. We are always traveling, never long in one stay. Sometimes the fiery cloudy pillar rests for a little but it is only for a little. “Forward,” is our watchword! We have no abiding city here. We pitch our tent by the wells and palms of Elim but we strike it in the morning, when the silver bugle sounds, “Up and away!” And so we march to Marah, or to the place of the fiery serpents. Ever onward, ever forward, ever moving! This is our lot. Be it so. Our equipment betokens it—we have appropriate shoes for this perpetual journey. We are not shod with the skins of beasts but with metals which will endure all wear and tear. Is it not written, “Your shoes shall be iron and brass”? However long the way, these shoes will last to the end.  
Perhaps I address some friend whose way is especially rough. You seem to be more tried than anybody else. You reckon yourself to be more familiar with sorrow than anyone you know—affliction has marked you for its own. I pray you take home this promise to yourself by faith—the Lord says to you, “Your shoes shall be iron and brass.” This special route of yours, which is beset with so many difficulties—your God has prepared you for it. You are shod as none but the Lord’s chosen are shod. If your way is singular, so are your shoes. You shall be able to traverse this thorny road—to journey along it with profit to yourself and with glory to God.  
For your traveling days you are well fitted, for your shoes are iron and brass—  
*“If the sorrows of your case  
Seem peculiar still to you,  
God has promised needful grace,  
‘As your days, your strength shall be.’ ”*  
Shoes of iron remind us of military array—they are meant to fight with. Brethren, we are soldiers, as well as pilgrims. These shoes are meant for trampling upon enemies. All sorts of deadly things lie in our way and it is by the help of these shoes that the promise is made good. “You shall tread upon the lion and adder. The young lion and the dragon shall you trample under foot.” Are we not often too much like the young man Jether, who was bidden by his father to slay Zebah and Zalmunna but he was afraid? We tremble to put our foot upon the neck of the enemy. We fancy that if we should attempt it, we should be guilty of presumption. Let us have done with this false humility, for thus we dishonor the Lord’s promise— “Your shoes shall be iron and brass.”  
Better far to say, “Through You will we push down our enemies— through Your name will we tread them under that rise up against us.” Thus we may say without fear, for assuredly “The Lord shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly.” “O my Soul, you have trod down strength,” said the holy woman of old, when the adversaries of Israel had been routed. Thus can our exultant spirits also take up the chant. I also can say, “O my Soul, you have trod down strength.” Yes, Believer, with your foot you have crushed your foe, even as your Lord, who came on purpose that He might break with His foot, even with His bruised heel, the head of our serpent adversary.  
Be not afraid, therefore, in the day of conflict, to push onward against the foe. Do not be afraid to seize the victory which Christ has already secured for you. “Your shoes shall be iron and brass”—you shall trample down your foe and march unharmed to victory.  
What a blessing it is when we get self under our feet! We shall have good use for iron shoes if we keep him there. What a mercy it is when you get a sinful habit under your feet! You will need shoes of brass to keep it there. What a mercy it is when some temptation that you have long struggled with at last falls to the ground and you can set your foot upon it! You need to have both of your shoes strengthened with iron, and hardened with brass, that you may bruise this spiritual enemy and crush out its life. Feet shod with sound metal of integrity and firmness will be none too strong in this evil world, where so many, like serpents, are ready to bite at our heels. Only so shod shall we win the victory. See, the Lord promises that we shall have shoes suitable alike for traveling and for trampling upon enemies!  
Next, we have shoes fit for climbing. One interpreter thinks that the sole of the shoe was to be studded with iron or copper nails. Certainly those who climb would not like to go with the smooth soles which suit us in our parlors and drawing rooms. There are many instances where a rough tip of iron, or a strong nail in the heel of the shoe, has checked the slipping mountaineer when gliding over a shelving rock and there he has stayed on the very brink of death. Our spiritual life is an upward climb with constant danger of a fall. It is a great mercy to have shoes of iron and brass in our spiritual climbing, that should our feet be almost gone, we may find foothold before we are utterly cast down.  
We ought to climb—the higher our spiritual life the better. It is written of the Believer, “He shall dwell on high.” We ought not to be satisfied till we reach the highest places of knowledge, experience and practice. High doctrine is glorious doctrine, high experience is blessed experience, high holiness is heavenly living. Many souls always keep in the plains—the simple elements are enough for them. And, thank God, they are enough for salvation and for comfort. But if you want the richest delight and the highest degree of Divine Grace, climb the hills and roam among the mysteries of God, the sublime Revelations of His Divine will.  
Especially climb into the Doctrines of Grace—be not afraid of electing love, of special redemption, of the Covenant and all that is contained in it. Be not afraid to climb high, for if your feet are dipped in the oil of Divine Grace, they shall also be so shod that they shall not slip. Trust in God and you shall be as Mount Zion, which can never be removed. Your shoes shall be iron and brass for lofty thought and clear knowledge, if you commit your mind to the instruction of the Lord. Receiving nothing except as you find it in the Word—but in a childlike spirit receiving everything that you find there—you shall stand upon your high places. Your feet shall be like hinds’ feet and your place of abode shall be above the mists and clouds of earth’s wretched atmosphere of doubt.  
Rise, also, to the highest graces and the noblest virtues. As is the food we feed on, such should our actions be. Let us love, for God is love and as dear children we must be imitators of Him in all gentleness, tenderness and forgiveness. Climb to the heights of self-denial, the summits of consecration. Be as near Heaven as is possible for those who dwell on earth. Have you not the shoes to climb with? Why tarry down below? I will not press this longer upon you, for I hope that your hearts aspire to climb up where your Lord reveals Himself in clearer light.  
But, lest you should be at all afraid of the climbing as the aged man is afraid of that which is high, I would arouse you to a holy bravery, since God has not given you shoes of iron and brass merely to trip over the plains. He means you to climb. Your equipment prove it. Will you be as the children of Ephraim, who, being armed and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle? Will you be shod with iron and melt like wax under a little heat of opposition?  
Once more—these shoes are for traveling, for trampling, for climbing. They are also made of iron and brass for perseverance. You would not need such shoes for a little bit of a run—for a trip up the street and back again. Since the Lord has shod you in this fashion, it is a warning to you that the way is long and weary and the end is not soon. The Lord has furnished you with shoes that will not wear out. “Old shoes and clouted” were good enough for Gibeonites but they are not fit for Israelites. The Lord does not mean that you should be arrayed as beggars, or become lame through worn-out shoes.  
The sacred Canticle, in one of its verses, says, “How beautiful are your feet with shoes, O prince’s daughter!” The princes of the heavenly household shall be shod according to their rank and this shall be the case at the end of their journey as surely as at the beginning. Whether Israel traversed sand or rock, the camp never halted because the people had become lame. For the Lord had said, “Your shoes shall be iron and brass.” It is a good pair of shoes that lasts a man for forty years. And there are some of us who can testify that God’s Grace has furnished us with spiritual shoes of that kind. I can speak of nearly that length of time since I knew the Lord and I bear my unhesitating witness that I have found the Grace of God

all-sufficient and His promises most sure and steadfast.  
If we are allowed to live till we touch the borders of a century, or if we even fulfill our hundred years, these shoes would never be too old. These are the sort of shoes that Enoch wore. And was it not for more than three hundred years that he walked with God? He was always walking, but his shoes of iron and brass were never worn out. It matters not, dear Friend, how severe may your trials and troubles are. Or how long may your pilgrimage through this wilderness be, God, who gives these extraordinary shoes—such as no other has ever fashioned and such as men are not accustomed to wear—has in this provided you against the utmost of endurance, the extremity of suffering.  
“Your shoes shall be iron and brass”—does not this symbol signify the best, the strongest, the most lasting, and the most fitting provision for a pilgrimage of trial? Your shoes shall last as long as you shall last. You shall find them as good as new when you are about to lie down on your last bed, to be gathered to your fathers. “Your shoes shall be iron and brass.”  
I may be addressing some here that are very low in spirit—they fear that they shall not hold on their way, they are ready to stop, yes, ready to lie down in despair. I trust the way will hold you on when you can hardly hold on your way. May you hear the ring of your iron sandals and be ashamed of cowardice. They should be iron men to whom God has given iron shoes. I would encourage you to go forward in the way, for you are, by God’s Grace, made fit for traveling. You are not bare-footed, nor badly shod. You ought to go forward bravely, after your heavenly Father has put such shoes as these upon your feet. You are shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace and you may trip lightly on your way.  
And again I say, though that way should be a very long one, you need not think that your provision for the way will fail you. Even to gray hairs the Lord will be with you. He has made and He will bear. Even He will carry you. Your last days shall be better than your first days. Yes, you shall go from strength to strength through His abounding and faithful love.  
I find great difficulty in speaking tonight, because of some failure of my voice. But the Divine promise is so sweet that even when poorly uttered it has a music all its own. For fear my voice should quite fail me, I will hasten on to say a few words upon the second point. We have examined the shoes, now let us consider the strength.  
II. “AS YOUR DAYS, SO SHALL YOUR STRENGTH BE.” This provision is meant to meet weakness. The words carry a tacit hint to us that we have no strength of our own but have need of strength from Above. Our proud hearts need such a hint. Often we poor creatures begin to rely upon ourselves. Although we are weak as water, we get the notion that our own wit, or our own experience may now suffice us, though once they might not have done so. But our best powers will not suffice us now any more than in our youth.  
If we begin to rest in ourselves it will not be long before we find out our folly. The Lord will not let His people depend upon themselves—they may make the attempt but, as surely as they are His people, He will empty them from vessel to vessel and make them know that their fullness dwells in Christ and not in themselves. Remember, if you have a sense of weakness, you have only a sense of the Truth of God. You are as weak as you think you are. You certainly do not exaggerate your own helplessness. The Savior has said, “Without Me, you can do nothing.” And that is the full extent of what you can do.  
The Lord promises you strength which He would have no need to promise you if you had it naturally apart from Him. But He promises to give it and therein He assures you that you need it. Come down from your selfesteem—stoop from the notion of your own natural ability—divest yourself of the foolish idea that you can do anything in, and of yourself, and come down to the strong for strength and ask your Lord to fulfill this promise in your experience, “As your days, so shall your strength be.”  
The strength which is here promised is to abide through days. “As your days, so shall your strength be.” Not for today, only, but for tomorrow— and for every day—as every day shall come. The longest and the shortest day, the brightest and the darkest day, the wedding and the funeral day, shall each have its strength measured out, till there shall be no more days. The Lord will portion out to His saints their support even as their days follow each other—  
*“Days of trial, days of grief,  
In succession you may see;  
This is still your sweet relief,  
‘As your day, your strength shall be.’ ”*  
This strength is to be given daily We shall never have two days’ Grace at a time—  
*“Day by day the manna fell—  
Oh, to learn this lesson well,  
‘Day by day’ the promise reads—  
Daily strength for daily needs!”*  
If I get strength enough to get through this sermon, I shall be satisfied for the present. I do not want strength to get through next Sabbath morning’s sermon till that Sabbath morning comes. If I can weather the present storm, I shall not just now require the strength to outlive the storms of all the year 1889.  
What should I do with this reserve force if I had it? Where would you store away your extra Grace? You would put it in the lumber-room of your pride, where it would breed worms and become an offense. A storage of what you call “grace” would turn into self-sufficiency. “As your days, so shall your strength be”—this secures you a day’s burden and a day’s help, a day’s sorrow and a day’s comfort. After all, what more do we want? If a man has a meal, let him give thanks for it—he does not want two meals at once. If a man has enough for the day, he certainly is not yet in want for tomorrow.  
He cannot eat tomorrow’s food today. Or, if he did, it would injure his health and be of no comfort to him. Let us narrow our vision as to the necessities of daily life, not looking so far ahead as to compress into today more evil than naturally belongs to it. For “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Our strength is to be given to us daily. And then the text seems to say clearly that it will be given to us proportionately, “As your days, so shall your strength be.” A day of little service, little strength. A day of little suffering, little strength. But in a tremendous day—a day that needs you to play the Samson—you shall have Samson’s strength.  
A day of deep waters in which you shall need to swim, shall be a day in which you shall ride the billows like a seabird. Do you not think that this might almost tempt us to wish for days of great trial, in order that we might receive great Grace? If we are always to go smoothly and to receive but little grace in consequence, we shall never rise to the great things of the Divine life. We shall be dwarfs and none shall say, “There were giants in those days.” We may not wish to be always children with boyish tasks and childish duties. It is right we should grow and that in consequence we should shoulder burdens from which youthful backs are exempt.  
Who would wish to be always a little child? Great Grace will be sent to us to meet our great necessities. And is not that a most desirable thing? I remember that for a long season the Lord was very gracious to me in the matter of funds for the extensive works which I have been called upon to originate and superintend—and I felt very grateful for the ease which I enjoyed. Yet it crossed my mind that I was learning less of God than in more trying seasons and I trembled. Years gone by there were considerable necessities which did not appear to be met at once and I went with them to God in prayer and I trusted Him and He supplied my needs in such a wonderful way that I seemed to have the closest communion with Him. I could most plainly see His hand stretched out to help me. I could see Him working for me as gloriously as if He wrought miracles. These were glorious days with me! I cannot tell you what holy wonder often filled my soul when the Lord interposed on behalf of the Orphanage or the College. The record reads so charmingly that unbelievers would never accept it as true. Then God made me by Divine Grace like one who steps from the summit of one mountain to another—I stepped across the valleys, leaving the deep places far below. So in my easy seasons I thought to myself, “Everything comes in regularly and abundantly. I am like a little child walking along a smooth lawn. This is but a common, ordinary state of affairs, in which even a man of no faith could pursue his way. I do not see so much of God, though assuredly I ought to see Him as clearly now as ever.”  
I did not wish for necessities but I remembered how the Lord glorified Himself in them, and therefore I half desired them. The regular blessing day by day, almost without need of special prayer, does not constrain you to look to God so vividly as when you gaze down into the deep, dark abyss of want and feel, “If He does not help me now, I shall soon be in dire distress.” This forces forth the living prayer, “Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and He saved them out of their distresses.” Our great necessities bring God so very near to us, so manifest to our consciousness that they are an unspeakable blessing.  
But I did not ask to have a time of need! I hope that I shall never be so foolish as that. But when I found a time of need hurrying up, as I soon did, I felt a special delight in it—I took pleasure in my necessities. My heart cried,” Now I shall see my Lord! Now I shall see Him again. Now I shall get a hold of that great arm and hang upon it and I shall see how the Lord will deliver me in time of need.” I did thus lay hold upon my Lord again and I found Him still God All-Sufficient, for which I bless His name. In proportion as He sends the trial He sends the help. Be not, therefore, afraid of great trial—on the contrary, look for it, and when it comes, say to yourselves, “Now for great Grace. Now for a special manifestation of the faithfulness of God.”  
Mark, again, that strength will be given to us in all forms. “As your days, so shall your strength be.” Our days vary, our trials change. Our service varies, too. Our lives are far from being monotonous—they are musical with many notes and tones. Our present state is like checkered work—or, say, as a mosaic of many colors. But the strength that God gives varies with the occasion. He can bestow physical strength and mental strength and moral strength and spiritual strength. He gives strength just where the strength is needed and of that peculiar kind which the trial demands. We have no need to fear because we feel weak in a certain direction—if we need strength in that special quarter, the strength will come there.  
“But if I am tried,” says one, “in a certain way, I shall fail.” No, you will not. “As your days, so shall your strength be.” “I am horrified,” says one, “at the thought of having to pass through the ordeal of a surgical operation.” Do not be horrified at it. For though at the present moment you may be quite unfit for the trial, you will be quite ready for it when it comes. Have you ever been in great danger and found yourself cool and calm beyond anything you could have expected? It has been so with me, and I have learned from my experience not to measure what I shall be in a trying hour, by what I happen to be just now. The Lord will take care to fit us for our future and as our days, so shall our strength be.  
I find that some persons read this passage thus—“When our days grow many and we come to the end, yet our strength shall be equal to what it was in the days of our youth. We shall, according to this, find our strength continuing as our days continue.” It is a cheering meaning, certainly. The children of God do find that, spiritually, their strength is renewed day by day. The outer man decays, that is nature—but the inward man is renewed day by day, that is Divine Grace. As your days are, so shall your strength continue to be. “Even the youths shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fail: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.”  
Though days come one after another, so shall strength come with them. There shall be such a continuity of perpetual renewal that the heart shall be strong even to the end of life and the old man shall know no inward decay. An hour or so ago, I stood by what will certainly be the deathbed of one of our best friends and I was cheered and comforted when I heard him so blessedly speaking both of the present with its pain and of the future with its near descent into the valley of death. He said, “I have no doubt as to my eternal bliss. I have had no doubt—no, not a shadow of doubt—of my interest in Christ through my long illness. In fact, I have felt a perfect rest of mind about it all. And,” he added, “this is nothing more than ought to be with us who listen to the glorious Gospel, for we live on good spiritual meat.  
“Sound doctrine should make us strong in the Lord. I have not been a hearer of yours for thirty years and heard of Covenant love and faithfulness, to die with a trembling hope. I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him.” Thus, dear Friends, shall we also be supported, for the Brother of whom I speak is a simple-minded man who makes no pretensions to learning but is one of our own selves. It will be a great privilege to find that when death’s days come—the days of sickness and decline and weakness—yet still our strength remains the same. It will be glorious to go from strength to strength and even in the day of utter physical prostration to find the spirit leaping for joy in anticipation of the time when it shall be free from the cumbering clay and shall stretch its wings and fly aloft to yonder world of joy. Yes, as our days our strength shall be.  
Come, child of God, be peaceful, be happy in the prospect of the future. Do more, be joyous and show your joy. You are out of harm’s reach, for Christ has you in His hand. You shall never be staggered nor overcome, for the Lord is your strength and your song and He has become your salvation. This text is a royal banquet for you. Here are fat things full of marrow. Eat abundantly, O Beloved. Feel your spirit renewed by the Holy Spirit. Be prepared for whatever is yet to come. For such a word as this, not from me, but from the Lord Himself, may gird up your loins for another march towards Canaan—“Your shoes shall be iron and brass and as your days, so shall your strength be.”  
I am sorry, very sorry, for those among you who have no portion and lot in such a promise as this. Whatever you may have in this world, you are very poor in losing such a promise as this. You are shoeless, or if you have some wooden shoe, it will soon be worn out. You will never be able to travel to Heaven in any shoes that mortal men can make for you. You need to go to the great Father, who alone can say, “Put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet.” I am sorry for you in your present condition, for you have no strength but your own, and that is a poor piece of weakness.  
You are troubled even now—what will you do in the swellings of Jordan? The common footmen of daily life have wearied you—what will you do when you have to contend with horses? O Souls, what will you do when you are ushered into the presence of the dreaded mysteries of another world? O Sirs, you are without strength. But is not that a grand verse, “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly”? Ungodly as you are, clutch at such a word as that. “Without strength” as you are, yet lay hold upon the Lord’s strength!  
It is for those who have no strength that Christ came into the world. It is for the ungodly that He laid down His life. Come and trust Him. Let Him become your strength and your righteousness from this time forth. And my He manifest Himself to you in a special and gracious way. And unto His name shall be praise, forever and ever. Amen.

**Portion Of Scripture Read Before Sermon—Psalm 37.** HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—686, 89 (PART II), 46 (VERSE 1) LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON

BELOVED READERS—To you, one and all, may the New Year be fruitful of blessings. I wish you the text of this sermon as a benediction, so far as it is applicable to you. Specially may your feet be shod with the iron and brass which are promised you and this will be better than the glass slippers of fortune, or the silver sandals of wealth. For myself, I beg your kind remembrance when you have the ear of “the King.” I need restored strength, for I am well, but weak. And for another year of service I need that the right hand of the Lord may be laid upon me and that He should say to me, “Be strong—fear not.” He that has supplied might to our feebleness for so many years will not fail us now. Week by week the loaf will be set before you in this sermon and we shall together bless the Lord of the Feast.

With all the good wishes of the season, in sincerity and Truth, I am, your weekly visitor,  
*C. H. SPURGEON.*  
Mentone, January 1st, 1889.

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“AS YOUR DAYS, SO SHALL YOUR STRENGTH BE”  
NO. 210

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 22, 1858, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“As your days, so shall your strength be.”  
Deuteronomy 33:25.**

BELOVED, it seems a sad thing that every day must die and be followed by a night. We have seen the hills clad with verdure to their summit and the seas laving their base with a silver glory. We have stretched our eyes faraway and have seen the widening prospect full of loveliness and beauty and we have felt sad that the sunlight should ever set upon such a scene and that so much beauty should be shrouded in the oblivion of darkness. But how much reason have we to bless God for nights! If it were not for nights how much of beauty ever would be discovered?

Never should I have considered the heavens the work of Your fingers, O my God, if You had not first covered the sun with a thick mantle of darkness—the moon and the stars which You have ordained, had never been bright in my eyes, if You had not hid the light of the sun and bid him retire within the curtains of the west. Night seems to be the great friend of the stars—they must be all unseen by eyes of men were they not set in the foil of darkness. It is even so with winter. We might feel sad that all the flowers of summer must die and all the fruits of autumn must be gathered into their storehouses, that every tree must be stripped and that all the fields must lose their fair flowers.

But were it not for winter we should never see the glistening crystals of the snow. We should never behold the beauteous festoons of the icicles that hang from the eaves. Much of God’s marvelous miracles of hoarfrost would be hidden from us if it were not for the cold chill of winter, which, when it robs us of one beauty, gives us another. It takes away the emerald of verdure, it gives us the diamond of ice—it casts from us the bright rubies of the flowers, it gives us the fair white ermine of snow. Well now, translate those two ideas and you will see why it is that even our sin—our lost and ruined estate—has been made the means, in the hand of God, of manifesting to us the excellencies of His Character.

My dear Friends, if you and I had been without trouble we never could have had such a promise as this given to us—“As your days, so shall your strength be.” It is our weakness that has made room for God to give us such a promise as this. Our sins make room for a Savior. Our frailties make room for the Holy Spirit to correct them. All our wanderings make room for the Good Shepherd, that He may seek us and bring us back. We

do not love nights, but we do love stars. We do not love weakness, but we do bless God for the promise that is to sustain us in our weakness. We do not admire winter, but we do admire the glittering snow. We must shudder at our own trembling weakness but we still bless God that we are weak because it makes room for the display of His own invincible strength in fulfilling such a promise as this.

In addressing you this morning, I shall first have to notice the selfweakness which is implied in our text. Secondly, I shall come to the great promise of the text. And then I shall try and draw one or two inferences from it before I conclude.

I. First, the SELF-WEAKNESS HINTED AT IN THE TEXT. To continue my metaphor, if this promise is like a star, you know there is no seeing the stars in the daytime when we stand here upon the upper land. We must go down a deep well and then we shall be able to discover them. Now, Beloved, as this is daytime with our hearts, it will be necessary for us to go down the deep well of old recollections of our past trials and troubles. We must first get a good idea of the great depth of our own weakness before we shall be able to behold the brightness of this rich and exceeding precious promise. A self-sufficient man can no more understand this promise than a coal heaver can understand Greek—he has never been in a position in which to understand it. He has never learned his own need of another’s strength and therefore he cannot possibly understand the value of a promise which consists in giving to us a strength beyond our own. Let us for a few minutes consider our own weakness.

You children of God, have you not proved your own weakness in the day of duty? The Lord has spoken to you and He has said, “Son of man, run and do such-and-such a thing which I bid you.” And you have gone to do it, but as you have been upon your way a sense of great responsibility has bowed you down and you have been ready to turn back even at the outset and to cry, “Send whomsoever you will send, but not me.” Reinforced by strength, you have gone to the duty but while performing it, you have at times felt your hands hanging exceeding heavy and you have had to look up many a time and cry, “O Lord, give me more strength, for without Your strength this work must be unaccomplished, I cannot perform it myself.”

And when the work has been done and you have looked back upon it, you have either been filled with amazement that it should have been done at all by so poor and weak a worm as yourself, or else you have been overcome with horror because you have been afraid the work was marred, like the vessel on the potter’s wheel, by reason of your own want of skillfulness. I confess in my own position I have a thousand causes to confess my own weakness every day. In preparing for the pulpit how often do we discover our weakness when a hundred texts exhibit themselves and we know not which to choose? And when we have selected our subject, distracting thoughts come in and when we would concentrate our minds upon some holy topic we find they are carried here and there, driven about like the minds of children by every wind of thought.

And when we bow our knees to seek the Lord’s help before we preach how often does our tongue refuse to give utterance to the earnestness of our hearts? And alas, how frequently, too, is our heart cold when we are about to enter upon an occupation which requires the heart to be hot like a furnace and the lip to be burning like a live coal? Here in this pulpit I have often learned my weakness, when words have fled from me and thoughts have departed, too. And when that seal which I thought would have poured itself forth like a cataract has trickled forth in unwilling drops like a sullen stream, the source of which does almost fail and which seems itself as if it longed to be dried up and dead.

And after preaching, how have I cast myself upon my bed and tossed to and fro, groaning because I thought I had failed to deliver my message and had not preached my Master’s Word as my Master would have me preach it! All of you, in your own callings, I dare say, have had enough to prove that. I do not believe a Christian man can examine himself without finding every day that weakness is proven even in the doing of his duty. Your shop, however small, will be enough to prove to you your weakness. Your business, however little, your cares, however light, your family, however small, will furnish you with enough proofs of the fact—“Without Me you can do nothing.” “He that abides in Me and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit—for without Me you can do nothing.”

But, Beloved, we prove our weakness perhaps more visibly when we come into the day of suffering. There it is that we are weak indeed. I have sat by the side of those who have been exceedingly sick and have marked their patience. But I do not know that I ever wondered at the patience of a sick man so much as I do when I am sick myself—then patience is an extraordinary virtue. Women suffer, and suffer well. But I think there are very few men who could bear the tithe of the suffering that many women endure, without exhibiting a hundred times as much impatience. Most of us who are gifted with strong constitutions and have but little of sickness, have to chasten ourselves that what little sickness we have to contend with is borne with so little resignation and with so much impatience. We are so ready to repine, so prepared to bow our heads and wish we were dead, because a little pain is rending our body.

Here it is that we prove our weakness, indeed. Ah, People of God, it is one thing to talk about the furnace. It is another thing to be in it. It is one thing to look at the doctor’s knife, but quite another thing to feel it. You will find it one thing to sip the cup of medicine, but quite another thing to lie in bed a dreary week or month and to drink on and on and on of that nauseating draught. When you are on dry land most of you are good sailors—out at sea you are vast different. There is many a man who makes a wonderfully brave soldier till he gets into the battle and then he wishes himself miles away and except his spurs there is no weapon he can use

with much advantage. That man has never been sick who does not know his weakness, his want of patience and of endurance.

Again, Beloved, there is another thing which will very soon prove our weakness, if neither duty nor suffering will do it—namely, progress. You sit down tomorrow and you read the life of some eminent servant of God— perhaps the life of David Brainard and how he gave up his life for his Master in the wilderness. Or the heroic life of Henry Martin and how he sacrificed all for Christ. And as you read you say within yourself, “I will endeavor to be like this man. I will seek to have his faith, his self-denial, his love to never-dying souls.” Try and get them, Beloved, and you will soon find your own weakness.

I have sometimes thought I would try to have more faith but I have found it very hard to keep as much as I had. I have thought, “I will love my Savior more,” and it was right that I should strive to do so. But when I sought to love Him more I found that perhaps I was going backward instead of forward.

How often do we find out our weakness when God answers our prayers!—  
*“I asked the Lord that I might grow  
In faith and love and every grace,  
Might more of His salvation know  
And seek more earnestly His face.  
I hoped that in some favored hour  
At once He’d answer my request,  
And by His love’s constraining power,  
Subdue my sins and give me rest.  
Instead of this He made me feel  
The hidden evils of my heart,  
And let the angry power of Hell  
Assault my soul in every part.  
‘Lord why is this?’ I trembling cried  
‘Will you pursue your worm to death?’  
‘Tis in this way,’ the Lord replied,  
‘I answer prayer for grace and faith.’”*

That is, the Lord helps us to grow downward when we are only thinking about growing upward. Let any of you try to grow in grace and seek to run the heavenly race and make a little progress and you will soon find, in such a slippery road as that which we have to travel, that it is very hard to go one step forward, though remarkably easy to go a great many steps backward.

If neither of these three things will prove your weakness, Christian, I will advise you to try another. See what you are in temptation. I have seen a tree in the forest that seemed to stand fast like a rock. I have stood beneath its wide-spreading branches and have sought to shake its trunk, to see if I could, but it stood immovable. The sun shone upon it and the rain descended and many a winter’s frost sprinkled its boughs with snow, but it still stood fast and firm. But one night there came a howling wind which swept through the forest and the tree that seemed to stand so fast lay stretched along the ground, its gaunt arms which once were lifted up to Heaven lying hopelessly broken and the trunk snapped in two.

And so have I seen many a professor strong and mighty and nothing seemed to move him. But I have seen the wind of persecution and temptation come against him and I have heard him creak with murmuring and at last have seen him break in apostasy and he has lain along the ground a mournful specimen of what every man must become who makes not the Lord his strength and who relies not upon the Most High. “Ah,” says one, “I do not believe I could be tempted to sin.” My Friend, it depends upon what kind of temptation it should be. There are many of us who could not be tempted to drunkenness and others who could not he tempted to lust. If the devil should set before some of you cups of the richest wines that ever came from the vintages of Burgundy or of Xeres, you would not care for them—if you did but sip them it would suffice you.

It would be in vain to tempt you with the drunkard’s song. Nothing could induce you to lose your equilibrium by intoxicating liquors. But perhaps you are the very man whom a temptation of lust might overthrow. While there are other men whom neither lust nor wine can overcome who may be led by a prospect of profit into that which is dishonest. And others again, whom neither profit, nor lust, nor wine, would turn aside, may be overthrown by anger, or envy, or malice. We have all our tender points. When Thetis dipped Achilles in the Styx, you remember she held him by the heel. He was made invulnerable wherever the water touched him, but his heel, not being covered with the water, was vulnerable and there Paris shot his arrow and he died.

It is even so with us. We may think that we are covered with virtue till we are totally invulnerable, but we have a heel somewhere. There is a place where the arrow of the devil can make way—hence the absolute necessity of taking to ourselves “the whole armor of God,” so that there may not be a solitary joint in the harness that shall be unprotected against the arrows of the devil. Satan is very crafty. He knows the ins and outs of manhood. There is many an old castle that has stood against every attack, but at last some traitor from within has gone without and said “I know an old deserted passage, a subterranean back way that has not been used for many a day.

“In such and such a field you will see an opening. Clear away a heap of stones there and I will lead you down the passage—you will then come to an old door, of which I have the key and I can let you in. And so by a back way I can lead you into the very heart of the citadel, which you may then easily capture.” It is so with Satan. Man knows not himself so well as Satan knows him. There are back ways and subterranean passages into man’s heart which the devil does well understand. He who thinks that he is safe let him take heed lest he fall. That is not a bad hymn of Dr. Watts, after all, where he tells us that Samson was very strong while he wore his

hair, but—  
*“Samson, when his hair was lost,  
Met the Philistines to his cost:  
Shook his vain limbs with vast surprise,  
Made feeble fight and lost his eyes.”*

The reason was because there was a back way into Samson’s heart. The Philistines could not overcome him—“Heaps upon heaps, with the jawbone of an ass, have I slain a thousand men.” Come on, Philistines, he will rend you in pieces as he did the young lion. Bind him with green ropes and he will snap them in two. Weave his locks with a weaver’s beam and he will carry away loom and all and go out like a giant refreshed with new wine. But, O Delilah, he has a back way to his heart. You have found it out and now you can overthrow him. Tremble, for you may yet be overcome! You are as weak as water if God shall leave you alone.

Now, I think if we have well surveyed these different points of our moral standing on earth, every child of God will be ready to confess that he is weak. I imagine there may be some of you ready to say, “Sir, I am nothing.” Then I shall reply, “Ah, you are a young Christian.” There will be others of you who will say, “Sir, I am less than nothing.” And I shall say, “Ah, you are an old Christian.” For the older Christians get, the less they become in their own esteem, the more they feel their own weakness and the more entirely they rely upon the strength of God.

II. Having thus dwelt upon the first point, we shall now come to the second—THE GREAT PROMISE—“As your days, so shall your strength be.”

In the first place, this is a well-guaranteed promise. A promise is nothing unless I have good security that it shall be fulfilled. It is in vain for men to promise largely unless their fulfillment shall be as large as their promise—for the largeness of their promise is just the largeness of deception. But here every word of God is true. God has issued no more notes for the bank of Heaven than He can cash in an hour if He wills. There is enough bullion in the vaults of Omnipotence to pay off every bill that ever shall be drawn by the faith of man or the promises of God.

Now look at this one—“As your days, so shall your strength be.” Beloved, God has a strong reserve with which to pay off this promise. For is He not Himself omnipotent, able to do all things? Believer, till you can drain dry the ocean of omnipotence, till you can break into pieces the towering mountains of almighty strength, you never need to fear! Until your enemy can stop the course of a whirlwind with a reed—till he can twist the hurricane from its path by a word of his puny lip—you need not think that the strength of man shall ever be able to overcome the strength which is in you, namely, the strength of God. While the earth’s huge pillars stand, you have enough to make your faith firm. The same God who guides the stars in their courses, who directs the earth in its orbit, who feeds the burning furnace of the sun and keeps the stars perpetually burning with their fires—the same God has promised to supply your strength. While He is able to do all these other things, think not that He shall be unable to fulfill his own promise.

Remember what He did in the days of old, in former generations? Remember how He spoke and it was done? How He commanded and it stood fast? Do you not see Him in the black eternity? When there was nothing but grim darkness, there He stood—the mighty Artificer—upon the anvil there He cast a hot mass of flame and hammering it with His own ponderous arm, each spark that flew from it made a world. There those sparks are glittering now, the offspring of the anvil of the eternal purposes and the hymn of His own majestic might. And shall He, that created the world, grow weary? Shall He fail? Shall He break His promises for want of strength? He hangs the world upon nothing. He fixed the pillars of Heaven in silver sockets of light and thereon He hung the golden lamps, the sun and the moon—and shall He that did all this be unable to support His children?

Shall He be unfaithful to His Word for want of power in His arm or strength in His will? Remember again, your God who has promised to be your strength, is the God who upholds all things by the power of His hand. Who feeds the ravens? Who supplies the lions? Does not He do it? And how? He opens His hand and supplies the want of every living thing. He has to do nothing more than simply to open His hand. Who is it that restrains the tempest? Does not He say that He rides upon the wings of the wind, that He makes the clouds His chariots and holds the water in the hollow of His hand? Shall He fail you? When He has put such a promise as this on record, shall you for a moment indulge the thought that He has out-promised Himself and gone beyond His power to fulfill?

Ah, no. Who was it that cut Rahab in pieces and wounded the dragon? Who divided the Red Sea and made the waters thereof stand upright as a heap? Who led the people through the wilderness? Who was it that did oust Pharaoh into the depths of the sea, his chosen captains also, in the depth of the Red Sea? Who rained fire and brimstone out of Heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah? Who chased out the Canaanite with the hornet and made a way of escape for His people, Israel? Who was it that brought them again from their captivity and did settle them again in their own land? Who is He that has put down kings, yes, and slew mighty kings, that He might make room for His people wherein they might dwell in a quiet habitation? Has not the Lord done it—and is His arm shortened that He cannot save? Or is His ear heavy that He cannot hear? O You who are my God and my strength, I can believe that this promise shall be fulfilled for the boundless reservoir of Your grace can never be exhausted and the unlimited storehouse of Your strength can never be emptied or rifled by the enemy. It is, then, a guaranteed promise.

But now I want you to notice it is a limited promise. “What?” says one,

“Limited?” Why it says, ‘As your days, so shall your strength be.’ ” Yes, it is limited. I know it is unlimited in our troubles, but still it is limited. First, it says our strength is to be as our days are. It does not say our strength is to be as our desires are. Oh, how often have we thought, “How I wish I were as strong as So-and-So”—one who had a great deal of faith. Ah, but then you would have rather more faith than you wanted and what would be the good of that? It would be like the manna the children of Israel had—if they did not eat it in the day it bred worms and stank.

“Still,” says one, “If I had faith like So-and-So, I think I should do wonders.” Yes, but you would get the glory of them. That is why God does not let you have the faith, because He does not want you to do wonders. That is reserved for God, not for you—“He only does wondrous things.” Once more, it does not say our strength shall be as our fears. God often leaves us to shift alone with our fears—never with our troubles. Many of God’s people have a factory at the back of their houses in which they manufacture troubles. And home-made troubles, like other home-made things, last a very long while and generally fit very comfortably. Troubles of God’s sending are always suitable—the right sort for our backs. But those that we make are of the wrong sort and they always last us longer than God’s.

I have known an old lady to sit and fret because she believed she should die in a workhouse and she wanted God to give her grace accordingly. But what would have been the good of that? Because the Lord meant that she should die in her own quiet bedroom? I have heard of and known men who, being sick, believed they were dying and wanted grace to die complacently. But God would not give it because He intended them to live and why should He give them dying grace till they came to die? And we have known others who said they wanted grace to endure many troubles which they expected to come upon them. They were going to fail in a fortnight or so, but they did not fail and it was no wonder they had not grace given to carry them through it, because they did not require it.

The promise is, “As your days, so shall your strength be.” “When your vessel gets empty then will I fill it. I will not give you any extra, over and above. When you are weak then I will make you strong. But I will not give you any extra strength to lay by—strength enough to bear your sufferings and to do your duty. But no strength to play at matches with your Brothers and Sisters in order to get the glory to yourselves.” Oh, if we had strength according to our wishes we should soon all of us be like Jeshurun—wax fat and begin to kick against the Most High.

Then again, there is another limit. It says “As your days so shall your strength be.” It does not say, “as your weeks,” or “months,” but “as your days.” You are not going to have Monday’s grace given you on a Sunday, nor Tuesday’s grace on a Monday. You shall have Monday’s grace given you on Monday morning as soon as you rise and want it. You shall not have it given you on Saturday night. You shall have it “day by day”—no more than you want, no less than you want. I do not believe God’s people are to be trusted with a week’s grace all at once. They are like many of our London workman—they get their wages on Saturday night and then the rascals go and have Saint Monday and Saint Tuesday and never do a stroke of work till Wednesday, when they go to the pawnbrokers with their tools to help them over till the next Saturday night.

Now, I think God’s children would do the same. If they had grace given them on Saturday to last them all through the week, I question whether Satan would not get a good deal of it—whether they would not be pawning some of their old evidences before the week was out, in order to live upon them—spending all their grace on Monday and Tuesday. Spending very much of their strength in indulging in pride and boasting, instead of walking humbly with their God. No, “as your days so shall your strength be.”

Now, having said that the promise is limited, perhaps I am bound to add—what an extensive promise this is! “As your days, so shall your strength be.” Some days are very little things—in our pocket book we have very little to put down—for there was nothing done of any importance. But some days are very big days. Ah, I have known a big day—a day of great duties, when great things had to be done for God—too great, it seemed, for one man to do. And when great duty was but half done there came great trouble, such as my poor heart had never felt before.

Oh, what a great day it was! There was a night of lamentation in this place and the cry of weeping and of mourning and of death! Ah, but blessed be God’s name, though the day was big with tempest and though it swelled with horror, yet as that day was so was God’s strength. Look at poor Job. What a great day he had once! “Master,” says one, “The oxen were plowing and the asses feeding beside them and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them away.” In comes another and he says, “The fire of God has fallen on the sheep.” “Oh,” says another “The Chaldeans have fallen upon the camels and taken them away and I, only I, am left to tell you.” Still, you see, grace kept growing with the day. Still strength grew as the trouble grew. At last comes the black stroke—“A great wind came from the wilderness and smote the house where your sons and daughters were feasting and they are dead and I, only I, am left to tell you.”

Grace still kept growing and at last the grace did overflow the trouble and the poor old Patriarch cried, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” Ah, Job, that was a big day, indeed! And it was big grace that went with that big day. Satan sometimes blows up our days with his black breath till they grow to such a cursed height that we know not how great the days must be. Our head whirls at the thought of passing through such a sea of trouble in so short a space of time. But oh, how sweet it is to think that the bed of grace is never shorter than a man can stretch himself upon it. Nor is the covering of Almighty love ever shorter than that it may cover us.

We never need be afraid. If our troubles should become high as mountains, God’s grace would become like Noah’s flood—it would go twenty cubits higher till the mountains were covered. If God should send to you and to me a day such as there was none like it, neither should be any more,

he would send us strength such as there was none like it, neither should there be any more. Do you see Martin Luther riding into Worms? There is a solitary monk going before a great council—he knows they will burn him—did not they burn John Huss and Jerome of Prague? Both those men had a safe conduct and it was violated and they were put to death by Papists who said that no faith was to be kept with heretics.

Luther placed very little reliance on his safe conduct. And you would have expected as he rode into Worms that he would have a dejected countenance. Not so. No sooner does he catch sight of Worms, than someone advises him not to go into the city. Said he, “If there were as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the roofs of the houses, I would enter.” And he does ride in. He goes to the inn and eats his bread and drinks his beer, as complacently as if he were at his own fireside. And then he goes quietly to bed. When summoned before the council and asked to retract his opinion, he does not want time to consider, or debate about it. But he says, “These things that I have written are the Truth of God and by them will I stand till I die. So help me God!”

The whole assembly trembles, but there is not a flush upon the cheek of the brave monk, nor do his knees knock together. He is in the midst of armed men and those that seek his blood. There sit fierce cardinals and bloodthirsty bishops and the Pope’s legate, like spiders longing to suck his blood. He cares for none of them. He walks away and is confident that “God is his refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” “Ah, but,” you say, “I could not do that.” Yes you could, if God called you to it. Any child of God can do what any other child of God has done, if God gives him the strength. You could not do what you are doing even now, without God’s strength. But you could do ten thousand times more, if He should be pressed to fill you with His might. What an expansive promise this is!

Once more, what a varying promise it is! I do not mean that the promise varies but adapts itself to all our changes. “As your days, so shall your strength be.” Here is a fine sunshiny morning—all the world is laughing— everything looks glad. The birds are singing, the trees seem to be all alive with music. “My strength shall be as my day is,” says the pilgrim. Ah, Pilgrim, there is a little black cloud gathering. Soon it increases. The flash of lightning wounds the Heaven and it begins to bleed in showers. Pilgrim, “As your days, so shall your strength be.” The birds have done singing and the world has done laughing. But “as your days, so shall your strength be.”

Now the dark night comes on and another day approaches—a day of tempest and whirlwind and storm. Do you tremble, Pilgrim?—“As your days, so shall your strength be.” “But there are robbers in the wood.” “As your days, so shall your strength be.” “But there are lions which shall devour me.” “As your days, so shall your strength be.” “But there are rivers—how shall I swim them?” Here is a boat to carry you over. “As your days, so shall your strength be.” “But there are fires—how shall I pass through them?” Here is the garment that will protect you. “As your days so shall your strength be.” “But there are arrows that fly by day.” Here is your shield. “As your days so shall your strength be.” “But there is the pestilence that walks in darkness.” Here is your antidote. “As your days so shall your strength be.”

Wherever you may be and whatever trouble awaits you, “As your days, so shall your strength be.” Children of God, cannot you say that this has been true till now? I can. It might seem egotistical if I were to talk of the evidence I have received of this during the past week, but nevertheless I cannot help recording my praise to God. I left this pulpit last Sunday as sick as any man ever left the pulpit and I left this country, too, as ill as I could be. But no sooner had I set my foot upon the other shore, where I was to preach the Gospel, than my strength entirely returned to me! I had no sooner buckled on the harness to go forth and fight my Master’s battle than every ache and pain was gone and all my sickness fled. And as my day was, so certainly was my strength. I believe if I were lying upon a dying couch, if God called me to preach in America and I had but faith to be carried down to the boat, I should have strength given me, though I seemed to be dying, to minister as the Lord had appointed me. And so would each of you, wherever you might be, find that as your day was, so your strength should be.

And, in conclusion, what a long promise this is! You may live till you are ever so old, but this promise will outlive you. When you come into the depths of the river Jordan, “as your days, so shall your strength be.” You shall have confidence to face the last grim tyrant and grace to smile even in the jaws of the grave. And when you shall rise again in the terrible morning of the resurrection, “as your days, so shall your strength be.” Though the earth be reeling with dismay you shall know no fear. Though the heavens are tottering with confusion you shall know no trouble. “As your days, so shall your strength be.” And when you shall see God face to face, though your weakness were enough to make you die, you shall have strength to bear the beatific vision. You shall see Him face to face and you shall live. You shall lie in the bosom of your God. Immortalized and made full of strength, you shall be able to bear even the brightness of the Most High.

III. What INFERENCE shall I draw except this? Children of the living God, be rid of your doubts, be rid of your troubles and your fears. Young Christians, do not be afraid to set forward on the heavenly race. You bashful Christians, that, like Nicodemus, are ashamed to come out and make an open profession, don’t be afraid, “As your day is, so shall your strength be.” Why need you fear? You are afraid of disgracing your profession, you shall not. Your day shall never be more troublesome, or more full of temptation, than your strength shall be full of deliverance. And as for you that have not God to be yours, I must draw one inference for you. Your strength is decaying. You are growing old and your old age will not be like your youth. You have strength—strength which you prostitute to the cause of Satan, which you misuse in the service of the devil. When you grow old, as you will do—unless your wickedness shall bring you to an early grave—they that look out of the windows must be darkened and the grasshopper must be a burden to you. And your strength shall not be as your day. And when you come to die, as die you must, then you shall have no strength to die with. You must die alone. You must hear yonder iron gates creak on their hinges and no guardian angel to comfort you as you go through the dreary vault. And you must stand at God’s great bar at the day of resurrection and no one to strengthen you there. How will your cheek blanch with terror! How will your soul be affrighted with horror when you shall hear it said, “Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire in Hell, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

You have no such promise as this to cheer you onward, but you have this to drive you to despair. Your days shall become heavier, but your strength shall become lighter. Your sorrows shall be multiplied and your joys shall be diminished. Your days shall shorten and your nights shall lengthen. Your summers shall become dimmer and your winters shall become blacker. All your hopes shall die and your fears shall live. You shall reap the harvest of your sins in the dreadful vintage of eternal wrath.

May God give us all grace, so that when days and years are past, we all may meet in Heaven. There are some people here that I have seen a great many times and I thought they would have been converted before now. I ask them one question, (there are some of them whom I sincerely respect), and it is this—what will you do in the swellings of Jordan? When death shall get hold upon you, what, what will you do then? May God help you to answer and prepare to meet Him!

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #803 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

ISRAEL’S GOD AND GOD’S ISRAEL  
NO. 803

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 29, 1868, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rides upon the Heaven in your help, and in His excellency on the sky. The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He shall  
thrust out the enemy from before you;  
and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also His heavens shall drop down dew.”  
Deuteronomy 33:26-28.**

MOSES lived to be 120 years of age, and his life was divided into three periods of 40 years. The first 40 he spent as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter in the Courts of Egypt. The second in the wilderness, at the foot of Horeb, as a shepherd, and the third 40 he reigned as king in Jeshurun, leading the Lord’s people from Egypt to the borders of the promised land. Observe how each of these periods terminated. The time of his apprenticeship in Egypt concluded with his refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, his avowal of brotherhood with the afflicted Israelites, his attempt to avenge their wrongs and his consequent flight from Egypt, because of the king.

Brethren, it is to be desired that thus our original connection with the world may once and for all be snapped—we are not of it though we are in it—and may Divine Grace so work in us that, like Moses, we may count the reproach of Christ to be greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt, and, therefore, may flee from all worldly conformity, resolving to come out from among the ungodly, not touching the unclean thing, but separating ourselves, cost what it may, from the world which lies in the Wicked One. It will be well for us, if that which divides us from the world shall be as clear, sharp, definite and impassable as that which cut off Moses from Egypt.

The second part of Moses’ life was spent in the solitudes of Horeb and was concluded by a manifestation of God and a commission for service. He saw Jehovah in the burning bush—the bush burned with fire, but was not consumed—and he was bid to deliver the Lord’s message to Pharaoh. Yes, and our times of quiet meditation are good for nothing if they do not end and culminate in bright discoveries of God and a call to heavenly labor. It is of little avail to be in the wilderness unless God is seen there. Meditation and retirement shall be but as barren fields unless they yield to us the harvest of communion with the Invisible and give us sheaves of blessing for our Brethren! You bookworms, you solitary students and men of meditation, think of this and pray that your meditations may so end likewise.

The third part of his life closed with the song which is now before us. The last 40 years were crowded with events and full of trials. He was greatly vexed with the unholy spirit of the people, yet, in meekness and patience he endured with them and was tender as a nurse with her child. He led the people like a flock out of Egypt with a high hand and an outstretched arm in the midst of miracles and wonders. And, then, afterwards, for 40 years he conducted them as they went winding about through the wild desert.

A great man, indeed, was Moses in what he saw, and did, and said and suffered. His life was spent in unmeasured toil. From the day when he first went in unto Pharaoh till he climbed the steeps of Nebo, he must have been, night and day, incessantly engaged, and yet he finished his life-work with a song! Even thus let it be our prayer, that we, bearing the burden and heat of the day, may hear in our souls the voice, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter you into the joy of your Lord.” And then may we, in our departing hours, pour out a stream of praise unto our God, blessing and magnifying the Most High who has worked our works in us, and made us, unworthy as we are, to be instruments fit for His use.

We shall now consider these words which compose the last stanzas of the song of Moses. May the Holy Spirit remarkably assist me because I am, this morning, so unusually unfit for ministering among you that the weakness of the creature will be painfully manifest. Both brain and voice are choked up, but the Holy One of Israel helps our infirmities!

I. Observe, in the first place, that Moses’ song MAGNIFIES ISRAEL’S GOD. He declares, “There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rides upon the Heaven in your help, and in His excellency on the sky.” The Lord is the great joy and the delightful portion of His people. In nothing were the tribes of Israel so favored as in having the true God to be their God. This was the great glory and the peculiar privilege of the chosen people—that the only living and Most High Jehovah had manifested Himself unto them and to their fathers—had taken them to be His people, and given Himself to be their God.

Truly, when Moses looked upon the gods of Egypt, a country so superstitious that the satirist wrote of them, “O happy nation, whose gods grow in their own gardens”—when he heard the wild mythology of their idolatry, he might well have said, “There is none among them all that is like unto the God of Jeshurun.” Perhaps Moses had seen those vast catacombs of idolized animals which Egyptian discoverers have lately opened—where the crocodiles, cats, and birds which had been worshipped in life—were afterwards carefully consigned. Wise as Egypt professed to be, she preserved her dead gods in myriads.

Dead gods! Hear it and be amazed at the folly of humanity! Truly, the fancies of the most civilized nations have invented no deity comparable for a moment to the living God who made the heavens and the earth! The plagues of Egypt, as we have often been told, were all aimed against the gods of Egypt and there was not a single deity adored by Egyptians that could stand against the Most High God. The river which they adored became loathsome to them when it was turned into blood and yielded frogs in such abundance that the land stank. Their sacred insects swarmed till the very dust was full of horrible life and the land was corrupted. Vain were their soothsayers and their idols, for Jehovah laughed them to scorn!

Not only was Pharaoh put to the worst before Jehovah, but Egypt’s gods were humbled. When all the chivalry of Egypt came to the Red Sea and descended into the space which God had cleared to make a highway for His people—when the bounding billows leaped upon them, covered as they were with the emblems of their false deities, and bearing standards inscribed with idolatrous signs—there was a triumph over all the idol gods as well as over their votaries. Moses saw this, and therefore sang, “Who is like unto You, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?”

Moses was often grieved when he saw the people of Israel going back in their thoughts to the foul idolatrous house of bondage, when he knew that they were ready at any time to make the image of Isis, the golden calf, and bow before it. He mourned that they harbored the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of their god, Remphan. He must have felt a holy horror that these images of mere demons, these pieces of gilded wood and carved stone should ever be objects of Israel’s adoration. For what had they done? What could they do? They had eyes, but they could not see. They had hands, but they could not handle—feet, but they could not move! But the God of Jeshurun made the heavens and then, before their eyes, made the heavens to drop with manna! He made the earth, and for their supply made the flinty rocks to flow with rivers!

He it was who went before His people with a pillar of fire and cloud, made them victorious over all their enemies and promised to bring them into the promised land. “Well,” said the man who had seen all this, “There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun.” Brothers and Sisters, there is no fear that you or I shall worship any false god literally as Israel so basely did, yet there is still need to say, “Flee idolatry.” Among all the comforts which you now enjoy, and in which there is always the tendency for you to find idols, there is none like the God of Jeshurun! Your home, the place of your love, must always be dear to you. Your relatives and the children of God’s gift must always be the fond objects of your affection—but remember John’s words, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”

None of your dearest and most cherished loves are at all worthy to sit upon the throne of your heart—far down in the scale must they be placed when the God who gave them to you is brought into comparison. That broad bosom of your beloved husband beats fondly and faithfully—but when death lays it low, as before long it must—how wretched will be your condition if you have not an everlasting Comforter upon whose breast to lean! Those dear little sparkling eyes which are like stars in the Heaven of your social joy—if these are the gods of your idolatry, how wretched will you be when their brightness is dim, and the mother’s joy is moldering back to dust!

Happy is he who has an everlasting joy and an undying comfort—and there is none in this respect like unto the God of Jeshurun. There would be fewer broken hearts if hearts were more completely the Lord’s. We should have no rebellious spirits if, when we had our joys, we used them lawfully and did not too much build our hopes upon them. All beneath the moon will wane. Everything on these shores ebbs and flows like the sea. Everything beneath the sun will be eclipsed. You will not find in time that which is only to be discovered in eternity, namely, an immutable and unfailing source of comfort. “There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun.”

Let me remind you that this is the case with all the objects of human pursuit. Some have lived for wealth, but when they have gained it they have been disappointed with the result. Though they have heaped gold in the bag, and added house to house, and field to field, yet their aching spirit has craved still for food—for gold can no more feed a soul than dust can satisfy the hunger of the body. Some have followed the star of ambition—they would be famous and make unto themselves a name like the great men that are in the earth. And when they have gained the bubble reputation, they have wept to find that, “vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” Even the best of earthly joys pall upon the appetites of those who attain them.

Christian, stand to your God. Be it your life to live for Him that made you, to live in Him that bought you, to live with Him that chose you, to live like Him who lived and died for you. You shall find that such an object of life will satisfy all the powers and passions of your soul, for to this end your soul was formed and suited. You shall run in this race without weariness, and walk without fainting—and if you get the prize, it is one that shall not wither in your hand like the ivy wreath of Greece, or like the laurel crown of Rome. It will not decay upon your brow—for you shall win a crown of life that fades not away. Moses, in the particular words here used, seems to intimate that there is none like the God of Jeshurun as the ground of our confidence.

Now, you who have trusted in God, remember there is room for you to trust Him still more—and the more you shall confide in Him, the more emphatically will you declare, “There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun.” If we rely upon men we put trust in fickleness itself! Brethren, my own public life enables me to speak very plainly and positively here. If we trust in men, even the very best of men, either they may deceive us or else, good enough though their intentions may be, they will not be able to bear us up in times of great and serious difficulty. If we depend upon the generosity of our fellow men in carrying on the Lord’s work—especially if we depend upon committees and upon the usual machinery which is so popular nowadays—we shall very often have to cry, “Woe is me!”

But if we trust in God, there may be famine over all the world but there shall be corn in Egypt for the Lord’s people! And if every society that depends upon its subscribers goes to rack and ruin, we who depend upon the everlasting God will stand fast and firm! There are two kinds of policy adopted by the Christian Church nowadays—the one is to trust in man, and the other to trust in the living God—and I daily notice that where man is trusted to more and more, there comes the withering and the fading of the leaf. But where God is relied upon, that work becomes like a tree planted by the rivers of water, the leaf whereof does not wither and which brings forth its fruit in its season. And whatever it does is prosperous.

If I had to address any Christian minister today, I would say to him, “Let the very first point of all your Christian policy be to trust in the Lord, for cursed is he that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm; but blessed is he that trusts in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.” I say the same to every one of you, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ—place your reliance upon the Most High! Get a good leverage upon the Rock of Ages, for when you are firmly fixed there you may lift a world of difficulties and remove a mountain of troubles. Oh, to be clean delivered from every confidence which is not derived from the Covenant God of Israel! Brethren, however sharp the strokes that bring us down to this, they are blessed strokes! However bitter may be the medicines that rinse our mouths and put them out of taste with worldly confidences—I say, however bitter they are—they are all the healthier and the Lord be thanked for them!

When we drink from the pure fountain at the fountainhead and turn from the stagnant puddles of the broken cisterns, cleaving to our God, and to our God alone, we are then growing in Divine Grace, and only then. That Moses meant this, I think is clear, from the words he uses, “There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, which rides upon the Heaven in your help [to help you], and in His excellency on the sky.” Men can come to our help, but they travel slowly, creeping along the earth. Lo, our God comes riding on the heavens!

They who travel on the earth may be stopped by enemies, they certainly will be hindered. But He that rides upon the heavens cannot be stayed nor even delayed. When Jehovah’s excellency comes flying upon the sky on the wings of the wind, how gloriously are displayed the swiftness, the certainty, and the all-sufficiency of delivering Grace. God has ways to help us that we dream not of. “Your way, O God, is in the sea.” He has a way in the tempest, and the clouds are the dust of His feet. Jehovah has made for Himself a highway, a chariot road along the heavens, that His purposes of love may never be hindered. If we will but trust in God, invisible spirits shall fight for us! The great wheels of Providence shall revolve for our good, and God the Eternal, Himself, dressed in robes of war like a valiant champion, shall come forth to join us in our quarrel!

Fall back upon yourselves, lean upon your fellow creatures, trust upon earth-born confidences and you fall upon a rotten foundation that shall give way beneath you! But rest upon your God and upon your God, alone, and the stars in Heaven shall fight for you! Yes, the stars in their courses and things present and things to come, and heights, and depths, and all the creatures subservient to the will of the Omnipotent Creator shall work together for good to you, seeing that you love God and are depending upon His power. Thus, and thus sweetly, does Israel’s Prophet sing of Israel’s God.

II. The second note of the song is ISRAEL’S SAFETY. “The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” Two sentences, with a little variation of expression, containing essentially the same sense. God is first said to be the refuge of His people, that is, when they have strength enough to fly to Him He protects them. But it is delightfully added, “underneath are the everlasting arms,” that is, when they have not strength enough to flee to Him, but faint where they stand, there are His arms ready to bear them up in their utmost extremity.

First, God is the refuge of His people—and He is this, let me remind you—always and under all difficulties. If it should rain today on your journey home, you will be glad of a little shelter beneath some friendly doorway. It would not have killed you, certainly, if you had not found the refuge, but still it was comfortable to be protected. Now remember that your God is not only a shelter from the avenging tempest at the last, but from the little present trials of the day. Do we not lose very much of comfort by our forgetting that God is as willing to help us in our minor sorrows as in our major griefs? He is your refuge, dear Friend, from a little loss, a little pain, a little grief—tell Him all.

As a father thinks nothing little that belongs to his well-loved child, so will your heavenly Father think no grief too little for His notice. He who guides a sparrow and counts the hairs of your head will be a refuge for you in your daily griefs. But suppose a storm of thunder and lightning should come on today, and a perfect hurricane should blow—then some neighbor’s house would be a shelter which you would value more—and so your God is a refuge to you when your heavier griefs come on. Do not, I pray you, think that anything in Providence can be too hard for God, or that your position ever can be beyond the reach of His delivering arm.

If you have lost all, so long as you have not lost Him, your losses shall turn out to be gains. If your friends and children should sicken and die, yet you are not alone so long as the ever-living Father is with you. It is a blessed thing to learn habitually to make use of God. There is no benefit in having a friend if we do not use him by making application to him. There are some friends who would love us all the less if we were often to avail ourselves of their friendship, but our God is such that He would have us draw upon Him. He delights to give—it is His pleasure to assist those who trust Him. Come, make your needs, your burdens known. Hesitate not, stand not away with an unholy bashfulness, but with a childlike boldness approach your heavenly Father and tell Him what your griefs may be, be they little or be they great—for the Lord is a refuge for us, a sure refuge, an open refuge, a constant refuge—a refuge at this very moment if we have but Divine Grace to fly to him.

Moses, I believe, in this passage alluded to one remarkable privilege of the children of Israel in the wilderness. All day long the cloudy pillar covered them. I do not think of it as being simply a column of smoke arising from the center of the Tabernacle—it was such, but besides that it covered the whole camp as a vast canopy or pavilion—so that in the great and terrible wilderness they fainted not under the burning heat of the sun. This pillar of cloud interposed a friendly shade so that they passed through the wilderness beneath the wings of God! At night their encampment would have been like a great city wrapped in darkness, but the pillar of fire supplied to them a light far superior to that which glows in London or in Paris through the art of man—that great flaming pillar lit up every tent and habitation so that in point of fact there was no night there.

They were always sheltered by God both by day and by night. If they strayed away from the camp for a little time in the heat of the sun, they had only to come flying back and there that emblem of the present God became their shelter! Or at night, if they wandered for awhile, that vast blazing lamp conducted them back again to their place of rest. So it is with us. In nights of trouble and grief, the fire of Divine comfort glows within us—the precious promises are round about us and we rejoice in the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. And when by day we travel over this burning wilderness to the rest appointed, God interposes perpetually the sweet presence of His love to screen us from the sharper sorrows of the world that we may still, while walking onward to Heaven, behold the shield of Heaven uplifted above our heads.

Dwell, for only one second upon that word, “The eternal God is your refuge.” Brethren, God is not only our refuge, but He is such as the eternal God! I do not understand, my dear Brethren, how some of the very best of men are satisfied to believe that God will forsake His people. I thank God I cannot receive their teaching. I believe that He is my refuge today and He was my refuge in the days of my youth—and when this hair is gray He will be my refuge, still. Yes, and when the sun of time has set beneath the horizon, never to rise again, and eternity is ushered in, the same refuge will remain to all His believing people! “The eternal God is your refuge.”

What are you doing, my Brother, over there? What are you doing? You found God to be your refuge years ago when you were in great distress, and you are in some fresh trouble today, and you fancy God will not help you. He is the eternal God, man! If He had changed, if He had died, you might be in despair. But since He is eternal and immutable, surely He will do for you today what He did for you then. Cast your present burden upon Him who helped you in the burdens past. “The eternal God is your refuge.” It is all very well for me to stand here and talk about this, but the sweetness lies in getting under the refuge! It is of no use to know, when you are climbing the storm-beaten Alps, that there is a refuge on the hillside against the storm unless you get into it. Beloved Believer, get into your God this morning!

I will tell you what I have often had to do. I have had perplexities in the work which grows out of the Church, and I have mused over them and puzzled my brain till I could see no way of escape. And at last I have come to this conclusion—“It is beyond me altogether. Gracious God, take it in Your hands.” I have put it upon the shelf and have resolved I would never think of it again—if God did not see to it, I would not. I gave up the case to Him, and I have often found that then the matter has been cleared up directly. Whereas, while I was fretting and worrying like a drowning man, I struggled myself deeper and deeper into the water—but when I laid quite still I could float and help came.

Do so with your troubles. When you have done the little you can do, then say, “This is evidently a thing beyond my power. What is the use of my straining at it? I am told God will appear for me in the time of my extremity, and so He shall. I will have nothing to do with it.” “Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.”

The second sentence is, “Underneath are the everlasting arms.” This seems to anticipate that the child of God may be in such a condition that he cannot run into the refuge, but falls down in a fainting fit. And where does he fall? Into Hell? Ah, no, he is redeemed, and Hell can never enclose a redeemed soul! Where does he fall, then? Fall to the hard, unsympathizing earth, to lie without help till he is strong enough to recover himself? Not at all! Even when he falls, he falls into the everlasting arms! I will mention some times when a Christian needs these arms peculiarly. These are when he is in a state of great elevation of mind. Sometimes God takes His servants and puts them on the pinnacle of the temple. Satan does it sometimes—God does it too—puts His servants up on the very pinnacle where they are so full of joy that they scarcely know how to contain themselves! “Whether in the body or out of the body they cannot tell.”

Well, now, suppose they should fall! It is so easy for a man, when full of ecstasy and ravishment, to make a false step and slip. Ah, but in such moments, “underneath are the everlasting arms.” They are safe enough! As safe as though they were in the valley of humiliation, for underneath are the arms of God. Sometimes He puts a man in such a position in service—there must be leaders in the Lord’s Church, captains and mighty men of war—and the Lord sometimes calls a man and says to him, “Now, be Moses to this people.” Such positions are fraught with temptation—and is God’s servant in greater danger than an ordinary Christian? Yes, he is, if left to himself—but he will not be left to himself, for God does not treat His captains as David treated Uriah, and put them in the forefront of the battle, to leave them, that they may be slain by the enemy. No, if our God calls a man to tread the high places of the field, that man shall say with Habakkuk, “He will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and He will make me to walk upon my high places.” “Underneath are the everlasting arms.”

Another period of great need is after extraordinary exaltations and enjoyments when it often happens that God’s servants are greatly depressed. I suppose some Brethren neither have much elevation or depression. I could almost wish to share their peaceful life, for I am much tossed up and down, and although my joy is greater than the most of men, my depression of spirit is such as few can have any idea of. This week has been in some respects the crowning week of my life, but it closed with a horror of great darkness of which I will say no more than this. I bless God that at my worst, underneath me I found the everlasting arms! What a grand day that was for Elijah when he saw the fire come down upon his bullock, in answer to his prayer, and he cried in holy wrath, “Take the prophets of Baal, let not one escape.”

I think I see the grim pleasure in the Prophet’s face as he saw them taken to the brook and slain. Behold his exhilaration as he binds up his loins and runs before Ahab’s chariot, keeping pace with the monarch’s horses with an agility in which soul and body joined. And then, what happens a day or two afterwards? In the wilderness, all alone, he has fled from a woman’s face, and you hear him cry, “Let me die, I am no better than my fathers.” Yes, the man who never was to die at all, prayed that he might die!

Just so, high exaltations involve deep depressions. But what was under Elijah when he fell down in that fainting fit under the juniper tree? Why, underneath were the everlasting arms! So shall it be with you who are called thus to fall into the depths of depression—the eternal arms shall be lower than you are! Brethren, there are many such occasions in which the spirit sinks sometimes through a sense of sin, through disappointments, through desertions of friends, through beholding the decay of the Lord’s work, through a lack of success in our ministry, or a thousand other mischiefs which may all cast us low. Yes, as low as Jonah, who went, he says, to the bottoms of the mountains. But when Jonah went to the lowest, underneath him were the everlasting arms! And when the earth, with her bars, was about him forever, and the weeds were wrapped about his head he came up again—because still lower than he was the hand of God—the everlasting arms were underneath him still.

There is blessed comfort when we come to die. I remember being at the funeral of one of our Brothers, and a dear friend in Christ offered prayer in which there was a sentence which struck me, “O Lord,” he said, “You have laid our friend low, but we thank You that he cannot go any lower, for underneath him are the everlasting arms.” Yes, underneath the bodies of the saints are the everlasting arms of God! They cannot sink to Hell— they must rise again at the sound of the archangel’s trumpet! Think, next time you go to the grave with your dear one—you will fancy that you are putting the body into the cold earth to leave it there—but if you will think that there are God’s arms at the bottom of that grave, you will drop your child into them, oh, so gently!

You will put father and mother, yes, and the dearest one you have, softly and happily down into the Father’s arms, believing that He will raise them up again after a little sleep upon His bosom. You see here, then, the safety of God’s people. God is such a help to them that they shall not faint—or fainting, shall only fall into His arms.

III. The second half of the verse tells us of ISRAEL’S FUTURE. “And He shall thrust out the enemy from before you; and shall say, Destroy them.” You have seen a man in our streets with a telescope through which you may see Venus, or Saturn, or Jupiter. Now, if that gentleman, instead of revealing the stars, could fix up a telescope and undertake that everybody who looked through it should see his future life, I will be bound to say he would make his fortune very speedily for there is a great desire among us all to know something of the future! Yet we need not be so anxious, for the great outlines of the future are very well known already. We have it on the best authority that in the future as in the past, we shall meet with difficulties and contend with enemies.

My text, like the telescope, reveals to those who trust in God what will become of their difficulties and we see that they are to be overcome. God will work, and you will work. He shall thrust out your enemies, and He shall say to you, “Destroy them.” What may be our future lot, as I have said, we do not know—save that the Holy Spirit testifies that in every place—bonds, and adversities, and struggles, and trials certainly await us. We shall not have an easy path to Heaven. As it has not been, so shall it not be, but onward—till we lay aside this body—we must contend for very life in spiritual things.

How precious it is to see that God has promised to thrust out the enemy from before us! This He does sometimes by Providence. Providence often removes enemies that would have been more than a match for us. When the children of Israel came to the promised land they found that the population had been thinned—God had sent the hornet before them. It was a land, as the spies said, that did eat up the inhabitants thereof—God had sent a hornet and a pestilence to clear off the hosts of Canaan. You do not know, Brothers and Sisters, how strangely God, by a very evident Providence, clears away temptations from before you—temptations which you might not have been strong enough to resist. You may be losing today something which will cause you grief for the present, which, if you had kept it, would have been your destruction in three years to come. The hornet has come and driven away your present comfort—really taking away from you a future curse.

Now, whatever your enemies or your difficulties may be, God is on your side and He will thrust them all away before you. It is a grand thing to go straight on in the path of duty, believing that God will clear the road. Like the priests, when they came to the edge of Jordan and saw the billows rolling up, yet on they went—and not so much as one of them was touched by the waves—as they put down their feet the waters receded! Oh, it must have been grand to be the first man in that march—to see the waters flow away before your feet! So shall it be with you! The water shall come up to where you are, yet it shall not touch you—you shall find it disappear as you, by faith, advance. If you are called to march through floods and flames, they shall not hurt you, but shall work your lasting good and expedite you on your journey towards the promised inheritance.

God has promised, then, by His Providence to thrust out your enemies. He will also do it by His Grace. His Holy Spirit will give you Divine power by which every uprising sin shall be put down. If all the devils in Hell should tempt you at one time, and all the lusts of the flesh should rise against you in one moment, and all the pride of life should assail you at the same instant—yet the eternal God, the Comforter—would be able to put them all back and to deliver you, and to put a new song into your mouth as He gave you deliverance! Therefore, go on, Brothers and Sisters, even through the valley of the shadow of death—for God will thrust aside your foes and make a pathway for you. But not without your fighting will you win the victory, for He will say, “Destroy them.”

You are not to be taken to Heaven as though you were a corpse carried there on a litter—you are to struggle according to the struggling of the Spirit within you. You shall work because He works in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure. Sins too hard for you today shall be destroyed tomorrow. You shall not merely escape from them, but you shall kill them! There are the eggs of the old serpent within your heart, and they continue to be hatched one after another—but you shall one day drive out the old dragon and all his hellish crew! Your heart shall be pure and holy—as pure as Heaven, and as holy as Christ Himself!

Thus much, then, with regard to God’s people in the future—you and I can take comfort from the precious promise here contained.  
IV. And now, lastly. Moses sang of ISRAEL’S BLESSEDNESS. Israel is to be blessed in three ways: First, “Israel then shall dwell in safety alone.” Brothers and Sisters, notwithstanding all our fights and our struggles by virtue of our salvation in Jesus, “We which have believed do enter into the rest,” for Jesus is our peace and our rest. Now see our privilege—we dwell alone. We have no alliance with the world. We stay not in Egypt—we rest not upon Assyria. God alone is our comfort and our confidence and we dwell in safety. Dwelling with God in communion—having with Him one object, one affection, one desire—we dwell apart from the rest of mankind, coming out daily more and more from them, and desiring to be nearer and nearer to Christ and further and further from men.  
Here we dwell safely! There is nowhere safe except when alone with God, but always safe then. I would roll this precious morsel under my tongue, “Israel then shall dwell in safety alone.” Like a sparrow, weak and defenseless and on the housetop alone, but still in safety. Hunted by Satan, molested by inward corruptions, tempted by the world, slandered by cruel tongues—but in the bosom of Jesus Christ like a dove, alone, always secure! Perish? That you shall not! Be destroyed by the adversary? It must not be! In time and in eternity God’s honor is pledged for your salvation! Earth’s old pillars may bow, but the promises of God must stand fast!  
Safe you are, and safe you shall be when the world is on a blaze. What a mine of comfort in two or three words! “Israel then shall dwell in safety alone.” It does not promise that you shall dwell in wealth, nor in fame, nor in respectability, nor even in moderate comfort—but you shall “dwell in safety alone.” You may have to lie upon the sick bed, bedridden year after year. You may be exiled from your native country. You may be among the poorest and most despised of mankind, but you shall surely dwell in safety! Where God guarantees safety, there safety is. All the princes of this world cannot make that man safe against whom God aims His arrow, but all the devils in Hell cannot wound that man over whom the everlasting shield is uplifted to keep him secure—“He shall dwell in safety alone.”  
Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us take our harps from the willows and begin a tune of quiet joy, for we are safe! Ah, poor world, you know nothing about this. The legalist, standing upon Sinai’s mountain, has done much—but he has more to do. He knows he is not safe—he is to be saved by his own good works, he says, and he never thinks that his good works have come to a sufficiency—therefore he is never safe. But we are safe, sinners as we are, for our righteousness is finished—it is the righteousness of Jesus! Our standing is secure for we are accepted in the Beloved. Blessed safety! This is what old Rome could never promise! Serve her faithfully, and she offers you but a place in “purgatory” as your reward! But we who have believed, have Christ today, and are safe today, and safe

forever— *“More happy, but not more secure  
Are the glorified spirits in Heaven.”*

Oh, it is blessed, going to sleep with this satisfaction, “If I never wake in this world, I shall wake in Heaven.” And it is blessed, living in this world, on land and on sea, in the midst of storm or of plague, when one is sure that neither life nor death shall affect our safety. Having confided in God, as He manifests Himself in the Person of Jesus Christ, our everlasting safety is secured by the promised oath, the Covenant of the everlasting God.

The next blessing which is given to Israel is abundant provision. “The fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine.” God’s people are to be supplied from a fountain, and around that fountain there shall always be a superabundance of corn for their necessities, and of wine for their comfort and their luxury. Those who come to God receive no stinted allowance—they are gentlemen commoners upon the bounty of God. There is a daily portion allotted to them and it is measured on a princely scale, equal to the dignity of the new birth. We drink from an ever-overflowing fountain. Other men get a little stock of grace, and goodness, and comfort, as they think, and they are pleased. But these things dry up and are gone!

But the Believer has no personal dependence whatever. He has everything in Christ—Christ is his fullness, and it pleases the Father that in Christ should all fullness dwell! The Believer comes to Jesus as to a fountain always bubbling up with waters fresh and sweet. The Believer’s provision is of all kinds, to meet his necessities and to meet his more luxurious desires. Brethren, we are not only saved from Hell—that is like the corn, but we are made meet for Heaven—that is the wine. We are not merely saved day by day from our besetting sins—that is as the corn, but we are made to have enjoyments, high enjoyments, fellowship with Jesus, the sitting in the heavenly places with Him—this is the wine. Believe me, Brothers and Sisters, all that your souls can need, when your desires are stretched to the utmost, you will find in Christ Jesus!

If you have learned to trust Him, you may make your capacities of intellect as large as those of a Locke or Sir Isaac Newton—you may have a mind which knows no limit, which, like the horse-leech, cries, “Give, give!” It may be as expansive as the all-embracing sky, but in your God you shall find all and more than all, for you shall be in your God as the fish that is in the sea, the bounds of which it cannot find, the limit of which it cannot learn—you shall be satiated, filled, satisfied with a superabundance from Him whose name is God All-Sufficient. Nor shall you merely have enough for your needs—your joys shall be high, bright, ecstatic! There shall be wine as well as corn.

Believe me, we have our dancing days, our times of sacred merriment— there are seasons with us when we would not envy the angels the mirth they have—when our Jesus, the Bridegroom, puts the fasting days away and gives us to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory! Oh, to know Him, to see Him, to feast upon Him is Heaven below! The fountain of Jacob, then, is upon a land of corn and wine to us.

Lastly, God’s people are furnished with another unspeakable blessing, namely, celestial unction. “Also His heavens shall drop down dew.” How we need this! How dry we get, how dull, how dead, unless the Lord visits us! The Oriental knew the value of dew. When he saw the green pastures turn brown and at last dry up till they were nothing but dust and powder, how he sought for the shower and the dew! And when it came, how thankful he was! When that dew of the Holy Spirit is gone from us, what dead prayers, what miserable songs, what wearisome preaching, what wretched hearing! Oh, there is death everywhere when the Holy Spirit is denied us! But we need not be without Him, for He is in the promise—“His Heaven

shall drop down dew.”

The words read as if there were much dew, superabundance of moisture. So, indeed, we may have the Holy Spirit most copiously if we have but faith enough to believe it and earnestness enough to seek it. Would God we had such a down-dropping of dew today! If it has not come this morning, as I fear it has not, may it yet descend on your classes and on your private meditations this afternoon! May you be favored with it this evening! O God, what are our services without Your Holy Spirit? It were better for us to be dumb than to speak without the Spirit of God! What is all the work the Church attempts without Your power, most blessed Holy Spirit? When we have You, then all is well—and You are promised— therefore come and glorify Yourself and glorify the Lord Jesus. Amen and Amen!

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UNDERNEATH  
NO. 1413

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 12, 1878, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Underneath are the everlasting arms.”  
Deuteronomy 33:27.**

GOD surrounds His children on all sides—they dwell in Him. The passage before us shows that the Lord is above, for we read, “There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rides upon the Heaven to help you, and in His excellency on the sky.” Assuredly He is around them, for, “The eternal God is your refuge.” And He is before them, for, “He shall thrust out the enemy from before you; and shall say, Destroy them.” Here, according to the text, the Lord is also under His saints, for, “Underneath are the everlasting arms.” “Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations,” and by You we are surrounded everywhere, as the earth is by the atmosphere—

*“Within Your circling power I stand.  
On every side I find Your hand.  
Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,  
I am surrounded still with God.”*

The verse which contains our text should be interpreted somewhat after this fashion—“The eternal God is your dwelling place, or your rest, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” The parallel passage is that verse in the Song wherein the bride exclaims, “His left hand is under my head, and His right hand does embrace me.” The soul has come to its resting place in God and feels itself to be supported by the Divine strength. The heart has learned to abide in Christ Jesus to go no more out, but to lean on His bosom both day and night. It is somewhat in the condition of Noah’s dove which, when weary, was about to drop into the destroying waters, but Noah put out his hand and plucked her to him into the ark. And when she was all safe, in the hollow of his hands, held by her preserver with a firm but tender grasp, she found in that place a refuge which surrounded her and upheld her from below. The hands covered her on all sides and came beneath her, too. Even thus, the hand of God sustains all those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High and abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I am going, however, to take the words just as they stand in our own authorized version and to consider them apart from the context. I ask your most careful consideration of them, for they must be very full of meaning and very emphatic in their force. The words are placed at the end of Moses’ song and they are its crown and climax. He had wound himself up to the highest pitch of poetic excitement and spiritual fervor—and this passage is the result. He had spoken grandly, before, concerning the separate tribes and the words which fell from his lips are unspeakably rich. But now he is about to close and, therefore, he pours forth his loftiest strains and utters full and deep meanings—the ripest and choicest fruit of a lifetime of communion with God! As our Lord ascended to

Heaven blessing His disciples, so did His servant Moses, before climbing to Pisgah, pour out a torrent of benedictions, full and deep, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

It is not possible, therefore, that the language can be too greatly prized. The words mean all that we can make them mean! The nectar of their consolation is altogether inexhaustible! May God the Holy Spirit help us to weigh and measure them and then distil their inner sense and drink of the spiced wine of His pomegranate. “Underneath are the everlasting arms.” I shall handle the text in this fashion. Where? “Underneath.” What? “The everlasting arms.” When? They are underneath us now and always and if it is so, what then?

I. First let us attend to the question—WHERE? “Underneath.” Now, “underneath,” is a region into which we cannot see. We glance down and the dead cold earth stops our gaze. When we are heavy in spirit we fix our eyes upon the ground and look, and look, and look—but even an eagle’s glance cannot see far below. We scarcely can peer beneath the thin green sod—the bottom of a grave is well near the full range of mortal vision. The underworld is mysterious. We associate the subterranean with all that is dark and hidden and, because of this, it is often regarded as terrible. A man scarcely ever fears that which he can see in proportion to his dread of what he cannot see. Therefore, our alarm at the “underneath.”

What may be underneath us when we leave this sunlit region for the grave’s overshadowing vault? What will happen to us in eternity? Life will soon end—what is death? What is the immediate result of death? What shall we feel when we are traversing those unknown tracks and finding our way to the Judgment Seat of God? Not knowing except that little which has been revealed to us, we are all too apt to conjecture terrors and invent horrors—and so to begin trembling concerning that which we do not understand! What a comfort it is to be told by the Voice of Inspiration that, “Underneath are the everlasting arms!”

Poets have usually been in a gloomy humor when picturing the underworld. Imagination is very apt to spin a black and tangled thread. You have read of dark caverns where the bodies of men are fast detained, of which caverns Death has the key. Of this the grim Anglo-Saxon poet wailed the warning note*—*

*“Loathsome is that earth-house,  
And grim within to dwell!  
There you shall dwell,  
And worms shall divide you!”*

You have heard of gloomy ruins where the night raven forever sits and croaks. You have heard of corridors where prisoners incessantly rattle their chains to the dolorous music of sullen groans and hollow moans. We have been afraid of death because of the horrors with which our ignorance has surrounded it! And we have been dismayed at the future because of the mysteries which darken it.

Be comforted! Our text, like a lamp, reveals the abyss of death and lifts up the veil of the future! Follow its gleam and you will see how it dispels the darkness! If you are a child of God, you may descend without fear into the lowest depths—even if, like Jonah, you had to cry, “I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me forever,” yet you need not be dismayed—for, “Underneath are the everlasting arms.” If you were called to take some such awful journey as Virgil and Dante have fabled in their poems, when their heroes descended into the dread Avernus, you need not tremble, though it were said of you as of them—

*“Along the illuminated shade*

*Darkening and lone their way they made.”*If, I say, you were bound to traverse the sepulchral vaults and all the gloomy dungeons of Hades, yet you need not fear, for, “Underneath are the everlasting arms.”

Mystery of mysteries! Death, you are no longer terrible to us because the Light of lights is shining upon you! Depths unfathomable, we no longer fear to pass through you, for there is One whose love is deeper than the depths beneath as it is higher than the heights above! And He has said, “I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring them up from the depths of the sea.” We gladly take our journey downward at the call of God! And without fear we pass through the gates of the tomb and enter the doors of the shadow of death, for, “Underneath are the everlasting arms.” “Underneath”—the word awakens thought and enquiry. Everything ought to be sound, solid and substantial there. “Underneath” must be firm, for if that fails we fail, indeed!

We have been building and our eyes have been gladdened with the rising walk and with the towering pinnacles. But what if something should be rotten “underneath?” Great will be the fall then, if we have built as high as Heaven, if sand lies underneath, yielding and shifting in the day of flood. “Underneath” is the great matter to which the architect, if he is wise, will give his best attention. And truly, Brothers and Sisters, when you and I begin to examine our Graces and our professions, that word, “underneath,” suggests many a testing question. Is it all right with us as to the root of the matter—“underneath?” If not, the fair flower above ground will wither very speedily. The seed has sprung up hastily, but how is the soil underneath? For if there is no depth of earth, the scorching sun will soon dry up the superficial harvest.

“Underneath,” though it is mysterious, is also intensely important and, therefore, the great joy of being able to say by faith, “Yes, ‘underneath’ is well secured, we have trusted in God and we shall not be confused. We have relied upon the eternal promises and they cannot fail. We have rested on the infinite merits of the atoning Sacrifice of God’s dear Son and we shall never be ashamed of our hope.” Happy is he who rests upon the Everlasting Covenant ordered in all things and sure, for with him all is safe underneath! And, though the earth is removed and the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea, he need not fear, but may patiently hope and quietly wait for the salvation of God.

For a period we may be content with superficial pleasures, but there are times of trial when we have to fall back upon something deeper and more reliable—earthly props give way, in their season, and we need superior sustaining power. The carnal mind meets with an hour when “the proud helpers do stoop under him” and Believers, too, in proportion as they foolishly lean upon an arm of flesh, find their confidences departing. Then it is that we feel the value of Divine upholding and rejoice that “Underneath are the everlasting arms.”

Let us look more closely into this most important matter. “Underneath are the everlasting arms.” That is, first, as the foundation of everything. If you go down, down, to discover the basement upon which all things rest, you come, before long, to “the everlasting arms.” The things which are seen are held up by the invisible God! This outward visible universe has no power to stand for a single instant if He does not keep it in being. By Him all things exist. There are no forces apart from God’s power! No existences apart from His will! He bears up the pillars of the universe. He, only, spreads out the heavens and treads upon the waves of the sea. He makes Arcturus, Orion, the Pleiades and the chambers of the south. Foolish are those philosophers who think that they can reach the essence and soul from which visible things were evolved unless they bow before the invisible God! He is the foundation of creation, the fountain and source of being, the root and basement of existence. “Underneath” everything “are the everlasting arms.”

Most true is this with regard to His Church. He chose her and redeemed her to Himself—the very idea of a Church is from the Lord alone. As a temple He devised her architecture, saying, “I will lay your foundations with sapphires.” And He has built up her every stone by His own power. He sustains her walls against her enemies so that the gates of Hell cannot prevail against her, for the foundation of God stands sure. The foundation of every true Church is the Lord Himself, the Highest, Himself, establishes her. God is in the midst of her—she shall not be moved. “Underneath are the everlasting arms.” Blessed be God, what is true of the Church as a corporate body is true of every member of the Church! There abides no spiritual life in the world which is not founded upon the everlasting arms.

Beloved, if the life of God is in you, if you search deep and go to the basis of it, you will find that your life is staying itself and drawing its constant nurture, yes, deriving its very existence from the life of the eternal God. Jesus says, “Because I live, you shall live also.” Your life is the life of God in you, for the Divine seed is the foundation of all spiritual life. Beware, then, of harboring in your heart anything which has not underneath it the everlasting arms. If there is any hope, let it be founded on the Everlasting Covenant of God. If there is any joy, let it well up from the everlasting love of God. If there is any confidence, let it be stayed upon the everlasting strength of Jehovah. If there is any service rendered, let it be according to the everlasting commandment.

If in your soul there is any Divine Grace. If there is any virtue. If there is any praise, suffer none of these matters to be superficial or pretentious—the creation of your own native strength—but let them all be founded upon the work of the Holy Spirit in your soul. In fact, let it be said of each of them, “Underneath are the everlasting arms.” Nothing will serve our turn in the trials of life, the terrors of death, or the solemnities of the Last Great Day, except that which has underneath it the everlasting arms! See how the nations reel when God no longer sustains them—“He removes the mountains and they know not, He overturns them in His anger.” See how those Churches fly into apostasy which have not underneath them the everlasting arms—they are quenched as the fire of thorns and only a smoke remains!

Did not Jesus say, “Every plant that my Father has not planted shall be rooted up”? See how hypocritical professors disappear like the morning mist when the sun rises! Nothing will abide the day of the Lord’s coming unless its foundation is laid in the eternal God. The Lord help us to know what this means so that we may be like the wise man who dug deep and built his house upon a rock. Again, we may read the words, “Underneath are the everlasting arms,” in the sense of being the bottom and end and object of everything. If in faith you search into Divine Providence, however dark and trying it may appear, you will soon find that underneath it are the everlasting arms.

Satan may be mining, but God is undermining! Even under the deep devices of Hell the everlasting arms are to be found. Satan’s craft is deep to us, but it is very shallow to the Lord, whose wisdom goes far deeper than all the cunning of the Prince of Darkness. The evils and errors which are in the world should not cause us to despair of the ultimate victory of the Truth of God, for beneath them there is still the immutable decree of the Ever-living and the Ever-blessed—and that decree shall be accomplished, whoever may oppose it! Has He not said, “I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return. That unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear”?

His purpose shall stand. He will do all His pleasure. He works all things according to the counsel of His own will. Trace your present trials below their surface—trace them to the deeps, instead of groaning over their outward appearance—and you will find that underneath each trouble there is a faithful purpose and a kind intent. Yes, beneath the utmost depths of distress and grief, God is still at work in love to your soul! From seeming evil still educing good and, better still—and better still in infinite progression—underneath the best events are the arms of love to make them good and underneath the worst that can happen are the same everlasting arms to moderate and overrule them! As the design and object of all, “underneath are the everlasting arms.”

I take the text, “Underneath are the everlasting arms,” to mean, next, that the arms of God are there as the preservation of His people. His people sometimes appear to themselves to be in very great danger, but it is written, “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.” Certain of the saints are set in very high places and their brain might well be turned so that they would fall. But they shall not slip with their feet, for God upholds the righteous. If under deep depression of spirit and sore travail of heart their feet should be almost gone, what a blessing it is to think that “underneath are the everlasting arms.”

Sometimes faith walks upon a very slender thread high up above the ways of common men. Poising her balancing pole of experience, she tries to keep her feet—but her satisfaction is that even if she should slip for a while and her joy should fail, yet there is a net beneath her which will receive her in her fall so that she shall not be utterly dashed in pieces. “I have prayed for you that your faith fail not” is the gracious safeguard of

those who fall, as Peter did, when Satan has them in his sieve. The people of God must and shall be safe! Satan may cast them down, but God shall save them before they fall into Hell. Let us walk carefully, none the less, because of this. Let us watch well our footsteps as much as if our preservation entirely depended upon ourselves—but let us always look only to our Lord—knowing that He, alone, keeps the feet of His saints.

Holiness, strength of faith and ultimate perfection are the things which we must daily aim at, but it is a blessed consolation that when, through infirmity or carelessness, we do not fully maintain our consecrated walk, we are not, therefore, cast away forever, for it is written, “Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholds him with His hand.” “Underneath are the everlasting arms.” That leads me to read my text in the fourth sense as teaching us that the everlasting arms are the rest of His people. If these everlasting arms are always outstretched to preserve me lest I totter in weakness and fall into destruction, then on those arms let me lean my whole weight for time and for eternity! That is the practical lesson of this choice word.

Keep yourselves, Beloved, in those arms which even now are embracing you! Why vex your heart when you may be free from care? Underneath everything, your Father’s arms are placed—what, then, can fret you? Why are you disquieted when you might dwell at ease and inherit the earth? Are you afraid to rest where the universe rests? Are not your Father’s arms a sufficient pillow for you? Do you think that it is not safe to be at peace when the love and might of God, like two strong arms, are stretched out to hold you up and the Divine Voice whispers to you “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him”? His own Word to His Prophets is, “Comfort you, comfort you My people, says your God. Speak you comfortably to Jerusalem.” Will you not accept the comfort which He sends by His Spirit and bids His servants impart to you?

When God Himself does rest in His love will you not rest in it and shall it not, again, be proven that, “we that have believed do enter into rest”? Is not the Lord Jesus our peace? Why, then, are we troubled? Well may you lie down to sleep in peace when underneath you are the everlasting arms! Well may your spirit be filled with composure and become indifferent to outward trials when you are thus held up! Blow, you winds and toss, you waves, the boat cannot sink, or if it did sink it could not sink to our destruction—we should only drop into the great Father’s hands—for underneath even the sinking vessel are the everlasting arms! Now, let the earth reel with earthquakes or open wide her mouth to swallow us up quickly— we need not fear to descend into her dreariest gulf—since underneath us would still be the everlasting arms! What a fullness of rest this secures to the believing people of God!

I will fetch from the text one more meaning while I am speaking upon the position of these arms. The text seems to give us a promise of exaltation and uplifting. We may be very low and greatly cast down, but “underneath are the everlasting arms.” The merciful God is great at a dead lift. “He raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the dunghill that He may set him with princes, even with the princes of His people.” Who can tell how high a man may be lifted up—to what sublime elevations he may safely ascend when the Lord makes his feet like hind’s feet that he may stand upon His high places? If still underneath him are the everlasting arms he may safely obey the word, “Get up into the high mountains.” He may outsoar the eagle, mounting higher and higher till he has left the sun like a speck beneath his feet and still underneath him shall be the everlasting arms. Therefore higher and yet higher may we hourly ascend in thought, in joy, in holiness, in likeness to our God!

This is meant to encourage us to rise, since there can be no danger while the arms of God are underneath. This, then, my Brothers and Sisters, is where we may expect to find the strength and power of God—it is underneath us, bearing us up! We may not always see it, for the underneath is hidden from our sight, but surely as in secret the Lord upholds the huge columns of the universe so He bears up all His own servants and their concerns! “Underneath are the everlasting arms.”

II. Secondly let us meditate upon WHAT it is which is beneath us. The everlasting arms. What is meant by this? I hope the gentlemen who are so ingenious in toning down the word “everlasting” will not meddle with my text. A new way of reading the Bible has been invented in these highly enlightened days. I used to get on exceedingly well with the Book years ago, for it seemed clear and plain enough, but modern interpreters would puzzle us out of our wits and out of our souls, if they could, by their vile habit of giving new meanings to plain words! Thank God I keep to the old simple way—but I am informed that the inventors of the new minimizing glasses manage to read the big words small—and they have even read down the word, “everlasting,” into a little space of time! Everlasting may be six weeks or six months according to them. I use no such glasses! My eyes remain the same and “everlasting” is “everlasting” to me whether I read of everlasting life or everlasting punishment. If I clip the word in one place, I must do so in another. And it will never do to have a terminable Heaven. I cannot afford to give it up here when its meaning is joyous to the saint and, therefore, not there when its sound is terrible to the sinner!

What, then, are “the everlasting arms?” They are arms which always were and always will be. They are arms which always were strong and will never grow faint or weary. They are arms which, once outstretched, will never be drawn back again. They are arms which, once engaged for the defense of the chosen people, shall never cease to work for their good, world without end! Not failing arms, nor dying arms, but everlasting arms are underneath the saints of God! I understand the words to mean, first, the arms of everlasting purpose, “according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” His purpose may be called His arms, by which He stretches out His hands to do His work and these can never fail, for, “The Lord of Hosts has purposed and who shall disannul it? And His hand is stretched out and who shall turn it back?” “The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations.” “He is in one mind, and who can turn Him? And what His soul desires, even that He does.”

We have to deal with One whose gifts and calling are without repentance. In the Book of His purpose it is written and His Providence and

Grace shall tally with the secret decree, “He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion,” and the everlasting purpose of Sovereign Grace shall be carried out to the end. O my Soul, when your poor purposes shift and vanish and you have to change them 20 times a day, what a blessing it is to think that the purpose of your God stands fast, and He, Himself, is without the shadow of a turning! He has declared that He that believes in Christ shall be saved and so you shall be, though all Hell assail you! Come what may, the eternal purpose lies at the bottom of all, and will be the end and result of all, and so all Israel shall be saved, for, “underneath are the everlasting arms” of unchanging purpose.

But next we see here the everlasting arms of love. I do no violence to Scripture when I compare love to arms, for is it not written, “I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you”? Love has hands and arms with which it draws us and these are, at this moment underlying all the dealings of God with us. This love is everlasting love—without beginning, without variation, without end. Underneath you, child of God, is the infinite affection of the Omnipotent God— what, then, can harm you?

Your love? Ah, how it flames forth at times and then how dull it becomes! But your safety comes from a love which never varies, which many waters cannot quench and which the floods cannot drown. Look beneath you and you may see a depth of love, fathomless and eternal, which may well remind you of what Moses said when he spoke of “the deep which lies under.” The strength of love which abides in God, who is Love itself, no mind can conceive! All this is placed under you, O Believer, for your succor, support and security. Immovable arches of immortal Love sustain your soul from fear of ruin. Rest there and sing unto the Lord your song upon your stringed instrument as long as you have any being.

But next, these arms may be described as the arms of power. And what says Isaiah the Prophet? “Trust you in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength.” What said Jeremiah? “Ah Lord God! Behold, You have made the Heaven and the earth by Your great power and stretched out arm and there is nothing too hard for You.” Strength is needed to uphold the people of God lest they fall to their confusion and that strength is always ready, no, it is always in exercise! Believer, you have been able to stand because the arm of Divine strength has never been withdrawn. He is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless and He will do it. “O bless our God, you people, and make the voice of His praise to be heard: which holds our soul in life, and suffers not our feet to be moved.” These are the arms of Immutability, for God abides forever the same. “I am God; I change not: therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.”

He saved His people “with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, for His mercy endures forever.” They are the arms of everlasting blessing, for God has determined to make His people happy and happy they shall be. “Surely,” He says, “in blessing I will bless you.” “Your blessing is upon Your people.” He gives liberally unto them and that liberality is never diminished, nor can it be stopped. Underneath you, Believer, are the everlasting arms, forever carrying you as a nurse carries her child, forever gathering up for you innumerable blessings and carrying them for your provision. He shall gather the lambs with His arms and with those same arms will He show strength unto His people. How blest are they who have such arms beneath them!

I heard of a man who was spending a great deal of money, living in grand style and launching out in business. Certain of his fellow tradesmen told me that they could not see a reason for his cutting such a figure. But said one, “There is somebody at his back, we are quite sure of that.” And so it is with us—we may well be strong, we may well be happy—for there is an unseen power which is at our back—the everlasting arms are underneath us—and we cannot fail! Let us be joyous, confident and praise the right hand of the Lord! Yes, though our conflicts should multiply, let us not fear, but let us sing unto the Lord, “Your right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power. The right hand of the Lord is exalted. The right hand of the Lord does valiantly.” For this right hand upholds the cause of His servants.

III. Now, in the third place, let us consider WHEN the everlasting arms are underneath us. The only answer is now and for evermore. Now, at this moment, Beloved, the everlasting arms are underneath us! The life of a Christian is described as walking by faith and to my mind, walking by faith is the most extraordinary miracle ever beheld beneath the sun! Walking on the waves, as Peter did, is a type of the life of every Christian. I have sometimes likened it to ascending an invisible staircase far up into the clouds. You cannot see an inch in front of you, but you wind up towards the Light. When you look down, all is dark, and before you lies nothing visible but clouds. Beneath you yawns a fathomless abyss.

Yet we have climbed, some of us, for years up this perpetually ascending stairway, never seeing an inch before us. We have often paused almost in horror and asked in wonder, “What next? What next?” Yet what we thought was cloud has proved to be solid rock! Darkness has been light before us and slippery places have been safe. Every now and then, when the darkness has been denser than usual—a darkness which might be felt, when all the past behind us has vanished and nothing has been seen but the one step we stood on—we have said, “How did I get here? What a strange, mysterious life mine has been!” We have almost wished ourselves down on the level among the worldlings who can always see their way and know what is underneath them. But faith has come to our help, again— we have believed—and believing we have seen the invisible and grasped the eternal! And then we have gone on, have put our foot down again and soon have run up, with joy, the shining way!

What an ascent we have sometimes made upon that ladder of light so that we have companied with angels and left the world far down beneath our feet! Now and then we have enjoyed a glimpse through the thick darkness of the jeweled walls of the Eternal City which needs no candle, neither light of the sun. We have seen, I say, its brightness and determined, still, to climb the mysterious way. Well, Believer, at this moment, though you cannot see your way, yet since you are walking by faith, “underneath are the everlasting arms.” It is so, though at this moment you fear that you are going down into a gloomy glen. You have lost a great

deal of money lately and the friend who so kindly helped you is taken away, so that you are going down in the world—yes, but underneath are the everlasting arms.

You are getting nearer to those arms now. Friends and wealth came between you and the almighty arms—but now you must lean only on them. The creature fails and you must rest on the Creator! You will have sweeter fellowship, now, than you ever had, since there is nothing to come between you and your Lord. “Ah,” says one, “but I am sinking in spirit. I am greatly depressed.” Still underneath are the everlasting arms. Your soul is sinking, like Peter in the waves, but a hand is outstretched to save you— you cannot sink while your heavenly Father’s hands are near. Go on sinking, if the Lord so wills it. Sometimes the greatest sweetness in life is found and intense bitterness. I never have in my soul a more solid and real joy than when I have been cast into the dust with fearful depression of spirit. I stay myself upon my God and Him, only, and then I touch the confines of bliss, though trembling all the while. I hardly know how to express the unrivalled sweetness of resting upon only the Lord!

When you are flung altogether upon God, then does your soul enter into the most Divine peace! The natural spirits have gone, everything that sprang from the vigor of youth and the natural elasticity of the mind has departed—now you come right upon God and lie naked in His hands. And then there is cast into your cup a foretaste of Heaven which the soul sits down and humbly sips to herself, for the secret she can never tell—no ear would understand her if she did. “Underneath are the everlasting arms.” And so, dear Friends, if you should sink both in circumstances and in spirits and your experience should happen to be a very downcast one, it will still be well. If now you have to discover the corruption of your nature, which you knew little of before. If now your experience, instead of being that of the Brethren of the higher life, should be one of humiliation, of prostration of spirit, of deep self-loathing—still, underneath you are the everlasting arms. If you are not to climb to Pisgah with Moses, but must dive to the bottom of the mountains like Jonah, still underneath are the everlasting arms—even at the lowest point of your going down! So it shall be forever and forever, for the arms are everlasting in their position as well as their power.

Now you have come to die. You have gathered up your feet in the bed. The death sweat stands upon your brow. You are sinking, so far as this life is concerned, among the sons of men, but underneath you shall then be the everlasting arms! Beautifully has Bunyan described confidence in death, when he pictures the pilgrims passing the river. Christian cried out to young Hopeful, “I sink in deep waters! The billows go over my head! All His waves go over me.” Then said Hopeful, “Be of good cheer, my Brother, I feel the bottom and it is good.” Thus, Beloved, shall it be with you! You shall feel the bottom of death’s chill river, but you shall say, “It is good,” for underneath are the everlasting arms!

Then comes the last plunge and we shall be as when a man stands on the edge of a precipice and leaps over into the clouds below him. You need not fear to take your last farewell and drop into your Father’s arms, for underneath you shall be the everlasting arms! And oh, how sweetly shall you be caught up together with the Lord in the air, pressed to the bosom of the great Father and borne upward into the Heaven of heavens where you shall behold the face of the Well-Beloved and find yourselves entranced in His company forever and forever! O heir of Glory, underneath you there is no Hell! Underneath you there is no annihilation! Underneath you are the everlasting arms—therefore commit your spirit unto your faithful Creator and then welcome life or death, for all is well with you!

IV. Lastly, let us reply to the query, WHAT THEN? If underneath us are the everlasting arms, what then? First, let us look underneath. My Brothers and Sisters, you have been going on with great discomfort, sighing and crying because your way is rough and because sometimes you think it dangerous and fear that you will slip into a chasm and perish. Now, instead of complaining after this fashion, and fearing the road, stop a little and begin to examine—“What is underneath me? What is the bottom of my hope?”

You hypocrites dare not examine! You formalists dare not search! You are afraid to ask questions and to open your eyes lest you should see too much. But those who are honest and sincere in the way of our Lord are not afraid to be tested. You who are under any anxiety will do well to pull right up and say, “I have been troubled with doubts and fears and I will no longer endure it. I will know the end of this! I will search myself and know my ways and pray the Lord to let me see the worst of my case, for I long to know what there is underneath.” If you are believing in Jesus Christ with a sincere heart and resting in the atoning Sacrifice and the Covenant of which His blood is the seal, you can afford to search underneath—for you will find all things solid and eternal!

It is well to look underneath an outward Providence when it frowns darkly upon you, for it conceals the eternal purpose of love. The sorrows which you see are but, as it were, a napkin hiding the precious treasure of eternal Grace and, therefore, you can say to yourself in all ill weathers, “All is well, for all is well underneath! The eternal purpose is working out my lasting good.” Do not be afraid to search underneath, my trembling Brothers and Sisters. but when you do so and find the everlasting arms to be there, then sing unto the Lord with all your might!

The next inference is, if underneath us are the everlasting arms, let us lean heavily. We are afraid to lean too hard on God. To be careful not to encroach on a friend is a very proper disposition. Do not spoil a generous friend by drawing upon him so heavily that he will dread to see you again. I wish some people had a little more of that disposition, as far as I am concerned, but this is not a right feeling when you have to deal with the Lord! Never fear that you will weary your God! Never say to yourself, “I will ask as little as I can.” Why, He says, “Open your mouth wide and I will fill it!” Never say, “I will trust Him a little. I will take Him a part of my cares and rest a portion of my trials upon Him.” No, lean with your whole weight!

Do not keep a spare ounce for your own carrying—that will break your back! Bring all the tons and the pounds and the ounces and the pennyweights and cast them all on God! He loves His children to treat Him with entire confidence. All your weight will not trouble Him. You know Aesop’s

fable of the polite little gnat which apologized to the ox for burdening him when he lighted on his horn, and the ox replied that he really did not know he was there. Your God will not tell you that, for He counts the very hairs of your head, but He will tell you that your load is no burden to Him. Why, if you had 50 kingdoms burdening your brain and if you carried the politics of a hundred nations in your mind, or were loaded with all the cares of a thousand worlds, you might safely leave them with the Wonderful Counselor and go your way rejoicing! Lean hard, Brothers and Sisters! For underneath you are the everlasting arms!

The next thing is, then, let us rise confidently. Do not be afraid of ascending to heights of love. Do not be afraid of having a high ambition for a wholly consecrated life. Be not afraid of high doctrines, or high enjoyments, or high attainments in holiness. Go as high as you like, for underneath you are the everlasting arms! It would be dangerous to speculate, but it is safe to believe. Some men are always going downward, turning diamonds into gas and hallelujahs into howls! They are trying to get rid of precious Truths of God and to substitute some new theories for them. Let us be brave in the other direction and seek to comprehend with all saints what are the heights and depths, and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge. You may climb, my dear young Brothers and Sisters, nor fear to fall even if you reach the masthead of Truth, for underneath are the everlasting arms!

Once more, let us dare unhesitatingly and be very courageous for the Lord our God—  
*“Through floods or flames, if Jesus leads, I’ll follow where He goes”*

for underneath are the everlasting arms! Are you called upon to lose everything for Christ? Go on and leap like Curtius into the gulf for your Lord Jesus, for underneath you are the everlasting arms! Does your Master call you to an enterprise which seems impossible? Nevertheless, if God has called you to it, attempt it, for He renders to every man according to his work. Remember what the Negro said—“If Massa Jesus say to me, ‘Sam, you jump through that brick wall,’ I jump. It is Sam’s business to jump— it is Massa’s work to make me go through the wall.” So it is with you. It is yours to leap forward when the Captain gives the watchword—and in confidence to attempt what mere nature cannot achieve—for the supernatural is with us!

The best of all is, God is with us! Underneath us are the everlasting arms! Less reliance upon self and more reliance upon God! Less counting of the barley loaves and fishes—and a greater readiness to bring them to His hands who can multiply them till they shall feed the thousands—this is what we need! God grant us Grace to trust in His almighty power and sing from now on and forever, “underneath are the everlasting arms!”

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THE EVERLASTING ARMS  
NO. 2435

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, OCTOBER 20, 1895. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 6, 1887.

**“Underneath are the everlasting arms.”  
Deuteronomy 33:27.**

This short passage is found in the midst of a mass of gold—sentences containing the richest treasures of the Truth of God. All this spiritual wealth is the heritage of the people of God—not only of His typical people to whom these words were spoken, but to His real people, the true seed of Abraham, those who are the believing children of the Father of all Believers. If you are trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, you may take these precious words home to yourself—and you may live upon them—you may eat the fat, drink the sweet and rejoice in all the refreshment that they bring to your spirit!

In the four verses, from the 26th to the 29th, notice how near God is said to be to His people. He is described as being above us, arching us over with His Divine Power—“There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rides upon the Heavens to help you, and in His excellency on the clouds.” Faith can hear the tramp of the celestial cavalry above our heads! We who trust in the Lord are always safe, for the angels of God are looking down upon us from the battlements of Heaven, ready to show themselves strong on our behalf as soon as their presence is needed by us. Then, our text tells us of God beneath us. As He is above us in the heavens, so underneath us are the everlasting arms. The next sentence shows us God before us—“and He shall thrust out the enemy from before you; and shall say, Destroy them.” And the remaining verses of the chapter represent Him as being all around us, so that we are encompassed with God—not only with His Presence, with which He fills Heaven, earth and all deep places—but with the glorious Presence of His mighty love. He is above, beneath, before, and all around us! He never forsakes us, for in Him we live, move, and have our being. Let us rejoice, therefore, in our Lord’s nearness!

I. Now, coming to our text, I want, as God’s Spirit shall help me, to bring to your notice, first, THE QUARTER THAT IS THUS HONORABLY SECURED—Underneath.

“Underneath.” Well, in the first place, that is the point of mysterious assault. We look for the attacks of the powers of darkness from underneath. They are very remarkable attacks—there are many who are the objects of them, but there are few who fully understand them. There are many of God’s children who are often sorely vexed by Satan, yet they do not know that it is the devil who is troubling them. They blame themselves for thoughts that are none of their own, but which come up from the infernal Pit like smoke and sparks from that dread lower world. O Friends, if Satan has ever grievously tempted and assailed you, you will dread beyond expression any repetition of that temptation or assault! Mr. Bunyan well says that a man had better go over hedge and ditch—and many miles round about—rather than meet this terrible adversary! He not only works through the world and through the flesh, but he has modes of personal attack—fiery darts from his own hands—false accusations and foul insinuations which come only from him. By all these he assails Christians and brings us to a stand so that, sometimes, we know not what to do! Just underneath us there seems to yawn the awful Pit, out of which Satan rises with his abandoned fallen angels, to do us mischief.

Then comes in this gracious assurance—“Underneath are the everlasting arms.” Against this mysterious, because incomprehensible foe, whose darts are so painful and deadly, God has been pleased to set a shield. And He puts underneath you, O child of God, His everlasting arms! You may be tempted by Satan, but it shall only be in a measure—God will not let him put forth all his diabolical strength! When the Lord suffered Satan to tempt Job, there was always a proviso, which said to the devil as to the raging sea, “Hitherto shall you come, but no further.” The Lord pulled him up short just at the point where he hoped to destroy the good man—and it shall be so with you, also, tried Believer. Underneath you, in your worst attacks from Satan, shall be the everlasting arms of the Lord Himself!

Note a second meaning of this word, “underneath.” That is the place of our daily pilgrimage. To the Israelites, “underneath” was the burning sand of the terrible wilderness. Sometimes, “underneath,” were the fiery serpents and all manner of evil things, so that their march towards Canaan was a continual trial to them. “But,” says God to His people, “though sense sees nothing underneath but ever-burning sands, let faith see underneath the everlasting arms.” Some of you go forth to your daily labors and you find the place of your service to be a real wilderness, full of trial and everything that is unpleasant to you. Yet look again, with eyes touched with Heaven’s eye-salve and, instead of seeing the bitter poverty, and the grinding toil, and the daily trial, you will begin to see that God is in it all and, “underneath are the everlasting arms!” You shall go cheerfully home to Heaven, borne up by God. He who made you will carry you! He who loves you will bear you all the days of old till you shall come unto the Mountain of God and stand in your lot at the end of the days! I think, therefore, that our text applies not only to the point of mysterious assault, but to the place of daily pilgrimage and toil.

Do you not think that this word, “underneath,” also relates to the place of perilous descent? There are times in a man’s life when he has to come down. It is not a very easy matter to go down the hill safely. Some persons have proved that it is difficult to grow old gracefully, but to the Christian it ought not to be impossible or unusual to grow old graciously. Still, there are difficulties about that coming down the hill of life—coming down in a very material sense, perhaps, from competence to real poverty. Coming down as to your mental powers. Being conscious of losing your former influence over your fellows. Coming down in general repute, through no fault of your own, but through circumstances of which you are not the master. All this is very trying to human nature. You know that on the way to Heaven there are many Hill Difficulties—and brave spirits rather enjoy climbing to the top of them! We like a craggy path, hard and rough, where we can keep on looking upward all the way even if we have to scramble on our hands and knees. There is something pleasant in going up in that fashion, but it is when going down into the Valley of Humiliation that we are apt to slip. We do not like going down and, as many horses fall at the bottom of the hill, so I believe that many people trip at the end of a trial when they think it is nearly over and they have no need to look so carefully to their feet.

Well now, dear Friends, if any of you are going down the hill, I think the text comes in very sweetly—“Underneath are the everlasting arms.” You cannot go so low but that God’s arms of love are still lower! You get poorer and poorer, but, “underneath are the everlasting arms.” You get older and feebler. Your ears are failing, your eyes are growing dim, but, “underneath are the everlasting arms.” By-and-by, unless the Lord speedily returns, you will have to die—and you will come down very low, then—but still it will be true, “underneath are the everlasting arms.”

Further, I think that we may use the text as referring to a matter of intense concern. Sometimes we say to one another, “Is our religion real? We trust we love the Lord, but do we really love Him? We think we are reposing in Christ, but are we really doing so? We have a measure of joy and peace—does it really come through believing in Jesus, or is it a delusion of the flesh or of the devil? We have, so far, come a long way in the heavenly trail, but are we really going towards Heaven, or is it all a mistake?”

It is a good thing, occasionally, Brothers and Sisters, to look underneath. He who never sees what is under him may have great cause to do so. Examine your foundations—see what your cornerstones are, for if you should be building on the sand, then, in the time of storm, your fine building will be all swept away! It is a grand thing if we can find this text to be true—“Underneath are the everlasting arms.” I dig through my experience and, “underneath are the everlasting arms.” I question my joys. I examine myself about my sorrows, but do I come down on the purposes of God, the Immutable faithfulness of the Most High, the eternal Truths of God revealed in Scripture? Do I come down upon the everlasting arms? If so, I am resting where the whole universe may rest—I am resting on a faithful God and I need not be afraid! Do not fear to examine yourself! If you do, there is, perhaps, all the graver need for the testing and trying. Search and look, and go to the bottom of these matters. Happy shall you be if, diving to the very depths, you can say, “Yes, underneath are the everlasting arms.”

I shall use this first word of my text in one more way. I think we have, here, the secret of singular discoveries that will yet be made. We do not at present know the reality of things—we judge according to our feelings and by the sight of our eyes—how else can we judge? But the day will come when things will appear very differently from what they do now. There is a huge trouble which has mastered us for years—it has seemed, with its dense shadow, to darken our heavenly way for a great length of time—but the day will come when we shall look through that trouble and we shall find that “underneath are the everlasting arms.” Perhaps some of us are in sore perplexity. We cannot understand the Lord’s Providential dealings with us. He does not always tell us the reason for His actions—we might not understand it if He did—but we may rest assured that He is working out purposes of Infinite Love! He ceases not to care for us even when things appear to be at their very worst. I bear my willing witness to the faithfulness of God! I am not as old as some, but I am old enough to have gone through fire and water, and I am here to testify that I have not been burned by the one, nor drowned by the other! Cannot many of you say the same? In your sorest trials and in your hottest furnaces, has He not been especially present with you and bestowed great blessings upon you? ‘Tis even so! Then trust Him, you saints, for what His Word assures you is gloriously true—“Underneath are the everlasting arms.”

Go deeper down. Look further into the real reason of things than you have been accustomed to do and you shall come on this solid foundation—that God is working out for you infinite and eternal blessedness by these light afflictions which are but for a moment.

II. Now, secondly, let us note THE MANNER IN WHICH THIS QUARTER IS SECURED—“Underneath are the everlasting arms.”  
The everlasting arms are there and that means, first of all, that God Himself is close to us, guaranteeing the eternal safety of all those who trust in Him. Of course, where any of his elect arms are, there He is, and God is not divided from His own arms. This is our joy and comfort that God is with us! What strength it gives to faith to believe that God is present! Even the false prophet, Mohammed, had a strong faith in god—in Allah—and when he fled for the first time and hid in a cave with only one friend, his companion said to him, “Our pursuers are after us and there are only two of us.” “Stop,” exclaimed Mohammed, “there are three, for Allah is here!” It was the utterance of a brave and grand faith—would that his whole career had been in harmony with it! Wherever there are two of God’s people, there is Another with them, for God is there. We do not count Him in as we ought to do, yet, if we were wise, we would put ourselves down as only ciphers and say, “Nobody is there till HE is there! He is the one true, personal Numeral that multiplies all these ciphers indefinitely.”  
Mr. Wesley said, as he died, “The best of all is, God is with us.” And that is the best of all, is it not? Underneath is God, Himself. He who made the heavens and the earth cannot forsake those who do not forsake Him. If you love Him. If you trust in Him, He might as soon cease to be, as fail anyone who is relying upon Him. This is the glory of Jehovah, that while the gods of the heathen are worthless idols, our God hears prayer and answers the cry of His people! Try Him and see if it is not so. Blessed are they who trust in Jehovah, for they shall find in the living God help in every time of need, and sufficient strength for every day of trial! So, then, we see that what might appear to us as the dark abyss, the dreary, mysterious underworld, is all guarded by Jehovah, Himself— “Underneath are the everlasting arms.”  
Our text also means that the Lord’s Immutable Purpose is being fulfilled. Where God’s arms are, He is at work, and He is at work accomplishing His purposes of Grace. The text speaks of everlasting arms—that is a strength that never fails and never turns aside from the purpose to which it has bound itself. O child of God, down deep where you cannot see it, the Divine Power of the Eternal Godhead is always at work for you! The arms of God are busy on your behalf! He has made them bare to show Himself strong in your defense! You can be sure of this! God has a purpose of love to all who believe in Him—and that purpose of love shall stand fast to all eternity! Whatever changes there may be in the appearance of this world and in the great universe of which it forms a part, there shall be no change in the Infinite resolve of God to bless His people and preserve them to the end. Why, Believer, be of good comfort, and say to yourself, “At the bottom of everything that happens to me, there is the Immutable Purpose of God and God, Himself, working it out!”  
Beside the Lord’s Immutable Purpose and His Infinite Power by which God is at work for you at all times, our text means that His inexhaustible patience is waiting its time. “Underneath are the everlasting arms” bearing up your load, sustaining it with long endurance while He keeps on working for you—invisible, yet always active on your behalf. Do you expect to see your God on this side Heaven? If so, you will be disappointed! Are you willing to walk by faith and not by sight? If so, you shall have a double blessing, for, “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” Oh, that the Holy Spirit of God would bring you to this point! Having trusted God in the Person of His dear Son. Having laid the whole weight of your eternal interests upon Him whom God has revealed to be your Savior, you may leave them there in perfect safety, without a moment’s care or anxiety! God’s everlasting arms must carry out God’s eternal purposes. Not one of His promises can fall to the ground, for, “God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: has He said and shall He not do it? Or has He spoken and shall He not make it good?” It is God Himself who undertakes to bear you up, and bear you through—therefore rest assured that He will do it!  
III. I must not speak longer upon that matter, for I must say just a little upon the third point. THERE ARE TIMES WHEN THIS TEXT IS VERY PRECIOUS TO BELIEVERS—“Underneath are the everlasting arms.”  
One of these times is, I think, when we are very sick and very feeble. The pillows have been fluffed up for you and made as soft as they can be. And the bed, which is so apt to grow hard, has been tenderly smoothed by kind fingers, yet you sink back as if you were about to die of exhaustion! Sink back, then! Be not afraid, for, “underneath are the everlasting arms.” Perhaps there comes a faintness over you and you seem to be sinking, sinking—you know not where—still, “underneath are the everlasting arms!” You try to rise, but you cannot. You would clutch at something by which you think you might get back to activity, but you fall back into the same state of weary languor and pain. Well, but still, “underneath are the everlasting arms!” It is delightful to feel that our feebleness encroaches upon Omnipotence—that just when there is nothing left to us—then God comes in with all His fullness and bears us up! He is always faithful and full of compassion—He does not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men—so, when He must grieve them, it is then that He displays His special power to strengthen and sustain them. Go home to your bed, if so it must be with you. If there are wearisome months of sickness and disease awaiting you, go home and carry this text with you—“Underneath are the everlasting arms.”  
Is not this Word of God very sweet, too, when burdened with sore troubles, or oppressed with heavy labors? You feel that you need double strength and you say, “I cannot keep on any longer. There is too much for mortal powers to endure, I cannot bear up under these repeated trials. The last time I felt thus, I thought that I had no strength left, and now this feeling comes over me again—what shall I do? I am thrown down, I am crushed as though men were riding over my head! I seem to be cast out like the mire in the streets.” Yes, but still, “underneath are the everlasting arms.” We sang, just now—  
*“As your day, your strength shall be.”*

Is that truth or fiction? Ask God’s people as to their past experience and they will set to their seal that God is true! And you, too, shall find it true. Oh, how wondrously God’s saints have been borne up under persecution—and cheerful and glad under oppression! The sweetest songs that ever were heard on earth were sung behind prison bars! Perhaps I shall not be wrong when I say that the most wonderful joys that ever were felt by mortal hearts have been felt by men and women who, on the morrow, were to be burned at the stake—but whose very souls have danced within them because of the unspeakable delight which the Presence of God has given them!

I think it was Socrates who said, “Philosophers could be merry without music.” I take the statement from his mouth and alter it, and say, Christians can be happy without happy circumstances! They can, sometimes, like nightingales, sing best in dark nights. Their joy is not mere outward mirth. Sorrows fall upon them, yet, from the deep that lies underneath wells up yet more exceeding joy! Yes, “underneath are the everlasting arms,” and when we can no longer stand, it is a blessed thing to lean or fall back on them!

I have already told you that another time when this text is very sweet is when you are going down hill. And some of you may be going down hill pretty fast just now. Never mind—“Underneath are the everlasting arms.” When you come down the hill of old age, you know what lies at the bottom. Why, then, go up again, higher than you ever went before, renewing your youth and being forever with the Well-Beloved!

So, dear Friends, I may change the application of my text, “Underneath are the everlasting arms,” and pass it on to those who are all trembling and shaking. Some of you, perhaps, know what I mean. That young man has begun to preach a little, but he says, “I fear that I shall break down.” Dear Brother, if you get a message from God to tell, then tell it, and do not be afraid, for, “underneath are the everlasting arms.” You are seeking to gather a few young people together and you are trying to bless them, but you feel your own weakness so much that you say, “I know I shall make a failure of it.” Do not say so, for, “underneath are the everlasting arms!” He who helps us when we go down, down, down, is equally ready to do so when we are going up in His service! When our ardent zeal is bearing us forward to do something more for the Lord than we are quite equal to, then, “underneath are the everlasting arms.” And if you are seeking greater holiness, daring to indulge a loftier joy—if you are trying to sing some of those hymns which, a few months ago, you thought were pitched in too high a key for you—be bold and daring! Your wing feathers will grow by your very attempt to fly! The possibilities of Grace are boundless—leave yourself to them. Be not always weak and trembling. God help you to become as a David, and you who are as David, to become as an angel of the Lord!

Once more, the hour will come when everything will begin to melt away beneath your feet. Earthly comforts will fail you, friends will be unable to help you—they can wipe the clammy sweat from your brow and moisten your lips with a drop of water—but they cannot go with you on the great voyage upon which you are about to be launched. When heart and flesh fail, then may the Lord speak to you the sweet words before us, “Underneath are the everlasting arms!” It will be a sinking to the flesh, but a rising to the spirit! Underneath dying saints there is the living God! Be not afraid, therefore, even to die, for, to the Christian, “to die is gain.” I remember, at a funeral, when we laid the body of one of God’s saints in the grave, a dear minister prayed, “Lord, we thank You that though our dear friend has come so low as to be in his grave, he cannot go any lower, for, ‘underneath are the everlasting arms,’ and in due time You will bring him up, again, in those everlasting arms, raised in the likeness of his Lord.”

That is true of all Believers! Therefore let this text come sweetly home to your heart—“Underneath are the everlasting arms.”  
I must conclude with this remark. There are some here who are net yet saved. I would illustrate the way of salvation to you by this text. You are hoping to save yourself. You are depending upon something that you have done, or that you have felt. I want you to let all that go, to give up every hope you have that comes out of yourself. “Oh,” you say, “but I shall fall.” Yes, you will, and that falling shall be your salvation, for, “underneath are the everlasting arms.” There you are, up at that window, and the flames are raging behind you so that you cannot escape—but one stands below. He is strong enough to catch you in his arms and he says, “Drop into my arms! Do not hesitate!” Jesus Christ never yet allowed any soul to be injured that dropped into His arms. Let go, man, let go! Let go everything and drop into the arms of Jesus! That is the saving thing—to let everything else go and trust only to Jesus, depending wholly upon Him who lived, and died, and rose again—and is the ever-living Savior of sinners. Drop into His arms! They are everlasting arms, as strong to save, now, as they were 1,800 years ago! Drop into His arms. God help you to do so, for His name’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**DEUTERONOMY 8.**

Verse 1. All the commandments which I command you this day shall you observe to do, that you may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers. Every word, here, seems emphatic. Like the children of Israel, we are to observe all the commandments of the Lord our God—not merely some of them, picking and choosing as we please. It is a very ill conscience which regards some of God’s statutes and pays no attention to others! In fact, the very act of making a selection as to what commands we will observe is gross disobedience. “All the commandments which I command you this day shall you observe to do.”

Notice that we are not only to do as we are bidden, but to do it with carefulness—“you shall observe to do.” God would not have a thoughtless, careless, blind service! We must bow our mind and heart as well as our will to His service. Remember, also, that it is not sufficient to “observe” the commandments so as to note what they are, but we are to “observe to do” them. That observation which does not end in right practice is like a promising blossom upon a tree which never knits and which, therefore, produces no fruit. Further notice that to walk in the ways of God is for our own benefit as well as for His Glory—“That you may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers.”

There are, doubtless, many good things which we miss because we are not careful in our walking. I am sure that the happiest life will be found to be that which is most carefully conducted upon the principles of holy obedience to God’s commands. There are certain blessings which God will not give to us while we are disobedient to Him. Many a father feels that he cannot indulge his child as he would wish to indulge him when he finds the child negligent as to his father’s will. So, if we please God, God will please us, but, if we walk contrary to Him, He will walk contrary to us. Let me read this most instructive verse again, that it may be further impressed upon your memories and your hearts—“All the commandments which I command you this day shall you observe to do, that you may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers.” To help you in obeying these commands, it is added—

2. And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you, and to prove you, to know what was in your hearts whether you would keep His commandments, or no. Look back and derive from your past experience a motive for more careful obedience in the future. He does not read his own life aright who does not see in it abundant causes for gratitude—and how can gratitude express itself better than by a cheerful, hearty obedience in the present and the future?

3. And He humbled you, and suffered you to hunger, and fed you with manna, These two sentences come very closely together—“Suffered you to hunger, and fed you with manna.” I suppose we are not fit to eat heavenly bread till first of all we begin to hunger for it. God loves to give to men who will eat with an appetite—“He suffered you to hunger, and fed you with manna.”

3. Which you knew not, neither did your fathers know. It was a new kind of food and even in the day when they ate it, they did not fully know what it was. They saw that it came by a miracle and it remained a mystery and, I think we can say that though we have fed upon the Bread of Heaven, some of us, for well-near 40 years, yet we hardly know, nor dare to think that we know, what it is made of, nor can we tell all the sweetness that is in it. We know the love of Christ, but it still passes our knowledge. It is true of us, as of Israel in the wilderness, “He humbled you, and suffered you to hunger, and fed you with manna, which you knew not, neither did your fathers know.”

3. That He might make you know that man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD does man live. It is a grand thing to be delivered from materialism, to be freed from the notion that the outward means are absolutely essential for the accomplishment of the Divine Purpose. If God had so willed it, we could have lived on air—if the air had been sanctified by the Word of God and prayer for such a use! The Lord has, however, chosen to feed us upon bread—yet our highest life, our real life, does not live on bread, but it lives on the Word which proceeds out of the mouth of God! This is one of the passages with which our Lord fought Satan in the desert and overcame him. Happy is that servant of God who will arm himself with this same Truth and feel, “I am not to be provided for merely by money, or by anything else that is visible. God will somehow provide for me and I can leave all care about the means, if the means fail, and get away to the God of the means and lean, not on what I see, but on that arm which is invisible! That which you can see may fail you, for it is, like yourself, a shadow. But He whom you cannot see will never fail you. The strongest sinew in an arm of flesh will crack, but the eternal arm never fails and never is shortened! Lean on that arm and you shall never be ashamed, nor confounded, world without end! It takes 40 years to teach some people that lesson, but some, alas, have not learned it even at the end of 80 years!

4. Your raiment waxed not old upon you, neither did your feet swell these forty years. See how God not only cares for His people’s food, but for their raiment, also. We may, therefore, well take heed to Paul’s injunction—“Having food and raiment let us be therewith content.” Whether it was by a miracle that the Israelites’ raiment did not wear out, or whether it came to pass, in the order of Providence, that they were able to get fresh clothing when it did wear out, does not matter at all—it made no difference to them how it was arranged, for it was equal kindness on the part of God who provided for them. “Neither did your feet swell.” We call the Arab, sometimes, “The pilgrim of the weary feet,” but the Israelites’ feet were not weary. They traversed a stony wilderness, yet God kept them in such health and strength that their feet swelled not even after 40 years of journeying! You and I often get worn out in 40 hours—forty days are as long as we can hope to go. But God enabled His ancient people to go on for 40 years and still their feet swelled not. Dr.

Watts sweetly sang— *“Mere mortal power shall fade and die,  
And youthful vigor cease.  
But we that wait upon the Lord  
Shall feel our strength increase!  
The saints shall mount on eagles’ wings,  
And taste the promised bliss,  
Till their unwearied feet arrive  
Where perfect pleasure is.”*

5. You shall also consider in your heart that, as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you. We sometimes think that we could do without the Lord’s chastening. If He will give us food and raiment and keep our feet from swelling, we will not crave the rod. No, but though we do not ask for it, the rod is one of the choicest blessings of the Covenant—and if we are the Lord’s children, we shall not go without it! To come under Divine discipline is one of the greatest mercies we can ever have. Many of us, who are now men and women, thank God for earthly parents who have corrected us. We wonder what we would have been if there had been no discipline in our father’s house. So, truly, is it with all of us who are God’s children—in years to come we shall prize the chastisement which now makes us grieve. Even now it is well if, by faith, we can apply to our own heart this text—“as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you.”

6, 7. Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to fear Him. For the LORD your God brings you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills. There are changes in our condition. Israel was not always in the wilderness—the chosen people were brought into a good land, into a place of rest from their weary wandering. So it may happen to you and to me that even in temporal circumstances, God may work a great change for us—and especially will He do this in spiritual matters. After a time of wilderness traveling, we who have believed enter into rest—we come to understand the Gospel—and he who understands the Gospel is not, any longer, in the wilderness! In a certain sense, he has come into the land of promise where he already enjoys Covenant mercies. It is true that the Canaanite is still in that land and we have to drive him out, but it is a good land to which God has brought us, “a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills.” The Lord makes us drink of the river of His good pleasure. He satisfies us with the cooling streams of His Covenant love.

8. A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of olive oil, and honey. I will not go into a spiritualizing of all this, but I know that you who have come to believe in Christ and have entered, by faith, into His rest, know what sweet things God has provided for you—not merely bare necessities, but choice delights. He gives you to eat of the sweetnesses. He gives you the fatnesses—the wines on the lees, well-refined, and the fat things full of marrow. I trust that there are many here who know the blessed experience of joy and peace in believing. You have entered into a fair region. You have passed through the belt of storms. You have come where the trade winds blow heavenward, Your sails are filled, your vessel skips along before the breeze. You are making good progress towards the Fair Havens of eternal happiness!

9. A land wherein you shall eat bread without scarceness, you shall not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you may dig brass. There are deep things hidden away in the Gospel treasuries. Silver and gold there may be none, but then, iron and copper are much more useful things—and the most useful things we shall ever need in this life lie hidden beneath the surface of the Gospel! If we know how to dig deep, we shall be abundantly rewarded by the treasures which we shall discover. Well now, if your experience has thus changed. If you have left the fiery serpents and the howling wilderness behind you and have come into a place of peace and enjoyment, what follows?

10. When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you. He permits you to eat—not to satiety, but you may eat and be full—only not so full but that you can always bless His name! Do not be afraid of holy joy! Eat and be full of it, only let it never take your heart away from Him who gives you the joy. On the contrary, bless your God for the good land which He has given you. It is said that in the olden times, pious Jews always blessed God before they ate, and always blessed God after they ate. They blessed God for the fragrance of the flower whenever they smelt it. Whenever they drank a cup of water, they blessed the Lord who gave them drink out of the rock in the desert. Oh, that we were always full of praises of God! Then it would not hurt us to be full of meat. But if we get full of meat and are empty of praises, this is mischievous, indeed!

11. Beware that you forget not the LORD your God, in not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command you this day. That would be practical atheism—not keeping the commandments of God is one of the most vivid ways of forgetting Him!

12-14. Lest when you have eaten and are full, and have built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; then your heart is lifted up and you forget the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. The other day a friend asked me this question, “From where does God get His princes?” And the answer I gave was, “He often picks them off dunghills.” Oh, but they sometimes forget the dunghills where they grew and think themselves wonderfully important individuals! Then there is a time of pulling down for them. We cannot eat and be full without having the temptation of getting our heart lifted up! It is a great blessing to have the heart lifted up in one way, that is, in God’s way—but to be lifted up by bread, to be lifted up by silver, to be lifted up by flocks and herds is such a bad way of being lifted up that evil and sorrow must come of it! See, the Lord does not forbid His people to build a house, or to eat and to enjoy what He gives them. But He does charge them not to forget the God who gave them these mercies, nor to forget where they used to be in slavery—“Beware that you forget not the Lord your God which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.”

16. Who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought you forth water out of the rock of flint. I cannot but pause as I remember my own passage through “that great and terrible wilderness, where there was no water.” When a soul is under conviction of sin, “fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought” are very feeble images of the pains and miseries that come of guilt unforgiven! “Where there was no water.” Oh, what would we not have given, then, to have understood a little of that Gospel which, perhaps, we now despise? Oh, what would we not have given, then, just to have moistened our burning lips with the Living Water of the precious Word in which, possibly, now we see no refreshing? May God have mercy upon us for our forgetfulness of His great mercy! Let us, with deep gratitude, think of Him again—“Who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought you forth water out of the rock of flint.” “More likely,” says one, “to bring fire rather than water out of a rock of flint.” And it did seem as if the Cross of the curse must have cursed us, yet it blessed us! The Lord brought forth Living Water out of that Rock which was smitten for guilty man!

16, 17. Who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers knew not, that He might humble you, and that He might prove you, to do you good at your latter end; and you said in your heart, My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth. We must not say this about either temporal or spiritual wealth! If we have grown in Grace and have become useful, and are spiritually a blessing to others, we must not take any credit for it—or else down we shall go before long! God did not enrich you that you might set up for a god in opposition to Him. Christ did not love you that you might make yourself a rival to Him. Oh, that must not be! We must never say in our heart, “My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.”

18, 19. But you shall remember the LORD your God: for it is He that gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His Covenant which He swore unto your fathers, as it is this day. And it shall be, if you do at all forget the LORD your God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish. If you live like sinners, you will die like sinners! “Where, then, is the perseverance of the saints?” asks one. Why, in this, that they shall not live like sinners! God’s Grace will not let them go wandering after idols to worship and to serve them! He will keep us faithful to Himself, but if we will wander after idol gods, it proves that we are not the Lord’s true Israel, and we must expect to be served as others have been who have turned aside to worship idols—

20. As the nations which the LORD destroys before your face, so shall you perish; because you would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.

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PRESENT PRIVILEGE AND FUTURE FAVOR

NO. 624

**DELIVERED ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, MARCH 29, 1865, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT UPTON CHAPEL.

**“The eternal God is your refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy from before you. And shall say, Destroy them.”  
Deuteronomy 33:27.**

THERE is a great satisfaction in having such a text as this, for even if the preacher should not be able to say anything to edification, yet the text itself is rich food for the saints and may fully satisfy their hunger. Let but a child of God really digest such a royal dainty as this and he shall be as well fed as was Elijah when, waking up, found food under the juniper tree, in the strength of which he might go for forty days. This one verse may, by the Holy Spirit, be made sufficiently nourishing to sustain a Believer from that place where he now is, to the gates of Glory. “The eternal God is your refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms.”

It is fabled that the swan sings but once and that just before it dies. So Moses, who had been all his life a Prophet, now closes his career a poet and dies singing! He praises God, setting Him above all gods and defying all men to find one like unto Him. “Who is like unto the God of Jeshurun?” Not satisfied with this, he also exalts in the highest degree all the people who have God to be their portion. “Happy are you, O Israel. Who is like unto you?” I may say that my text is a combination of the two—he is here extolling God, the everlasting and eternal God who is our refuge— and he is here admiring the privilege of Believers who have such a God to rest upon.

While we are speaking, therefore, this evening, if you are not profited by our words, yet your hearts may be blessed if you praise God for His great goodness towards you. And may you also feel melted with holy joy at the blessed privileges which belong to you as the people of God—in having such a God who is so good to you. The text naturally divides itself into two parts—the present and the future. In the present we have the eternal God to be our refuge. In the future it is written that He shall thrust out the enemy from before us and shall say, “Destroy them.”

I. Beginning then, with the first part of the text, THE PRESENT BLESSING appeals to me to give us three distinct thoughts. God is our shelter. “The eternal God is your refuge.” But the word, “refuge,” according to many of the best translators, may be read, “mansion,” or “abiding place.” So here comes a second thought—that God is our abode. Then the next sentence gives us the third thought, “And underneath are the everlasting arms,” so that God is our support, as well as our shelter and our abode. 1. We will begin our meditation, in the Spirit’s power, by considering

God as our shelter. The children of Israel, while they were in Egypt and in the wilderness, were a type of God’s visible Church on earth. Moses was speaking primarily of them, but secondarily, of all the chosen ones of God in every age. Now, as God was the shelter of His ancient people Israel, so is He the refuge of His saints through all time. And first, He was eminently their shelter when they were under bondage and the yoke was heavy. When they had to make bricks without straw and the taskmasters oppressed them, then the people cried unto the Lord and God heard their cry and sent unto them His servant Moses.

So also there often comes to men a time when they begin to feel the oppression of Satan. I believe that many ungodly men feel the slavery of their position. Even some of those who are never converted have sense enough to feel at times that the service of Satan is a hard one, yielding but little pleasure and involving awful risks. Some men cannot go long making bricks without straw without being more or less conscious that they are in the house of bondage. These, who are not God’s people, under the pressure of mind consequent upon a partial discovery of their state, turn to some form of pleasure or self-righteousness in order to forget their burden and yoke.

But God’s elect people, moved by a higher power, are led to cry unto their God. It is one of the first signs of a chosen soul—that it seems to know, as if by heavenly instinct—where its true refuge is. Dear Brothers and Sisters, you remember that although you knew but little of Christ— and in doctrinal matters you were very dark, though you did not understand, perhaps, even your own need—yet there was a something in you that made you pray and realize that only at the Mercy Seat could you find your refuge.

Before you were a Christian, before you could say—“Christ is mine”— your bedside was the witness to many flowing tears when your aching heart poured itself out before God, perhaps in strains like these—“O God, I need something. I do not know what it is I need, but I feel a heaviness of spirit. My mind is burdened and I feel that You only can unburden me. I know that I am a sinner! Oh, that You would forgive me! I hardly understand the plan of salvation, but one thing I know—I want to be saved! I would arise and go unto my Father—my heart pants to make Your bosom my refuge.”

Now, I say that this is one of the first indications that such a soul is one of God’s chosen, for it is true, just as it was of Israel in Egypt, that God is the refuge of His people even when they are under the yoke. When captivity is led captive, the Eternal God becomes the refuge of His people from their sins. The Israelites were brought out of Egypt. They were free— albeit they were marching they knew not where—yet their chains were snapped. They were emancipated and needed not to call any man, “Master.”

But look, Pharaoh is angry and he pursues them! With his horses and his chariots he hastens after them. The enemy said, “I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil. My lust shall be satisfied upon them.” Thus there is a period in the spiritual life when sin labors to drag back the sinner who has newly escaped from it. Like hosts ready for battle, all the poor sinner’s past iniquities hurry after him and overtake him in a place where his way is hedged in. The poor fugitive would escape, but he cannot! What, then, must he do? You remember, then, Moses cried unto the Lord. When nothing else could be found to afford shelter to the poor escaped slaves. When the Red Sea rolled before them and the mountains shut them in on either side. When an angry foe pursued them, there was one road which was not stopped up and that was the king’s highway upward to the Throne—the way to their God—and therefore they began at once to travel that road, lifting up their hearts in humble prayer to God, trusting that He would deliver them.

You know the story too well for me to need to repeat it here—how the uplifted rod divided the watery deeps. How the people passed through the sea as a horse through the wilderness and how the Lord brought all the hosts of Egypt into the depths of the sea—that He might utterly destroy them so that not one of them was left and those who had seen them one day saw them no more forever.

Beloved, in this sense God is still the refuge of His people. Our sins which pursued us so hotly have been drowned in the depths of the Savior’s blood. They sank to the bottom like stones. The depths have covered them—there is not one, no, not one of them left—and we, standing upon the shore in safety can shout in triumph over our drowned sins! “Sing unto the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously and all our iniquities has He cast into the midst of the sea.” While God is thus the refuge of His people under the yoke, and when sin seeks to overcome them, He is also their refuge in times of need.

The children of Israel journeyed into the wilderness but there was nothing for them to feed upon there. The arid sand yielded them neither leeks, nor garlic, nor cucumbers. And no brooks or rivers, like the Nile, were there to quench their thirst. They would have famished if they had been left to depend upon the natural productions of the soil. They came to Marab, where there was a well, but the water was very bitter. At other stations there were no wells whatever and even bitter water was not to be had. What then? Why, the unfailing refuge of God’s people in the wilderness was prayer. Moses, their representative, always betook himself to the Most High—at times falling upon his face in agony and at other seasons climbing to the top of the hill and there pleading in solemn communion with God that He would deliver the people.

And you have heard full often how men did eat angels’ food in the desert—how Jehovah rained bread from Heaven upon His people in the howling wilderness and how He smote the rock and waters gushed forth. You have not forgotten how the strong wind blew and brought them flesh so that they ate and were satisfied. Israel had no need unsupplied. Their garments waxed not old and though they went through the wilderness, their feet grew not sore. God supplied all their needs. We in our land must go to the baker, the butcher, the clothier and many others in order to equip ourselves fully. But the men of Israel went to God for everything. We have to store up our money and buy this in one place and that in the other—but the Eternal God was their refuge and their resort for everything and in every time of need they had nothing to do but to lift up their

voice to Him.

Now it is just so with us spiritually. Faith sees our position today to be just that of the children of Israel then—whatever our needs are the Eternal God is our refuge. God has promised you that your bread shall be given you and that your water shall be sure. He who gives spirituals will not deny temporals. The Mighty Master will never suffer you to perish while He has it in His power to succor you. Go to Him with whatever may be the trouble which weighs you down. Do not suppose your case too bad, for nothing is too hard for the Lord! Dream not that He will refuse to undertake temporals as well as spirituals—He cares for you in all things.

In everything you are to give thanks, and surely in everything by prayer and supplication you may make known your needs unto God. In times when the cruse of oil is ready to fail and the handful of meal is all but spent, then go to the All-Sufficient God and you shall find that they who trust in Him shall not lack any good thing. Furthermore, our God is the refuge of His saints when their enemies rage. When the host was passing through the wilderness they were suddenly attacked by the Amalekites. Unprovoked, these marauders of the desert set upon them and destroyed the tail end of them. And what did Israel do? The people did not ask to have a strong body of horsemen, hired out of the land of Egypt for their refuge, or even if they did wish it, He who was their wiser self, Moses, looked to another arm than that of man, for he cried unto God!

How glorious is that picture of Moses, with uplifted hands, upon the top of the hill giving victory to Joshua in the plains below! Those uplifted arms were worth ten thousand men to the hosts of Israel. No, twice ten thousand had not so easily gotten a victory as did those two extended arms which brought down Omnipotence itself from Heaven! This was Israel’s master-weapon of war—their confidence in God. Joshua shall go forth with men of war, but the Lord, Jehovah-Nissi, is the banner of the fight and the giver of the victory! Thus, dear Friends, the Eternal God is our refuge. When our foes rage we need not fear their fury. Let us not seek to be without enemies, but let us take our case and spread it before God.

We cannot be in such a position—that the weapons of our foes can hurt us, while the promise stands good—“No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper and every tongue that rises against you in judgment You shall condemn.” Though earth and Hell should unite in malice, the Eternal God is our castle and stronghold, securing to us an everlasting refuge. To close our remarks upon this point—when their falls into sin had cursed the people of God and provoked the Most High so that He sent fiery serpents among them—even then the Eternal God was their refuge. When we are conscious that sin has brought us into any mischief or sorrow, we are apt to feel—“I must not go to God with this, because it is clearly the natural and inevitable result of my sin—it is a rod of my own making.”

Yes, but we may go even with that, for if the Lord should send the fiery serpents, still, you must fly into the arms of that very God who has sent the serpents to bite you—for it is He, and He alone who can lift up the bronze serpent before your tearful eyes and give you life through looking at it! We make a mistake when we imagine that we may not go to God as sinners! We may feel unworthy to go, but we must not think that we shall be unwelcome. I do not go to my Heavenly Father in times of need because I feel there are excellencies in me which will qualify me for receiving His help! No! I go because I feel unfit to be blessed and am therefore anxious for the blessing!

I go because I feel unworthy of deliverance and am the more desirous that I may get deliverance from the God of Grace. The Eternal God, then, is our refuge in a thousand ways. I have only given you a few hints on this part of the subject but we will sum them up and then you can enlarge on them at your leisure. Under the yoke, before sin is forgiven, if you are a child of God the Eternal God is your refuge. When you have escaped from sin and the past haunts you, still the Eternal God is your refuge. When, in the wilderness, your needs press you down, whether they are temporal or spiritual, then the Eternal God is your refuge. And when your enemies attack you, or your own guilt has brought you into such a position that God Himself chastises you sharply, still, even then it holds good and true that the Eternal God is your refuge if you believe in Him.

2. Now take the second thought with brevity. The Eternal God is our mansion, our dwelling, our abiding place. The children of Israel had no other and therefore if God were not their dwelling place, they were houseless. Pilgrims of the weary foot. They found no city to dwell in. At eventide they pitched their tents but they struck them again in the morning. The trumpet sounded and they were up and away. If they were in a comfortable valley for one day, yet that relentless trumpet bade them resume their wearisome march through the wilderness in the morning. And, perhaps they thought they lingered the longest where an encampment was least desirable. Nevertheless they always had a dwelling place in their God.

If I might use such a description without seeming to be fanciful, I would say that the great cloudy canopy which covered them all day long from the heat of the sun was their roof—and that the blazing pillar which protected them by night was their family fireside. God Himself dwelt in the very midst of them in the bright shining light, the Shekinah, within the holy place and up from the very spot there rose the great pillar which was cloud by day and fire by night. And so, within the compass of God’s protecting Presence they found a perpetual abode. So Moses sings, “Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.”

Wherever they were, if they were but under the shadow of that cloud they were quite at home and whenever they got within the radius of the bright pillar of fire, they felt that they were not away from the family circle. Now I hope that many of us can say that the Eternal God is our dwelling place—

*“Home, home,  
Sweet home,  
There’s no place like home,”*

says the song, and certainly, if God is our home, the song has a depth of sweetness in it. At home one feels safe. An Englishman’s house is his castle—who shall intrude upon him there? When the bolt is drawn, when the curtains are drawn, when the family gathers round the fireside, then we

have shut the world and all our enemies’ babbling tongues out and we dwell in quiet.

So when we get to our God, not bolts of brass nor gates of iron could guard God’s people so well as that wall of fire which Jehovah is to all His chosen. When we draw near to God in sweet communion we feel as if the devil himself were dumb—

*“Then, let the earth’s old pillars shake,  
And all the wheels of Nature break.  
Our steadfast souls shall fear no more,  
Than solid rocks when billows roar.”*

At home, too, we take our rest. Out in the world, in the workshop, we toil until the sweat streams from our face. In the pulpit, in the midst of our congregations, our mind is so active and on the alert that the brain is often wearied. But at home we cast ourselves down upon the couch and feel that now the day’s work is over and that the happy evening of rest has come.

When I get to my God, no servile works have I to do—no hewing of wood and drawing of water, like a Gibeonite, in God’s house! But here I am, His servant, happy in His service and finding sweet rest in what I do for Him. “We that have believed, do enter into rest,” and there is a peace which, “passes all understanding, which keeps our heart and mind, through Christ Jesus.” At home we let our hearts loose. We cast aside all dignity there—we are no longer on our guard like men in armor. We are not afraid that our children will misunderstand us, or that our dear ones will misconstrue our words and sentiments. We feel at ease.

So is it when we are with our God. I dare tell Him what I dare not tell anyone else. There is no secret of my heart which I would not pour into His ear. There is no wish that might be deemed foolish or ambitious by others which I would not communicate to Him. Surely, if “the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him,” the secrets of them that fear Him ought to be, and must be with their Lord. It is at home, if anywhere, that a man is thoroughly happy and delighted. He takes his soul’s best solace there. His eyes sparkle most at his own fireside. Whatever the man may be abroad with all his cares and his troubles, he can’t wait to get home, as going to the place of his delight.

So I trust it is with us and our God. We go out, like Noah’s dove. With weary wings we fly over the watery waste, ready to drop. But we come back again, like that same dove, into Noah’s hand and there we find our resting place forever. It is for home that a man works and labors. I am sure when I see the workers filling the streets, just when work is over, that the most of them have a home to go to for the sake of which they toil. What makes that man work so hard? Why, there are three little ones at home who must be fed! How is it that he is content to go through so much toil? There is a wife at home dear to his soul and for her and the babes he fights the battle of life bravely.

Be it ever so homely. Be it up ever so many pairs of stairs, yet the thought of that little room and of the dear ones there at home gives strength to the man to bear his burden and helps his fingers to fly the quicker over his work. In this sense, too, I think we can say that our gracious God is our home, our mansion. The love of God strengthens us. We do but think of Him in the Person of His dear Son and a glimpse of the suffering face of the Redeemer constrains us to labor. We feel that we must work, for we have brethren yet to be saved! We have uncalled ones yet to be brought in! We have the head of Christ to crown—we have the Father’s heart to make glad by bringing home to Him His wayward and wandering sons.

We will pause here and see if we can say, “Yes, ‘tis true, Lord. You are, as the Eternal God, our mansion and dwelling place.” I pray, dear Friends, do not say this in words unless you know in truth that the Eternal God is your dwelling place.

3. We must be very brief on the third part of this present privilege— “Underneath are the everlasting arms.” This means that God is our support, and our support just when we begin to sink. We want support when we are sinking and by the arms being “underneath,” it seems that this support is given just when we are going down. At certain seasons the Christian sings very low in humiliation. He has a deep sense of his own sin. He is humbled before God till he scarcely knows how to lift up his face and pray because he appears, in his own sight, so abject, so mean, so base, so worthless.

Well, Child of God, remember that when you are at your worst, yet “underneath you are the everlasting arms.” Christ’s Atonement dives deeper than your sin. Sin may sink you ever so low, but the great Atonement is still under all! I will give you a text which proves it. “He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.” You may have gone very low, but you can never have gone so low as, “the uttermost.” Here is another. “All manner of sin and of iniquity shall be forgiven unto men.” You have plunged into nearly all sorts of sin, but you have not gone into, “all manner of sin.” Or if you have, it may be forgiven so that this promise goes underneath you. The love of God, the power of the blood and the prevalence of the intercession are deeper down than sin with all its Hell-born vileness can ever sink the sinner while breath is in his nostrils

Again, the Christian sometimes sinks very deeply in sore trials from without. He loses his property. His children die. His wife is carried to the grave—every earthly prop is cut away. What then? He goes down, down, down—yet still underneath him are the everlasting arms! You cannot sink so deep in distress and affliction, but what the Covenant Grace of an everfaithful God will be still lower than you are—even when at your very lowest! Look at your Savior—you are never so low as He was. Perhaps you cannot pay your rent and you are to be turned out of that little room—this is falling low, indeed. But what did your Savior say—“Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but I, the Son of Man, have not where to lay My head.”

I have supposed you to be in a very sad case, but, you see, underneath you there are the sufferings of Christ. Perhaps your friends have forsaken you. Yes, but hear Him—“He that eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.” He is deeper in the mire than you. You are very, very, very poor, but see, there He hangs upon the Cross—stripped naked, without a rag to cover Him—deserted by all. You have gone very far, but not so far as that. Jesus represents the great goodness of God in its communion with your need and in Him your God puts underneath you His everlasting

arms.  
Possibly you are sinking very deep down, under trouble from within.  
You have felt such vexatious of spirit as you never thought you could have  
known. You have waged such a conflict as you never dreamed of. The  
fountains of the great deep have been broken up. And, as a deluge, sin  
threatens to cover your spirit and drown all the life in your heart. Beloved,  
you cannot, even there, be brought so low as Christ was, for what did He  
say—“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”  
God is still with you to be your succor and if you have lost the light of  
your Father’s countenance, yet you have not lost it to so great an extent  
as your Savior did. You have not yet sweat “great drops of blood.” You  
have not yet prayed with strong crying and tears and found that the cup  
could not be removed altogether. You have not yet descended into the  
depths, as your Savior did. And so we will take it for granted that underneath you, wherever you may be, there are the everlasting arms. I think I  
see the devil trying to drown a Believer, but underneath are the everlasting arms. Satan says, “I will have him yet,” and down he dives lower still—  
but the everlasting arms are even there.  
Why, look what he did with Jonah. He got him into the whale’s belly,  
but he was not content with that. The whale, of course, was near the surface when it first sucked Jonah in. But it goes down, perhaps half a  
mile—it must go deeper yet and so it stirs up the deep in its pain, for it  
has an indigestible morsel within and it does not know what to do with it.  
It plunges down, down, DOWN, till Jonah says he went to the bottoms of  
the mountains and the weeds were wrapped about his head and the earth  
with her bars was about him forever—yet even then, “underneath were the  
everlasting arms,” and therefore the whale comes up and Jonah stands  
upon the dry land once more! So shall it be with you, Beloved, for in your  
worst trials and times of difficulty underneath you are the everlasting  
arms!  
And this, also, I may give you by way of comfort in any weary labors in  
which you may be engaged. There are some of God’s servants who feel as  
if they would willingly die—for to serve God, though very pleasant—is at  
times very hard work. And when one is sincere in God’s service and is  
ready to drop, one will cry out, “Oh, when shall the day of rest come?”  
Courage, courage, you fainting soldier! Underneath are the everlasting  
arms—you shall have strength equal to your day! Your shoes shall be iron  
and brass! You shall end your journey well and you shall fight the fight till  
the victory comes.  
At last, when death comes, the promise shall still hold good. We shall  
stand in the midst of Jordan and, like poor Christian, it is possible that  
we may begin to sink—but may we have some Hopeful with us then, to  
say, as Hopeful did to Christian, “Be of good cheer, my Brother. I feel the  
bottom, it is good”—for underneath us there will be the everlasting arms.  
You may be full of pain and anguish and the spirit may sink into a spiritual death even before the natural death comes on. You may feel dying to  
be dreadful work. But still, if the worst should come to worst—you shall  
yet in the hour of extremity win the victory! You shall triumph over death and enter into the Presence of God and bless His name because, “under  
neath you are the everlasting arms.”  
I can scarcely venture on the second part of my subject tonight at all,  
for we have not done with the first point. I wish you to notice those two  
phrases which are the pith of the text. “The Eternal God.” “Everlasting  
arms.” “The Eternal God.” Here is antiquity. The God who was before all  
worlds is forever my God. Oh, how I love that word, “eternal”! But, Brothers and Sisters, there are some people who do not believe in an Eternal  
God. At any rate they do not believe in Him as being theirs eternally. They  
do not believe that they belonged to Christ before they were born. They  
have a notion that they only had God to be theirs when they believed on  
Him for the first time. They do not believe in Covenant settlements and  
eternal decrees and the ancient purposes of the Most High.  
But let me say that for comfort there is no thought more full of sweetness than that of an Eternal God engaged in Christ Jesus to His people to  
love and bless and save them all! One who has made them the distinguished objects of His discriminating regard from all eternity. It is the  
ETERNAL God. And then there are the “everlasting arms”—arms that will  
never drop, arms that will never grow weary, arms that will never lose  
their strength. They put the two words, “eternal,” and, “everlasting,” together and they remind us of another sweet word—immutability. An everlasting God that faints not, neither is weary, that changes not and turns  
not from His promise. Such is the God we delight to adore and to use as  
our eternal shelter, our dwelling place and our support.  
II. The second part of the subject, AS TO THE FUTURE, I cannot dwell  
upon for want of time but only give you an outline of what one might have  
said upon it if there had been opportunity. He who has been our God in  
the past will certainly be our God in the future! And in the future we have  
two things to comfort us—Divine work, and we have a Divine command.  
Here is the Divine work—He will thrust out our enemies before us. Whatever your difficulties may be, whatever your sins may be against which  
you have to contend, remember, Jehovah leads the van and crushes your  
foes before you come to them.  
You have to fight, Christian, with vanquished enemies and it is an easy  
thing when you have to overcome a dragon who has had his head broken  
already by your risen Lord. Therefore Dr. Watts makes us sing for our  
comfort—  
*“Hell and your sins resist your course,  
But Hell and sin are vanquished foes!  
Your Savior nailed them to the Cross,  
And sung the triumph when He rose.”*  
Before you get to your difficulties, your God will have removed them. The  
stone was laid at the mouth of the sepulcher and the women said, “Who  
shall roll away the stone?” But when they arrived at the spot they found  
that the stone had been rolled away by an angel long before. March on, Christian—the Jordan may be very deep—but as soon as the  
feet of God’s priests touch the border of the river it shall be dried up! You  
shall have before you ten thousand things which may appall you, but if  
you will but go on in the strength of faith, they shall prove to be but the  
shadows which disappear when the sun rises. There is Divine work always going on before God’s people—His shield always goes in front—His  
sword always cuts and clears the way and we have but to follow where He  
leads. When the children of Israel passed over Jordan, the priests who  
bore the ark first dipped their feet in the stream and it parted before the  
servants of the Lord because God was between the cherubim. So in every crossing which lies in the path to the city of our God, that  
better city, Jerusalem the golden, we see the footprints of one who is our  
Priest—touched with a sense of our infirmities and griefs because He has  
endured the same before us! It is He who has planted His feet in the darkest depths and made a path through the mightiest waters so that we need  
not fear—but may boldly plunge in—assured that we only follow Him  
whose Presence will ever enable us to say, “Though I walk through the  
valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me, Your  
rod and Your staff they comfort me.”  
We follow the Captain of our salvation who says, “Come on, follow Me.”  
He goes before. Every dart that wounds you passes by Him. Yes, He has  
felt the first smart of each poisoned arrow in the devil’s quiver and the  
venomous power has been washed away in His blood. There is not a  
weapon in Hell’s armory whose edge has not been turned on the armor of  
our great Champion. The keenness of every blade is gone since it was buried in His wounds. When Jacob wrestled with the nameless one till the  
break of day, he came out of the contest with one sinew withered so that  
he limped to his grave. And thus each of our foes has received a touch  
from the finger of Him, “who comes up from Edom with dyed garments  
from Bozrah, traveling in the greatness of His strength.”  
And that touch has crippled the power of our enemies. They are spoiled  
and robbed of much of their satanic might because they have been beneath the heel of Him who has trod down all our foes beneath His feet.  
Still, we are not to be idle, for we have next a Divine command. He shall  
thrust out our enemies, but He will also say, “Destroy them.” We have to  
take God’s Word and to be obedient to it in the future. Whatever sins we  
have, there is only one thing to be done with them and that is to “destroy  
them.”  
A man has a number of faults and he says, “Well, Sir, there is my  
drunkenness and my swearing and so on. I am quite agreeable to what  
you say, I will destroy them. I will hang them on a gallows as high as that  
on which Haman would have hanged Mordecai. But, Sir, I have little a  
trick in my trade—I should not like to tell everybody of it—it is a very profitable one and I do not think it is so very bad, for nearly everybody else in  
the trade does it. Do you not think the best way would be to practice it  
and give part of the money I get by it to God’s cause? I will be very careful  
and do it only when compelled.”  
My dear Friend, I have only one thing to say to you about your sin and  
that is, “destroy it!” Do not try to make it better, to dress it up, swear it in  
and make a soldier of it for Christ—no—destroy it! This is your work. If  
your eyes offend you, “pluck them out.” “Oh,” says another, “but I have a  
very bad temper. I sometimes fly into a passion. I think I must try to get  
over it by degrees, but still I can make a great many excuses for myself  
and am I not quite right in doing so?” My dear Sir, I can only say one thing and that is, “destroy it,” for the only proper treatment of sin is to cut it off and cast it from you. Do not pamper it or excuse it, but destroy it! Smite it to the heart if you can and never be satisfied till you have ut  
terly destroyed it.  
Look at Saul. He has been against the Amalekites and he brings home  
a very beautiful flock of sheep and bullocks and so on. He is told to destroy them all, but he brings them home and Agag with them. Why did he  
not kill Agag? Well, he was such a gentleman, such a thorough gentleman, that he did not like to kill him. It was a public duty to sweep the  
commonplace Amalekites out of the way—they were such rascals! But this  
Agag, why, he walked so delicately, he had such a nice way with him, he  
was so winning, he had such an enchanting face, had the manners and  
air, in fact, of an Israelite—it would be a pity, a great pity to kill him! So Saul brought home the best of the sheep and the beasts and the cattle and Agag with them. But Samuel comes in and is in no sweet mood  
when he hears the bleating of the sheep. He demands of Saul—“Have you  
done as God commanded you?” “Yes I have,” said Saul. “Then what mean  
the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the cattle that I hear?” “Oh,”  
said Saul, “I did not slay them all. I thought I had better spare some of the  
best of them as an offering unto God, so I kept them alive and I have also  
kept Agag.”  
What came of it? Did the Prophet spare the Amalekite? No, truly! Samuel first told Saul that God had put him away from being king and then  
he said, “Bring Agag,” and Agag came to him. You can imagine how he  
would come—and he said, “Surely the bitterness of death is past.” There  
he stood and I think I see Samuel, getting gray then, very gray and not  
very fit for such service, but he looked for the nearest sword that he could  
get and though it is not a Prophet’s work to kill, yet as soon as he could  
grasp a sword he hewed Agag in pieces! He was not content to cut his  
head off, but hewed him in pieces, as a man would chop a block of wood—  
to show the anger and detestation which God had towards the most  
princely sins.  
Now, Christian, your business with sin is in the Spirit’s power to serve  
it as Samuel did Agag—to hew it in pieces and show the utmost hatred  
towards it. So far from making excuses for it, seek to devise ways by  
which you may mortify it and put it to death. When the Prophet Elijah  
had received the answer to his prayer and the fire from Heaven had consumed the sacrifice in the presence of all the people, he called upon the  
assembled Israelites to take the priests of Baal and, said he, “Let not one  
escape.” And he took them all down to the brook Kishon and slew them  
there.  
So must it be with our sins—each one must die—let not one escape!  
Spare it not for its much crying. Strike, though it be a darling sin as dear  
as an Isaac. Strike, for God struck at sin when it was on His Son. Even so,  
with stern unflinching purpose, condemn to death that sin which may  
have been the darling of your heart. Spare it not, because it may make  
sport or be of use in any way. Remember Samson, how he gathered  
strength as his locks grew once more and how he avenged himself upon  
his foes. Beware lest your sins which are only for awhile repressed and not totally destroyed, should rise up again and with new-found might should hurl you to the ground and bury you in the wreck of your noblest  
hopes and deeds.  
You will probably ask how you will be able to accomplish this work.  
Why, take the promise we have been talking about—“The eternal God is  
your refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms.” If you would triumph over darkness set yourself in the Presence of the Sun of Righteousness. There is no place so well adapted for the discovery of sin, and recovery from its power and guilt, as the immediate Presence of God. Get into  
God’s arms and you will see how to hit at sin and will gather strength to  
give the final blow which shall lay the monster in the dust. Job never  
knew how to get rid of sin half so well as he did when his eye of faith  
rested on God and he abhorred himself and repented in dust and ashes. The fine gold of the Christian is often becoming dim and the spots will  
appear upon the surface showing that we dwell among the sons of earth  
in a world which lies in the Wicked One. We want some sacred fire which  
shall consume away the dross and give us back the brightness we have  
lost. Go to God, He is a consuming fire—not to your spirit—but to your  
sins. You may so plead the work of Christ and the Covenant of Grace as to  
make the very Nature of God, which would condemn you out of Christ, to  
cleanse you, being in Christ Jesus!  
You will be sanctified by the God who would have destroyed you had  
you not fled for refuge to the hope set before you. You have strength to  
overcome sin given you in the Covenant of Grace. You have strength to  
drive out your own iniquities. You have strength to win battles for your  
Master, because in Christ Jesus He has promised to be with you even  
unto the end. May the past experience stimulate you to future exertion  
and let the goodness of God excite you to a sacred jealousy and to a holy  
revenge against those sins which are hateful in His sight. May God bless  
you, Brethren, for Christ’s sake.

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HAPPINESS—THE PRIVILEGE AND DUTY OF CHRISTIANS  
NO. 1359

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 10, 1877, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE. NEWINGTON.

**“Happy are you, O Israel; who is like unto you? O people saved by the Lord, the shield of your help, and who is the sword of your excellency! And your enemies shall be found liars unto you; and you shall tread upon their high places.”  
Deuteronomy 33:29.**

THESE are the last recorded words of Moses and they are significant, for they show us that he found comfort, in his dying moments, in considering the happiness of the people for whom he had labored all his life. From the day when, by God’s power, he led them up out of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness, they had never ceased to lie near his heart. They had been a very heavy burden to him at times, but with marvelous meekness and patience he had borne with their many rebellious provocations and only once spoken bitterly of them. Oftentimes had he stood in the gap and made intercession for them, when otherwise they would have been destroyed. He had, for their sakes, given up the most glorious prospect that was ever proposed to the mind of man, for the Lord had said to him in secret, “Let Me alone, that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a greater nation.”

But no, even such a proposal could not divert him from his patriotic zeal for his people! He loved Israel, erring Israel, ungrateful Israel, as a mother loves her child, and family aggrandizement was relinquished for love of the nation. Still he continued to instruct, lead and guide the stiffnecked race, having no thought but God’s Glory in the midst of Israel, and no ambition but to see the tribes brought, at length, into the promised land. When about to die, the ruling passion was strong upon him and from it he draws his consolation. He seems to say to himself, “I can no more go out and come in. The Lord has said unto me, You shall not go over this Jordan, but though I must leave the beloved nation, yet they are a happy people and are safe in Jehovah’s hands.”

He looks with sparkling eyes at the privileges with which God had enriched them and he feels that he may quietly go up to the mountain and fall asleep, for they would be blessed when he was gone, and saved of the Lord. Ah, my dear young Friends, you who are children of godly families, you cannot tell what joy you will give to your parents if you are converted to God! When they come to die, they will find it one of their sweetest consolations to see their children walking in the Truth of God. They have loved you dearly and they will feel a pang in leaving you, but if they can feel that God has blessed you and saved you, they will die in peace!

I have heard saints, when dying, say, “There is but one thing that I want and for which I could wish to be spared a little longer. I could wish to live to see all my family believing in the Lord. O that all my offspring were lovers of Jesus.” I have heard dying saints express themselves in language somewhat similar to that of David—“The Lord has made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure, although my house is not so with God as I could desire.” That, “although my house is not so with God,” has been a thorn in their pillow and they have felt it painful to quit their household while yet their children were so unhappy as to be out of Christ and unreconciled to God. Think of this, dear young people, I pray you, and, perhaps, natural affection may be blessed in the hand of God to lead you to seek after eternal salvation.

Thus you see how Moses consoled himself. But why was not this expression of the great Lawgiver left as a soliloquy unrecorded? Moses had cheered himself with this reflection, “Happy are you, O Israel,” what need to write it down, or to utter it before the people? It is frequently an unwise thing to tell a man of his propitious surroundings, for he may become vain of them. You may commend a man’s estate until he foolishly dreams that you are commending him. When you praise a man’s position, it is the next thing to flattering the man, for the most of men do not divide between themselves and their condition, but read a commendation of their condition as a commendation of themselves though it is not so!

Therefore, one has sometimes to be very leery of calling men happy— and all the more so because we cannot generally be sure that they are happy—external circumstances being but a poor means of judgment. The fairest apple may be rotten at the core! The finest linen may be a cover for a corpse! Moreover, according to the truthful rule of the ancients, no man is to be counted happy till he is dead, seeing that you do not know the whole of his life and it may happen that the circumstances which now appear to be the foundation of a happy life may turn out to be a preparation for increased bitterness in the later part of existence.

Yet Moses speaks thus openly to Israel without a word of qualification or caution—“Happy are you, O Israel; who is like unto you?” Now, we are quite certain that Moses did not err in this. It would be great self-conceit to imagine such a thing! We may confide in the clearness of his judgment, in the maturity of his experience and in the fidelity of his spirit. We are sure that he did not speak with rashness, for he was of a meek and gentle disposition and somewhat slow in speech and, not likely, therefore, to warm into unreasonable enthusiasm and go beyond the sober truth. Above all, the Holy Spirit has adopted the Lawgiver’s words, for He had Himself inspired them—and we have them here in the Infallible Word of God, so that it is quite certain that Israel was happy, even as our text declares.

The people were favored and it was right for them to be told so. A wise design led to their being reminded of the blessed fact. I think that Moses thus eulogized the nation by way of consoling them for his departure. He did as much as say, “I climb the mount to go away to God, but happy are you, O Israel! Whether Moses is with you or not, God is with you.” No doubt many would say, as the great Lawgiver departed, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof,” but Moses reminds them that the shield of their help and the sword of their excellency would still be with them and they would still be a people saved of the Lord. What better comfort can be offered to bereaved hearts?

I think, also, that he had in his mind’s eye the fact that they were now about to face new difficulties. Under Joshua they were to cross the Jordan and fight the Canaanites. They had known occasional brushes in the wilderness with Amalek and Bashan, but for the most part they had led peaceable lives. Now, however, each man was to be a soldier. From the day in which his foot pressed the promised land, each man was to contend for the mastery and, therefore, Moses sustains them with rich and nourishing meat to strengthen them for the new service.

“Happy are you, O Israel; you are about to throw yourself into the midst of ferocious tribes who will all conspire to cut you off; but you are a people saved of the Lord; your enemies shall be found liars unto you, and you shall tread upon their high places.”—

*“My never-ceasing songs shall show  
The mercies of the Lord,  
And make succeeding ages know  
How faithful is His Word.  
The sacred Truths His lips pronounce  
Shall firm as Heaven endure;  
And if He speak a promise once,  
The eternal Grace is sure.  
How long the grace of David held  
The promised Jewish Throne!  
But there’s a nobler Covenant sealed  
To David’s greater Son.  
His seed forever shall possess  
A Throne above the skies;  
The meanest subject of His Grace  
Shall to that glory rise.”*

So, then, I gather from the example of Moses that to commend a man’s condition, if you have a wise motive for it, and can either console him under trouble or inspire him for future service, is a right thing to do.

This morning we are going to repeat the experiment. Whatever was said about the happy condition of the natural Israel is emphatically true of the spiritual Israel! The tribes were our types and what was true of them is true of us. Without any sort of wresting of the text, we shall, this morning, apply to all Believers—to all who rest in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh—the words of Moses to the tribes, “Happy are you, O Israel; who is like unto you? O people saved by the Lord.” We are the true Israel, the spiritual seed of the father of the faithful, and to us unbounded happiness belongs. This shall be our point this morning.

First, let us consider the happy condition of God’s people. And then, secondly, let us consider the result of our fully realizing this happiness. May the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, fill us with all joy and peace while we commune upon this subject. May the blessed God now bless all His children!  
I. Let us dwell upon THE HAPPY CONDITION OF GOD’S PEOPLE. The

Israelites were so favored that Moses, himself, was astonished at the eminently desirable condition in which they were placed. We may readily imagine that we see him lifting up his hands with surprise and saying, “Happy are you, O Israel; who is like unto you?” He considered the nation to be incomparably favored and, therefore, enquired in astonishment, “Who is like unto you?” He had seen Egypt with all its wisdom and its wealth—and the desert tribes in all their rustic simplicity—and doubtless he knew the condition of most of the nations under Heaven. But having his eyes upon them all, he, nevertheless, looks upon the chosen race which God had brought up out of Egypt and he says, “Who is like unto you?”

Beloved, you who are in Christ are favored by God beyond all others! None in the whole universe are so happily placed as you are—“you are a chosen generation, a peculiar people.” If you have been born again and saved, you are the pick and choice of all God’s creatures and He has indulged you with a measure of love and kindness such as He has shown to none else! I address Believers as a body and I ask you, would you change your estate with the rich of this world? Would you barter Grace for gain? Surely not! There is much that is comfortable connected with the possession of wealth, but if you look at the opulent, as such, there is no reason to believe that they are the possessors of any great amount of happiness.

Gold cannot lighten the heavy heart or cool the burning brow—far more often it cankers the soul and lies like a weight upon the spirit. It is a heavy metal and has weighed many down to Hell. You, even though you are the poor of the flock, the despised and rejected of men—you are a people infinitely favored beyond those who possess the treasures of this fleeting world! Select even a company of princes and let them stand before you in all their pomp, half worshipped by their subjects, but they will not excite your envy, for, “uneasy lies the head that wears a crown,” and those who climb to the high places of the earth commonly confess that there is little peace of mind to be found there. You who believe in Jesus are kings of a nobler sort, already, and enjoy honors and blessings which emperors might covet!

You reign in Christ after a far higher manner than princes and emperors, for you rule in a superior realm, since the spiritual far exceeds the material. Who is like unto you, O Believer, among the mighty ones of the earth? The Lord Jehovah is your strength and your song, your portion and your praise, your comfort and your crown! Turn, if you will, to those who are famous for knowledge, men of skill, wit and research, yet among these there are none to be found comparable in happiness to Christians! To know yourself forgiven, to know yourself eternally saved, to know yourself ordained unto eternal life—to be assured that you will enjoy unspeakable bliss when yonder sun turns to a coal and the moon is black as sackcloth of hair—to know all this is to be unspeakably favored! The utmost learning cannot compare with it.

Nor if you take the sons of pleasure with their wine and their music and their sensual joys, can you find any rivals for our happiness. Solomon tells us concerning laughter that it is mad and sums up all earthly joy with—“Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” Our consecrated pleasures are not such! Our holy joy has no delusion in it. It is solid and real and can never be taken from us and, therefore, those who possess it are a people unparalleled for blessedness! Wealth, rank, learning, fame, pleasure and all else that man holds dear, we would gladly renounce for the joy of our Lord! He has satisfied us with favor and filled us to the brim with content now that He has given us Himself for our portion. Blessed are our very dwellings and the beds we lie upon and the tables at which we sit. “How goodly are your tents, O Jacob, and your tabernacles, O Israel!”

Am I speaking to some Believers who are not enjoying this happiness? Is it not strange that men should be in a position which angels might envy and yet they fail to realize their blessed estate? Just as some men with thousands a year will live like paupers, so are there others who, with a boundless income of eternal love at their disposal, nevertheless starve their souls with small delights. Just think for a minute, O downcast Believers, of this singular fact and chide yourselves into a more joyful frame of mind. There was a time when yon would have given your eyes to be what you now are! Do you remember when sin lay heavy on your conscience and a dread of death and Hell brooded over you? What would you have given, then, to have been able to say, “By Grace I am forgiven”?

You know you used to envy the very least and poorest and most afflicted of God’s saints in those days! And you were apt to think that if you could lie in a dungeon and be fed on bread and water all your life, yet if you could but once get rid of the burden of sin, you would never murmur again! Yet here you are, accepted in the Beloved and conscious of being adopted into the family of Heaven—and for all that your joy is at a low ebb! Should it be so? Do you remember, also, the time of your espousals, the season of your first love? Why, in those days you wondered how a Christian could be unhappy! As for yourself, you were so full of intense delight that when you heard some older Christian lamenting over anxiety, doubt, fear and the like, you looked at him as a prodigy—you could not comprehend his speaking after that fashion!

You felt that to say, “My Beloved is mine and I am His,” was the very essence of Heaven to you and you could not make out how a man could be an heir of Glory and not be as overflowing with delight as you were! Therefore, I say, chide yourself to think that you should have fallen from your eminency and come away from those sweet delights. Beloved, if we are not as happy as the days are long in these summer months, it is entirely our own fault, for there is plenty of reason for being so! Come, Christians, why are you cast down? Why are you so disquieted? Have you forgotten your redemption, forgotten your adoption, forgotten your justification and forgotten your safety in Christ?

Have you not, also, somewhat neglected to survey your hopes? What if you have little of this world? Look at what is laid up in store for you hereafter! Within a few years, at the outside, you are to be with the angels where no dust of toil shall ever stain your garments! Where no sweat of labor shall stand upon your brow! Where no care shall scourge the heart and no sorrow dim the eyes! Grief, loss, bereavement, or need shall never

approach you there! You are of the imperial blood and you are soon to be acknowledged as a peer of Heaven’s own realm! The day of your accession to sacred honors hastens on. It may be but a week or two that the bliss will tarry—even a few hours may be the only interval and we shall stand beatified among the perfected ones who see God’s face without a veil between!

We have every reason to be happy and if we are not so, it must be because we fail to remember the privileges which our Lord has bestowed upon us. Let me stir you up, my Brothers and Sisters, to happiness this morning—

*“Why should the children of a King  
Go mourning all their days?  
Come, cease to groan, and loudly sing  
A Psalm of gladsome praise.”*

What a blessed task is mine—to urge my Brothers and Sisters to be happy! How highly favored are you to be exhorted to so delicious a privilege! When happiness becomes a duty, who will not be glad? What a blessed people are they to whom to be delighted is but to obey the Divine command to rejoice in the Lord—an obligation as well as a privilege! My Brethren, I would urge you to rejoice, this morning, because if you are, indeed, believers in Christ, you are “a people saved by the Lord.”

If you only read as far as the word, “saved,” and there pause, what music there is in the words—“a people saved”! Not a people who may be saved, who are in process of being saved, but a people saved! He that believes in Jesus is saved! The work is done. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” “Unto us who are saved,” says the Apostle, not speaking of salvation as a future gift, but as a deed accomplished! It is ours at this very moment, for in Christ Jesus we are “a people saved.”

The Israelites were saved from Pharaoh’s domination. With a high hand and an outstretched arm did Jehovah bring them forth, even as at this day you and I are saved from the reigning power of sin. We are no longer held spell-bound by Satan so that we cannot bestir ourselves and seek after holiness. We are saved from the bondage of evil, even from the iron furnace of our ruling passions. The Israelites were saved, also, from the destroying angel. On that night when the avenger flew through the land and smote all the firstborn of Egypt, the blood mark on the lintel saved the families of Israel and even so are we saved by the precious blood of Christ! No angel of vengeance can smite the man who is sheltered beneath the atoning blood! He shall feast securely when Egypt sends up her mighty cry.

The chosen tribes were saved when Pharaoh pursued them and his hosts overtook them at the sea, even at the Red Sea. Then came the fiery cloudy pillar between Israel and Egypt, brightness to Israel but darkness to their foes! They could not come near them all that night and in the morning Israel was safe, for the Lord’s redeemed marched on foot through the Red Sea and saw their enemies no more—they were drowned in the midst of the sea—for God had saved His people! Even so has He saved us from being overtaken and overthrown by temptation. He has rescued us from the renewed attacks of the old, corrupt Nature combined with the cunning of Satan—He has saved us up to this hour from besetting sin and its fierce pursuits!

When the people came into the wilderness they thought they were to perish of thirst, but He saved them by bidding the crystal stream leap from the Rock! They were ready to die of hunger, but He saved them, for the manna fell from Heaven round about their camp! They were attacked by Amalek when they were weary, but He saved them, for Joshua’s sword and Moses’ outstretched hands brought victory for them till their foes were utterly defeated. Israel knew what it was to be saved in many ways— and so do we. We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, fed with the Bread of Heaven and made to drink of water from the Rock of Ages. And as for our adversaries, they have not been able to harm us, for the Lord has saved us unto this day.

Mark the emphasis which Moses puts here, “A people saved by the Lord.” You and I know that if we are saved, at all, it is of the Lord! We cannot talk of merit. We abhor the very word! Nor dare we attribute our salvation to our own free will—Free Grace must wear the crown if ever we are saved! I think, Brothers and Sisters, what a blessing it is to have a salvation which is altogether Divine! If you had saved yourself, that poor work of yours would, like all man’s work, one day pass away! But salvation is of the Lord and, therefore, it will stand forever! It is God that appointed and arranged it, even the Father who is the God of our election, it is Jesus who worked it out, even the Son who is the God of our redemption! And it is the Holy Spirit who applies it, even the Holy Spirit, who is the God of our regeneration and our sanctification.

The Triune God has worked all our works in us and for us, glory be to His name! “Who is like unto you, O people saved by the Lord?” I wish I could speak as I feel this morning—I would fire your hearts with enthusiasm towards Him who loved you before the earth was—who, having chosen you, purchased you with an immense price, brought you out from among the rest of mankind by His power, separated you unto Himself to be His people forever and who now loves you with a love that will never weary nor grow cold, but will bring you unto Himself and seat you at His right hand forever and ever! You are saved! Remember that, O Believer!

You are not half-saved, but completely saved! You are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation! You shall not be ashamed nor confused, world without end! Why, that one word, “saved,” is enough to make the heart dance as long as life remains. “Saved!” Let us hang out our banners and set the bells ringing. Saved! What a sweet sound it is to the man who is wrecked and sees the vessel going down and at that moment discovers that the lifeboat is near and will rescue him from the sinking ship. To be snatched from the devouring fire, or saved from fierce disease just when the turning point has come and death appears imminent—these, also, are occasions for crying, “Saved!” But to be rescued from sin and Hell is a greater salvation, still, and demands a louder joy! We will sing it in life and whisper it in death and chant it throughout eternity—saved by the

Lord! “Happy, indeed, are you, O Israel”!

Another source of joy for the Israelite is found in the grand Truth of God that the Lord’s Beloved are, also, shielded by God—“who is the shield of your help.” God’s people are a warring people and yet a happy people, for though dangers surround them, Omnipotence preserves them! No sooner are we saved than we have to contend with foes. Now, these foes are very good at warfare and ready to smite us even to the death. Therefore the necessity for this blessed word, “The shield of your help.” The sword shall be lifted against you, but God, Himself, will interpose between you and that sword! The arrows shall fly winged with malicious design, but God shall hold His sacred protection over you and protect you from even the thought of harm! He is “the shield of your help.” Think of this and rejoice!

Many evils would injure you and even destroy you, if they could, but Jehovah Jesus interposes between you and them—  
*“Many times since days of youth,  
May Israel truly say,  
Foes devoid of love and truth  
Afflict me day by day.  
Yet they never can prevail,  
God defends His people still!  
Jesus’ power can never fail  
To save from all that’s ill.”*

See how the Lord our God has interposed, already, on innumerable occasions. We have been laid low by sickness, but it has worked our spiritual health. We have experienced losses, but we have been enriched by them in the highest sense. We have even endured calumny, but our character is still as bright as ever through the gracious protection of our God. We have been assailed by temptation, but the evil influence did not enter our spirit, so as to pollute it, for just then Divine Grace came in to prevent our yielding to the vile suggestion. We have been the subjects of much doubt and skepticism, but always, when these have flown at us like vultures, God, Himself, in infinite love, has turned aside their fierce attacks.

We have been preserved in Christ Jesus, for He is our shield. We have been strengthened by Him, for He is our help. And being helped, we have escaped every assault, for He is our help and our shield. Brothers and Sisters, you shall be shielded throughout the entire battle of life. If all the quivers of Hell are to be emptied out against you, behold, the Lord God is your salvation! You may trust and not be afraid, for the Lord says to each one of His chosen, even as unto Abraham, “Fear not, I am your shield and your exceedingly great reward.” This, also, is true today. As you have been protected, so are you now shielded by the Lord. Your present troubles are only like a shower rattling upon the window pane—you shall not so much as be dampened by them.

Your adversaries appear to be let loose against you, but their fiery darts will stop short upon that wondrous shield of God which will blunt their points. “Trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength.” “No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper and every tongue that rises against you in judgment you shall condemn.” “He shall cover you with His feathers and under His wings shall you trust. His truth shall be your shield and buckler.” Will you not be happy after that? As you cower down beneath those mighty wings, even as the little chickens shelter under the hen, are you not happy? As you hide behind that mighty shield, do you not feel restful and content? If not, pray that you may be, for so you ought to be!

Besides defensive armor we need offensive weapons and we ought to be happy, in the next place, because we are divinely armed—“Who is the sword of your excellency!” This wondrous Word of God, when blessed by the Holy Spirit, is our sword with which to fight the battles of life! Does sin invade us? The precept smites it and the story of Calvary slays it! Does the flesh rebel? The Word of God smites the flesh and helps us to mortify it! Does Satan come against us? With, “It is written,” we meet him as our Master met him in the wilderness of old! There is no weapon like the Word of God! This is the true Jerusalem blade that will cut through bone and marrow! It has never been known to bend or break, yet, in the hour of conflict. Take good heed that you have it by you. Gird it on your thigh and wield it well, for victory always goes with it.

We are armed with the Word of God, not only that we may smite our own spiritual foes, but that we may win men for Christ. As the Israelites had to conquer Canaan, so have we to conquer the world for Jesus! Go up against the ramparts of error! Go up against the hosts of evil with no weapon in your hand but the story of the Cross, the Revelation of the Most High, the declaration of the Gospel of Jesus—for by this sign we conquer—it is impossible that we should fail with the Gospel in our hands. How happy God’s people ought to be when they think of this! Armed with an invincible weapon, ought we not to rejoice in anticipation of victory?

A man who has a Bible of his own—I mean not the paper and the letterpress, but all that is in the Inspired Volume—is there anything more that he can desire? He finds, from Genesis to Revelation, every promise his, every dear assurance of almighty power and love all his own—what more does he need? He who can use this two-edged sword may defy doubt, fear, anxiety, care, temptation, worldliness—yes, death and the devil! At the very sight of this sword our adversaries tremble, for it cuts through joints and marrow and leaves a deadly wound wherever it cuts. Be happy, Christian! May the Lord help you to be happy as you see this sword of the Spirit to be yours.

The fourth thing which is mentioned as a great privilege is that we have security of victory—“Your enemies shall be found liars unto you.” Now I ask any Christian of experience here whether he has not found this true? What a shameless liar the devil is! “Ah,” he says, “in this trouble the hand of the Lord has gone out against you! He has forsaken you and He will be gracious no more. He has deserted you as He did Saul the king, and from now on dark and brooding thoughts will overshadow you which no musician’s hand shall be able to charm away. The Lord will no more answer you from His holy oracle, for behold, He has cast you away!”

But, Brothers and Sisters, we are not deserted, after all, for here we are, this morning, to sing of Divine loving kindness and to tell of all our past troubles as trials and proofs of eternal faithfulness! We are not in the asylum, nor the prison, though the arch-enemy has threatened us with the one or the other. God has enabled us to triumph over all difficulties, though the enemy has predicted our utter defeat. The devil came to us once, and he said, “Now you will assuredly fall! Already your heart is beginning to go back to sin. You are not faithful. You have been treacherous in your inmost thoughts and you will apostatize, altogether, and bring great disgrace upon your profession. You are a fool to have ever joined the Church—there is no stability about you. You are a mere flash in the pan. You blazed like a firebrand, but you will die out into black ashes.”

But, Beloved, we have not died out yet, blessed be Jehovah’s name! Year after year has passed and the faint are still pursuing, the feeble still hold on their way and utter weakness still triumphs over strong temptations! Satan has been a liar to us and so has that wicked unbelief of ours, which is rather worse than the devil, for, at any rate, it has less excuse for its existence. Unbelief has whispered a thousand accursed falsehoods in our ears—this labor was to be too difficult, that trial was to consume us— that adversary would swallow us up! Nothing of the kind has happened, but so our enemies said and they have all been liars! What fools we were to have believed them and what greater fools we shall be if, in days to come, we shall lend an ear to them. Let us not listen to anything which opposes itself to the sure Truth of God.

He cannot forsake us. Leave His chosen to perish? Cast away the people whom He foreknew? Renounce the purchase of His blood, the darlings of His heart? Impossible! He may sooner cease to be than cease to be the Father of His own-begotten! He may sooner quench the sun and moon, and bid the whole universe pass away as the sere leaves fall from the forest trees, than He can ever say unto His children, “ I have loved you, but not now. I have chosen you, but have cast you away. I have brought you thus far to put you to shame.” No, Beloved, His mercy endures forever and never does He turn from His Covenant! What a God you have to deal with! There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun!

In the chapter from which our text is taken we see a singular God and a singular people. There is none like Jehovah and none like His people. He is blessed forever and they are blessed forever in Him and by Him. Therefore let us be happy this morning! O you mourners, take down your harps from the willows and tune them afresh! Put away the sackbut and take the dulcimer and upon an instrument of ten strings praise the Lord. Let your heart be glad in His name and rejoice, yes, exceedingly rejoice!

II. Secondly and briefly, LET US CONSIDER THE RESULT OF REALIZING OUR BLESSED ESTATE. Upon this subject there ought to be no need to dilate, for each heir of Heaven should live in the hourly enjoyment of his Divine inheritance, but, alas, few are doing so! Surely spiritual blessings are the only ones which men decline to enjoy! Bring a thirsty man near a brimming cup and see how long he will linger. See how he hastens to enjoy the draught! Bring a poor man near an estate and tell him that he has but to sue the court to gain it and tomorrow morning he will be asking where he has to go! Alas, Christian people seem to be stupid about their privileges! They are not so wise as the ass which knows its master’s crib. They have great blessings, but they do not always enjoy them. The good which the Lord provides is set before them, but they do not grasp it as they should. May the Holy Spirit teach us wisdom!

Now, there are many reasons why you should enjoy your privileges and be happy. The first is because it tends to keep our allegiance to God unshaken. Israel would never seek after another god while she knew that none could bless her as Jehovah had done! Those who were happy with Jehovah would not be likely to wander off to Baal. God’s people will not go astray from Him when their hearts are thoroughly happy with Him. It is because you lose the sweet flavor of the waters of the flowing fountain that you dabble in those muddy, stagnant gatherings which linger in the broken cisterns. If you would delight yourself in the Lord, all the world could not tempt you from Him.

A man will never be dazzled with gold who has his heart satiated with God. Unhappy Christians, when tempted, are very apt to seek pleasure away from the Lord. But those who rejoice in the Lord always shall find the joy of the Lord to be their strength, for it shall be cords of love and bands of a man to hold them fast to their King. When your joy begins to slacken, say to yourself, “There is something wrong here. I must get back to where I was in my earlier days. I must return to my God and to the sunlight, for now that I am in the cold shade, my love may soon cool.” Beloved, if you will be happy, it will create warm enthusiasm and a grateful love within your bosom.

Have you begun to be lukewarm? Has your heart declined in affection? Nothing can make your soul return to its first love like the Lord’s return and the restoration of the old happiness. Yes, I am saved. Yes, I am shielded. Yes, I bear His sword with which to smite my foes. Yes, I shall triumph through the blood of the Lamb and there is a portion for me at His right hand. Well, then, the next thought is therefore blessed be His dear name, I do love Him! I thought I did not, but when I begin to see what He has done for me and what He has given me and provided for me, I find my sluggish heart beating at a quicker rate—

*“Yes, I love Him and adore,*

*Oh for Grace to love Him more.”*  
That is a good result to come of being happy. “Therefore comfort you, comfort you My people, says the Lord; speak you comfortably unto Jerusalem.”

Joy, also, will have another effect. It will give you confidence to expect other blessings. Because God has dealt so well with us in the past, we are persuaded that goodness and mercy will follow us all our days. If now, today, Beloved, you will survey the goodness of God to you in the past, you will feel confidence that when new troubles arise you will be helped in them and when new mercies are needed, they shall be supplied, “new every morning.” Gratitude for the past inspires us with courage for the future. And so, too, you will gain strength for bearing all your burdens and courage for facing all your enemies. Has the Lord done so much to make

us happy? Then He will not deny us anything! He who has given us so much, already, will be sure to sustain us and supply our needs out of His all-sufficiency until we have trampled down every foe and shall rest forever at His right hand.

Lastly, for Christians to be happy is one of the surest ways to set them seeking the salvation of others. If we found religion to be a bondage and a deception, we should be inhuman if we wished to introduce others to it. He who enters upon a tyrant’s service, with little food and no pay and much misery, ought not to stand at the door and invite others to come in! He should, rather, warn them to seek some happier service. Now, we have found religion to be true happiness. I am sure I speak the sentiments of all here who know the Lord when I say that if we have not been perfectly happy it has not been the fault of God’s Grace, but entirely our own, for had we lived up to our calling and our privileges we should have been as happy as the birds of the air and our lives would have been one perpetual song!

Despite our shortcomings, blessed be God, we have been supremely happy. If we could begin life again we would only ask to begin it with Jesus, by the power of His Spirit. If we had our choice of all the various positions and conditions of our fellow men, we do not know one that we prefer to our own, so long as we can say, “Christ is mine.” Because we have found this honey, we desire our friends and kinsfolk to partake of it. Oh, my Hearers, I would you were all happy! I would you were, every one of you, supremely happy! And especially I wish it for some of you into whose faces I have looked these many years and see that you are still not clear of your anxieties. I see that you are not sure about your souls yet, and you still hesitate and linger in the border land.

O come and rest where God has provided rest for sinners’ souls! Beloved, trust in Jesus Christ this morning! Make no more delay! May His Divine Spirit enable you to do so—then shall your peace be like a river and you shall confess that we did not deceive you. You will cry, “The half has not been told me,” when you perceive the deep peace, the holy calm, the blessed restfulness and sometimes the ecstatic, overflowing delight which is the portion of the child of God! If I had to die like a dog and there were no hereafter, I would still choose to be a Christian, for of all lives that can be lived there is none that can compare with this! We drink the wine on the lees well-refined and are satisfied with marrow and with fatness!

But as for worldlings, they desire the husks that swine eat, with which their bellies cannot be filled. The Lord grant His people Grace to be happy in Him and may He also bring in the wanderers, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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THE DEATH OF MOSES  
NO. 1966

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 5, 1887, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, according to the Word of the Lord.”  
Deuteronomy 34:5.**

WHAT an honorable title! Moses is distinguished as “the servant of Jehovah.” He was this of choice, for he willed to be the servant of God rather than to be great in the land of the Pharaohs. Such he was most perseveringly throughout the whole of his life. Such he was most intensely, for he waited upon God for his directions, as a servant waits upon his master, and he endeavored to do all things according to the pattern which was shown him in the holy mountain. Though he was king in Jeshurun, he never acted on his own authority, but was the lowly instrument of the Divine will. Moses was faithful to God in all his house, as a servant. You neither see him overstepping his office nor neglecting it. His reverence for the Lord’s name was deep, his devotion to the Lord’s cause was complete and his confidence in the Lord’s Word was constant. He was a true servant of God from the time when he was appointed at the burning bush until the hour when he surrendered his keys of office to his successor and climbed the appointed mountain to die. Oh that you and I may so live as to prove ourselves servants of God!

Unto as many as have received Him, our Lord Jesus has given power to become the sons of God and this is our great joy! But as sons we aspire to serve our Father, even as His great first-born Son has done, who took upon Himself the form of a Servant that He might accomplish His Father’s good pleasure for His Church. Let us with good will do service unto our Father who is in Heaven, seeing it is but our reasonable service that we should lay out ourselves for Him who has made us His sons and daughters. Redeemed from the slavery of sin, let us, as the Lord’s freemen, cry unto Him henceforth, “O Lord, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant and the son of Your handmaid: You have loosed my bonds.”

But servant of God as Moses was, he must die. It is the common lot of men. Only two have passed out of this world into the abodes of Glory without fording the stream of death. Moses is not one of the two. Even had he crossed the Jordan into Canaan, he would, in due course, have died in the land. We might have expected that he would live on till the people were settled in Canaan, but it seemed right unto the Lord God that on account of his one slip he should die outside of the Promised Land, like the rest of the people. Only Caleb and Joshua, of all that generation who came out of Egypt, were permitted to possess the land towards which they had journeyed for 40 years!

If that one offense lost Moses the privilege of entering the earthly Canaan, there may have been still more powerful reasons why he should not enter the heavenly Canaan without experiencing the change of death. He must not make a third with Enoch and Elijah, but he must die and be buried. Such will probably be our lot in due season. Brothers and Sisters, it may be that we shall not die—our Lord Jesus may come before we fall asleep—but if He does not come speedily, we shall find that it is appointed unto all men once to die. We shall pass from this world unto the Father by that common road which is beaten hard by the innumerable feet of mortal men. Since we must die, it is well to meditate upon the solemn future. Moses shall be our teacher in the are of dying. We will consider his decease in the hope that our fears may be removed and our desires may be excited. There is a Pisgah where we must yield up the ghost and be gathered to our fathers—may we climb to it as willingly as did Moses, the servant of God!

The manner of Moses’ death is exceedingly remarkable . I suppose that no subject presents a finer field for oratory than the sublime decease of the Prophet, but we have nothing to do with oratory—our objective is spiritual and practical profit. Poets might well expend their noblest powers in depicting this strange scene of the man of God alone on the mountain’s brow, with the view of Canaan at his feet and himself in holy rapture passing away into the eternal state. We are not poets, but simple Believers, desiring to learn some holy lesson from the death of one who, though the greatest of men, knew no higher honor than to be the servant of the Lord! Oh that the Spirit of Grace and Truth who has come to us by Christ Jesus may help us find instruction in the death of him who brought the Law from the mouth of God to men!

I. We are told in the text that, “Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, according to the Word of the Lord.” This I shall read, first, as meaning that Moses died on Pisgah ACCORDING TO THE WARNING OF THE LORD.

His death was long foreseen . Moses knew some time before that he must die without setting foot in Canaan. Read in the first chapter of Deuteronomy his own account of the sin of the people at Meribah and the Lord’s sentence, then and there pronounced—“Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I swore to give unto your fathers, save Caleb, the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he has trodden upon, and to his children, because he has wholly followed the Lord.” “Also,” adds Moses, “the Lord was angry with me for your sakes, saying, You also shall not go in there.”

His death outside of the Promised Land did not come upon him at all as a surprise. He had to see his sister, Miriam, first of the great trio, fall asleep and, next, he was called to go up to Mount Hor and disrobe his brother, Aaron, of his priestly garments which he placed upon Eleazar, his son. Moses also had to see the whole of the generation that came out of Egypt with him buried in the wilderness. The 90th Psalm is his and it is a sort of a Death March—fit hymn for a nation whose track was marked by countless graves. Because of unbelief “their carcasses fell in the wilderness.” Only Caleb and Joshua remained, the sole survivors of the great host which crossed the Red Sea. The Great Lawgiver had thus abundant pledges of his own departure and he must have had, in his brother’s death, a rehearsal of his own. Have not we, also, had many warnings? Are we ready?

Concerning his death in the land of Moab, it is natural to remark that it was exceedingly disappointing. He had been, for 40 years, engaged in leading the people to the land of promise—must he die when that country was within a day’s march? It was his life’s work for which he had been prepared by 40 years in Egypt, where he became learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians—and by another 40 years in the solitary wilderness where he kept sheep and held high fellowship with God. His third 40 years had been spent in freeing Israel from Egypt, training them to become a nation and conducting them to the land of promise—must he now expire before the nation entered in? What years his had been! What a life was that of Moses! How glorious was the man who had confronted Pharaoh and broken the pride of Egypt! How tried and troubled a man had he been while called to carry all that nation in his bosom and care for them as a shepherd cares for his sheep! His was a task that well-near broke him down and, had not the man Moses been made very meek by the indwelling Spirit of the Lord, and had he not also been graciously sustained by fellowship with God, his task had proven too heavy even for him.

Yet, after all that toil in fashioning a nation, he must die before the long-expected conquest! It was a bitter disappointment when first the sentence pierced his heart. He had known one great disappointment before, for Stephen tells us, that when he smote the Egyptian, “he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God, by his hand, would deliver them: but they understood not.” Then, when his brethren had refused him, he fled into the land of Midian, a rejected leader, a patriot whose heroism had only brought forth from his countrymen the contemptuous question, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us?” But this denial of entrance into Canaan was still a greater disappointment! To have toiled so long and to reap no harvest. To see the land, but not to enter it. To bring the tribes to the Jordan’s brink—and then to die in Moab after all—it was a grievous disappointment. Brothers and Sisters, are we ready to say as to our most cherished hope, “Your will be done”? Are we holding our life’s dearest purpose with a loose hand? It will be our wisdom to do so.

Apparently it was a severe chastisement . His offense was but one, but it excluded him from Canaan. We have not time to describe in detail the sin of Moses. It would appear to have been a sin of unbelief occasioned by his feeling so intensely for and with the people. Moses was thoroughly knit to Israel. When they sinned, he interceded as for himself. When Jehovah made him the offer that He would make of him a great nation, he declined it solely from his love for Israel. He lived for the nation and for the nation he died. Remember how once he went so far as to say, “If not, blot me, I pray You, out of Your Book which You have written.” In every way he was of the people, bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh. Israel was hidden in his heart and out of that master passion of sympathy with the people came the weakness which, at last, made him speak unadvisedly with his lips. They strove with God and though Moses never yielded a point to them in that wielded contest, yet their unbelief so far influenced him that he spoke in anger and said, “Hear now, you rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?”

Then “the Lord spoke unto Moses and Aaron, Because you believed Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them” (Num 20:12). Three times in the Book of Deuteronomy Moses tells the people, “The Lord was angry with me for your sakes.” It was not so much that which Moses did personally which involved him in judgment, but he suffered because of his being mixed up with Israel! As the Lord had, before, spared the people for Moses’ sake, it became necessary that, when he in any measure shared in their great sin of unbelief, he should be chastened for their sake as well as his own. His faith had saved them and now his unbelief, being backed by theirs, secures for him the sentence of exclusion from the land.

My Brothers and Sisters, when I think of this severity of discipline towards so faithful a servant as Moses, I do exceedingly fear and quake! Truly, “the Lord our God is a jealous God.” We are sure that He is never unjust. We are sure that He is never unduly severe. We do not, for a moment, impugn the righteousness or even the love of our God in this or any other act, but He is terrible out of His holy places. How true it is that He will be sanctified in them that come near to Him! Behold and wonder! That highly-favored servant, Moses, though always accepted in the economy of Grace, yet must he come under the rule of the house and feel the chastising hand if he transgresses! Hence the sentence of exclusion is passed. As he had once joined that unbelieving generation by manifesting a measure of hasty unbelief, he must now share their doom and die on Moab’s side of Jordan. “Righteous are You, O Lord, and upright are Your judgments.” Oh for Grace to behave ourselves aright in Your house! Lord, teach us Your statutes and keep us in Your way.

Beloved, it seemed a great calamity that Moses must die when he did. He was an aged man as to years, but not as to condition. It is true he was 120 years old, but his father and his grandfather and his great grandfather had all lived beyond that age—two of them reaching 127—so that he might naturally have expected a longer lease of life. This truly grand old man had not failed in any respect. His eyes were not dim, neither had his natural force abated and, therefore, he might have expected to live on. Besides, it seems a painful thing for a man to die while he was capable of so much work—when, indeed, he was more mature, more gracious, more wise than ever! The mental and spiritual powers of Moses were greater in the latter days of his life than ever before. Notice his wonderful song! Observe his marvelous address to the people! He was in the prime of his mental manhood! He had been tutored by a long experience, chastened by a marvelous discipline and elevated by a sublime communion with God— and yet he must die. How strange that when a man seems most fit to live, it is then that the mandate comes, “Get you up into the mountain and die”!

Naturally speaking, it seemed a sad loss for the people of Israel. Who but Moses could rule them? Even he could scarcely control them! They were a heavy burden, even to his meekness—who else could so successfully act as king in Jeshurun? Without Moses to awe them, what will not these rebels do? It was a grave experiment to place a younger and an inferior man in the seat of power when the nation was entering upon its great campaign. It would need all the faith and discretion of Moses to conduct the conquest of the country and to divide their portions to the tribes. Yet so it must be—precious as his life was, the Word of God went forth, “Get you up into the top of Pisgah: for you shall not go over this Jordan.” Even thus to the best and most useful must the summons come. Who would wish to forbid the Lord to call home His own when He wills?

The sentence was not to be averted by prayer. Moses tells us that he besought the Lord at that time, “O Lord God, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand: for what God is there in Heaven or in earth that can do according to Your works and according to Your might? I pray You, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon.” This was altogether a very proper prayer. He did not plead his own services, but he urged the former mercies of the Lord. Surely this was good pleading and he might have hoped to prevail for himself, seeing he had formerly been heard for a whole nation. But no. This blessing must be denied him. The Lord said, “Let it suffice you; speak no more unto Me of this matter.” Moses never again opened his lips upon the subject. He did not beseech the Lord thrice, as Paul did, in his hour of trouble, but seeing that the sentence was final, he bowed his head in holy consent.

Brethren, he had often asked a greater thing than this of the Lord, his God! Once he had even dared to say, “I beseech You, show me Your Glory,” and he was heard even in that high request. The Lord placed him in the cleft of the rock and made all His goodness pass before him. Yet now he begs for a comparatively small thing—and it is refused. What a mercy that it is in the small things of this life that our requests may be denied, but in the things which touch the Kingdom of the Lord, our prayer never returns empty! All Heaven is open to our bended knee, though for wise ends and purposes a Canaan on earth may be closed against us. Allsufficient Grace was given though the thorn was not removed—Moses, the servant of the Lord, died, but triumphed over death!

When I thought of the trial of Moses in being shut out of the land, I found myself unable to read the chapter which lay open before me, for I was blinded by my tears. How shall any of us stand before a God so holy? Where Moses errs how shall we be faultless? Never servant more favored of his Lord and yet even he must undergo a disappointment so great as a rebuke for a single fault. The flower of his life is broken off from the stalk for one act of unbelief. To be exalted so near to God is to be involved in a great responsibility. A fierce light beats about the Throne of God. He that is the King’s chosen, admitted to continual communion with Him, must stand in awe of Him. Well is it written, “Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling.” An offense which might be passed over as a mere trifle in an ordinary subject would be very serious in a prince of the blood who had been favored with royal secrets and had been permitted to lean his head upon the bosom of the King.

If we live near to God we cannot sin without incurring sharp rebukes. Even the common run of the elect must remember those Words of God, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” Much more must the elect out of the elect hear such a warning! God did, in effect, say to Moses, “You, only, have I chosen of all mankind to speak with Me face to face and, therefore, since you have failed in your faith after such communion with Me, it behooves Me, in very faithfulness and love towards you, to mark your failure with an evident token of displeasure.” The discipline of saints is in this life. I doubt not but many a man’s life has come to an end when he wished it to be continued and he has missed that which he has strived for because of an offense against the Lord committed in his earlier years. We had need walk carefully before our jealous God, who will not spare sin anywhere and, least of all, in His own beloved. His love to them never fails, but His hatred of their sin burns like coals of juniper. Foolish parents spare the rod, but our wise Father acts not so! Walk circumspectly, O you heirs of eternal life, for, “even our God is a consuming fire.” The Lord give us to feel the sanctifying power of this passage in the story of the great Lawgiver!

II. But now I have to conduct you to a second point of view. Moses, the man of God, died in the land of Moab “according to the Word of the Lord,” that is, ACCORDING TO THE DIVINE APPOINTMENT.

All the details of the death of Moses had been ordered of the Lord . Time, place and circumstances were arranged by God. So, Brothers and Sisters, it is appointed unto us where we shall die and when we shall die. We speak of certain persons as having “died by accident” and we sometimes bewail the deaths of Christian men as premature—but in the deepest sense it is not so! God has marked out for us the place where and the time when we must resign our breath. Let this suffice us. That which is of Divine appointment should be to our contentment. We do not believe in the Kismet of blind fate, but we believe in the predestination of Infinite Wisdom and, therefore, we say, “It is the Lord, let Him do what seems good to Him.”

Moses died according to the Divine appointment, that is also according to an appointment which is very general among God’s people. He died without seeing the full result of his life-work. If you look down the list of the servants of God, you will find that the most of them die before the objective which they had in view is fully accomplished. It is true that we are immortal till our work is done, but then we usually think that our work is something other than it is. It never was the work of Moses to lead Israel into the Promised Land! It was his wish, but not his work. His work he saw, but his wish he saw not. Moses really did finish his own proper work, but the desire of his heart was to have seen the people settled in their land and this was not granted him. Thus David gathered together gold and silver with which to build the Temple, but he was not to build it. Solomon, his son, undertook the work.

Even thus, great Reformers rise and speak the Truth of God and cause colossal systems of error to tremble, but they do not, themselves, utterly destroy those evils. Their successors continue the work. Most men have to sow that others may reap. The prayer of Moses is fulfilled to others as well as to himself—“Let Your work appear unto Your servants and Your Glory unto their children.” We must not hope to engross all things. Let us be content to do our own part in laying the foundation upon which other men may build in due course. It is according to the Divine appointment which links us with each other that one plants and another waters, one brings out of Egypt and another leads into Canaan.

And I may here notice that Moses thus “died according to the Word of the Lord” for a deep dispensational reason. It was not for Moses to give the people rest, for the Law of God gives no man rest and brings no man to Heaven. The Law may bring us to the borders of the promise, but only Joshua or Jesus can bring us into Grace and Truth. If Moses had given them Canaan, the allegory would have seemed to teach us that rest might be obtained by the Law of God, but as Moses must be laid asleep and buried by Divine hands, so must the Law cease to rule so that the Covenant of Grace may lead us into the fullness of peace—

*“Moses may lead to Jordan’s flood,  
But there surrenders his command.  
Our Joshua must the waves divide,  
And bring us to the promised land.  
Trained by the Law, we learn our place,  
But gain the inheritance by Grace.”*

Thus there was a mysterious reason why Moses should die in Moab, according to the eternal purpose of God. Not without such Divine decree shall any other of the servants of the Lord depart out of the camp of Israel. We also shall, in life and death, answer some gracious purpose of the Lord. Are we not glad to have it so? Yes, Lord, Your will be done!

III. I have conducted you a little out of the dark, now, and the sky is clearing around us. In the third place, Moses died ACCORDING TO THE LOVING WISDOM OF THE LORD. It was a meet thing, a wise thing and a kind thing that Moses should not go over Jordan.

First, by so doing he preserved his identity with the people for whom he had cared. For their sakes he had forsaken a princedom in Egypt and now, for their sakes, he loses a home in Palestine. He had suffered with them, “esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt,” and he had been with them in all that great and terrible wilderness, afflicted in all their affliction, bearing and carrying them in God’s name all his days—was it not meet that he should at last die with them? He had been, all along, the mirror of self-denial—neither for himself, nor his brother, nor his son had he sought honor—he lived only for others and never for himself. And his death was agreeable with his whole life, for he leads others to the border of Canaan, but enters it not, himself. He sleeps with the older nation. He ends his career on this side of Jordan, like all the generation which he had numbered when they came out from under the iron hand of the Egyptian tyrant. It seemed fit that one so identified with the people should say, “Where you die, I will die.” Are not we satisfied to take our lot with the holy men and women who already sleep in Jesus?

Moreover, Moses might be well content to die then and there, since he was thus released from all further trial. Surely he had known enough of sorrow in connection with that rebellious nation! Forty years was enough for a pastorate over a people so fickle and perverse. Surely he must have blessed the hand that removed his shoulder from the burden! His was no life of luxury and ease, but of stern self-denial and perpetual provocation. What trial he endured! What self-restraint he exercised! What a lonely life he led! Are you surprised to hear me say that? With whom could he associate? Even Aaron, his brother, was a poor comrade for such a man! Remember how he failed Moses when that man of God was absent for 40 days upon the Mountain with God? It was Aaron that made the golden calf and this clearly proved his spiritual inferiority to Moses. The man of God had to watch even his brother who stood next to him! With whom could he take counsel? Who would talk with him as a friend? He dwelt apart and shone as a lone star.

It is significant that he died alone, for so had he lived. Aaron had tender attendants to disrobe him. He who put the vestments on most fitly aided to take them off, but the crown which Moses wore, God, Himself, had set upon his brow and no human hand must remove it. Surely this burdened watcher of Israel must have been glad when his watch was over! Surely this lonely man, after 120 years of service, must have felt it a happy release to be admitted to the glorious society of Heaven! As Noah was a preacher of righteousness for 120 years and then entered into the ark, so Moses, after 120 years of service, enters into his rest. Is it not well? Do you grieve that the battle is fought and the victory is won forever? We, also, in our deaths, shall find the end of toil and labor—and the rest will be glorious!

Remember, in the next place, that by his so dying he was relieved from a fresh strain upon him which would have been involved in the conquest of Canaan. He would have crossed the Jordan, not to enjoy the country, but to fight for it—was he not well out of so severe a struggle? You think of the clusters of Eshcol, but I am thinking of the sieges and the battles. Was it so very desirable to be there? Would Moses really have desired that dreadful fray? Was it not a gracious act on the part of the Commander-in-Chief to relieve from his command a veteran who had already served through 40 years of war? The Lord would not put upon Moses a burden so little agreeable to his age and to his turn of mind as that of executing the condemned Canaanites. Joshua was naturally a man of war—let him use the sword, for Moses was abler at the pen. Recollect that the people of Israel were no better when they reached Canaan than when they were in the wilderness—they suffered defeat through unbelief—and they missed much of their inheritance through self-indulgence. Moses had seen enough of them on one side Jordan, without being troubled with them on the other. The Lord, therefore, graciously took His servant off the active list, and promoted him to a higher sphere. Let us not be distressed by the fact that He will one day perform the like kindness to us in our turn.

“But,” you will say, “surely it might have been as well if Moses had lived to have seen Joshua win the country!” Would this have been desirable? Do active men find much delight in sitting still and seeing others take the lead? Moreover, had Moses lived, he would, before long, have felt those infirmities from which he had, for 120 years, been screened—is it so very desirable to survive one’s powers and to be a tottering old man amidst constant battles? Peace suits age—age agrees not with war’s alarms. Had Moses remained the leader of the people, he might have injured the glory of his former days. Have we not seen aged men survive their wisdom? Have not their friends wished that they had closed their career long before? Have we not seen pastors, once able and efficient, holding to their pulpits to the injury of the Churches they once edified? Oh that men would have wisdom enough not to undo, in their old age, what they have worked in their youth! Moses is removed before this evil can happen to him and it is well.

“But,” you say, “perhaps he might have been there to watch with joy the victories of Joshua.” Is that always an easy thing to one who has been in the front rank, himself? At least it is not an unmixed privilege—there is a mixture of trial in the blessing. Moses did not “lag superfluous on the stage.” He did not survive his work. Who wishes to do so? He passed away on the crest of the wave before any ebb had set in, or any weakness had been discoverable. He died so as to be missed. Israel wept for him and no man said that he had lived too long. That prayer of his, after all, was a mistake. What would have been the particular joy of merely treading the soil of Canaan? The land looked far more beautiful from Pisgah than it would have done had he stood by Jericho. Assuredly, at the present day, you and I who have never seen Palestine, have a much more delightful idea of it than those who have endured its noonday heats and midnight frosts! Moses had more joy in gazing upon it from above than in actually warring among its hills.

IV. I must hasten on to say that while the death of Moses thus exhibits the loving wisdom of God, the way in which he died abundantly displays THE GRACE OF GOD.

After Moses had been well assured that he must die, you never hear a complaint of it, nor even a prayer against it. Remember that he, himself, wrote the story and it is charming to see how he recorded his own fault, his prayer to be allowed entrance into Canaan and its denial. Had he murmured, he would also have recorded this. He seems to me always to write about Moses as if he were somebody he had known—he is strictly impartial in his praise or blame of himself. He calls himself, “king in Jeshurun.” He says that the man Moses was very meek and yet he records his outbursts of anger. No man was ever less self-conscious, or lived so little for himself as Moses did! Therefore, when once the Lord told him he must die, he acquiesced without a word.

Most fitly the old man immediately called forth all his energies to finish his work. You will find in the 31st chapter of the Book of Numbers that he took in hand a war—“And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites: afterward shall you be gathered unto your people” (Num 31:1, 2). He would die warring with Israel’s adversaries and obeying Israel’s Lord. Certain ordinances to be observed in war he delivered to Eleazar and he supervised the division of the spoils. Fearing lest the tribes which had settled east of Jordan might excuse themselves from future labors, he stirred up Reuben and Gad, and gained from them a promise to go over armed with their brethren till the whole land was conquered.

Furthermore, he prepared his manuscripts, not for the press, but to be put away in the Ark and to be preserved. He would have his testimony to future generations complete before his hand was paralyzed by death. He knew that he was to die, but he did not sit down and weep, nor sulk, nor give himself up to bitter forebodings of the hour of departure. He served his God with increased vigor and was more than ever alive as life neared its close. Then he preached his best sermon. What a wonderful sermon it was! How he poured out his heart in pleading with the people! The sermon over, he began to sing. The swan is fabled to sing but once and that just before it dies.

So did Moses, at the last, give us that famous 90th Psalm, the song commencing, “Give ear, O you heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass. Because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe you greatness unto our God.” Moses had no time for poetry while his whole strength was needed in his government, but now he is about to die, his frame of mind is ecstatic—prose will not content him, he must weave his thoughts into verse. In fine, all the faculties of his manhood were drawn out to their utmost in a final effort to glorify the Lord, his God. Brothers and Sisters, is not this a fine fruit of Grace? Oh that we may bear it!

Then he gathered the tribes together and blessed them in prophetic words, pouring out his soul in benedictions. Having already cried to God about his successor, he laid his hands upon Joshua and charged him, encouraged him and bade the people help him in all his service.

He did all that remained to be done and then went willingly to his end— *“Sweet was the journey to the sky,  
The wondrous Prophet tried.  
‘Climb up the mount,’ says God, ‘ and die.’ The Prophet climbed and died.  
Softly his fainting head he lay  
Upon his Maker’s breast.  
His Maker kissed his soul away,  
And laid his flesh to rest.”*

We, my Brothers, also expect to die. Let us not fear it, but let us awaken ourselves to labor more abundantly. Let us preach more boldly, let us sing more sweetly, let us pray more ardently. As flowers, before they shed their leaves, pour out all their perfumes, so let us pour out our souls unto the Lord! Let us live while we live! And dying, let us die unto the Lord! May our life-work close as the sun sets, looking greater when he sinks into the west than when he shines at full meridian height!

V. Now let us conclude by noticing, in the last place, that Moses died, “according to the Word of the Lord,” that is, ACCORDING TO THE DIVINE FAVOR.

His death leaves nothing to regret and neither is any desirable thing lacking. Failing to pass over Jordan seems a mere pin’s prick in presence of the honors which surrounded his departing hours. His death was the climax of his life. He now saw that he had fulfilled his destiny and was not as a pillar broken short. He was ordered to lead the people through the wilderness and he had done so. There they stood on the borders of their heritage—a people molded by his hands. By his instrumentality they were, so to speak, a regenerated race, far more fit than their fathers, to become a nation. The degrading results of long bondage had been shaken off in the free air of the desert. They were all young men, vigorous, hardy and ready for the fray. It is grand to pass away while there is nothing of infirmity yet seen, nothing left undone and nothing allowed to fail through too long persistence in office. We may say of Moses that he did—

*“His body with his charge lay down,  
And cease at once to work and live.”*

Moreover, his successor was appointed and was just below in the plain. It was not his son, but it was his servant who had become his son at last. He did not leave his flock to be scattered, his building to be thrown down. Happy Moses, to see his Joshua! Happy Elijah, to see his Elisha! No trembling, for the Ark of the Lord mars such a departure. The succession of workers lies with the Master, not with the workers! We are to train men, “who can also teach others”—but our own special work we must leave with the Lord. Yet as Paul was glad for Timothy, so must Moses have rejoiced over Joshua and felt, in his appointment, a release from care.

He died, moreover, in the best company possible. Some men expire most fitly in the presence of their children—their strength has laid in their domestic duties and affections and their children fitly close their eyes. But for the man, Moses, there was no true kindred. You hear that he married an Ethiopian woman, but you know nothing about her. You know that he had sons, but you do not hear a word about them except their names— their father was too engrossed in honoring his God to crave office for them! As we have seen, he lived as to men, alone, and as to men he died, alone. But God was with him and in the peculiarly near and dear society of God, he closed his life on the lone peak. If he suffered any weakness, no mortal eye beheld it. So far as his people were concerned, “he was not, for God took him.” Pisgah was to him the vestibule of Heaven. God met him at the gates of Paradise!

As he died, the sweetness of his last thought was indescribable. Before his strengthened eyes there lay the goodly land and Lebanon. The Lord showed him all the land of Gilead unto Daniel. Yonder is Carmel and beyond it he sees the gleam of the utmost sea. Through breaks of the mountains he sees Bethlehem and Jebus, which is Jerusalem. Then, like Abraham, he saw the Day of Christ—and by faith beheld the track of the Incarnate God! Your land, O Immanuel, appeared before him and he saw it in all its spiritual bearings. What a vision! Yet even this melted into a nobler view. As we have seen in our childhood by the light of the magic lantern one view dissolve into another, so did the lower scene gradually melt away into another—and the servant of the Lord found himself removed from the shadows which his eyes had seen into the realities which eyes cannot behold! He had gone from Canaan below to Canaan above—and from the vision of Jerusalem on earth to the joy of the City of Peace in Glory!

The Rabbis say that our text means that Moses died at the mouth of God and that his soul was taken away by a kiss from the Lord’s mouth. I do not know, but I have no doubt that there was more sweetness in the truth than even their legend could set forth! As a mother takes her child and kisses it and then lays it down to sleep in its own bed, so did the Lord kiss the soul of Moses away to be with Him forever—and then He hid the body of Moses we know not where. Whoever had such a burial as that of Moses? Angels contended over it, but Satan has failed to use it for his purposes. That body was not lost, for in due time it appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, talking with Jesus concerning the greatest event that ever transpired! Oh that we, also, may pass away amid the most joyful prospects! Heaven coming down to us as we go up to Heaven! May we also attain unto the resurrection from among the dead and be with our Lord in His Glory!

Soon our turn shall come. [Brother Spurgeon was with His Master in less than five years.] Do we dread it? As we are favored to serve our Lord, we shall be favored to be called Home in due season. Let us always be ready. Yes, joyfully ready! When we are dying, we shall not see the land of Naphtali and Ephraim, but the Covenant—and the infinite provisions of its promises will be spread out before our soul, as Canaan at the feet of Moses! Wrapt in happy enjoyment of precious promises, we shall, with surprise, find ourselves ushered into the place where the promises are all fulfilled—

*“There shall we see His face,  
And never, never sin!  
But from the rivers of His Grace,  
Drink endless pleasures in.”*

To the Believer it is not death to die! Since Jesus has died and risen again, the sting of death is gone—therefore let us prepare ourselves to climb where Moses stood and view the landscape! Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Numbers 20:1-13; Deuteronomy 3:21-28; 32:48-52; 34:1-12.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—912, 876, 875.